

Family Farm Care

A NEWSLETTER
SAVING YOU
TIME & £100'S

LINKING FARMERS TO CARE & HEALTH MANAGERS IN THE SOUTH EAST

Autumn
09

2012 - the year of the 'farm helper'....

.....
.....
..(and the Olympics)

More important than the Olympics to agriculture and the care/health industries, Care Farming is set to become public knowledge in 2012 albeit without the Torch and TV coverage, and it's expected to stay.

We therefore suggest all farmers, as well as other rural site owners and service user managers, start looking at the opportunities **now** of participating in a small trial enterprise. You will then be well placed in 2012 to provide a tried and tested service to any group or individual ("the farm helpers"), rather than losing this valuable and personally rewarding business to non-agri institutionalised block contract service providers.

Why we think it will happen in 2012:

- The care farming concept is not new and untried but has had a make-over with better knowledge, training and income through increasing demand
- Farms as a resource can be used further and smaller family farms may need this growing source of significant income to survive; but remember "farm helpers" come before £££
- The current UK care system for youth and those with a variety of mental issues itself requires more support and new ideas
- Efficacy and government acceptance for care farming continues to build worldwide with Holland and Norway leading the way
- The National Care Farming Initiative (www.ncfi.org.uk) is successfully driving the concept forward with its national voice and has just received further funding of £100k+ from a major national charity
- Regional funding to encourage care farming has started this year with a grant to the West Midlands area of £400k+ and more support exists in other regions
- Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk) recognises the power of nature and supports the logical development of care farming in the countryside - it recently launched 'The Natural Health Service'. Others such as LEAF (www.leafuk.org) have introduced schemes for care farmers
- UK Government policy is de-institutionalising care services and is now passing huge social care support budgets direct to individuals, set to be fully rolled out by 2011
- Estimated milestone to be reached by March 2010: 206,000 people will have personal support budgets of £1.5 billion to spend and for the first time can exercise personal discretion on providers of support and activities including on farms
- UK Government policy will shortly legislate to introduce 'pilot' personal health budgets (in addition to the social care ones above) direct to patients, further championing the right of the individual to choice

LOOK INSIDE...

Always something to do on a farm, it's for your people

Trial a care enterprise on your farm now

Lucky dip Includes care farming videos

Tips for people with potential



If you think you might be able to occupy three people for two half days per week on your family farm for a trial please contact Stephen Sellers on 01420 538793

People visiting farms

People with learning disabilities
People with various mental issues
Trauma sufferers
Unmotivated/excluded school children
Youth offenders
People with drug/alcohol dependency
Elderly people
Long term State benefit recipients

Goals achievable

Feeling secure and relaxed
Useful daytime occupation
Work training (inc with animals)
Social inclusion
Safe and stimulating leisure time
Education (inc the value of good food)
Specific therapeutic aims
Rehabilitation

Farmer benefits

Personal satisfaction
Daily payment of £20 - £100/visitor
Useful assistance
Increased own grown produce sales through positive publicity
Employment of family as trainers, supervisors or carers
Re-connection of rural and urban areas
Increased motivation of existing employees

Attention: Service User Managers

On a farm there is always something to do between sessions no more hanging around!

Whether it's a Day Centre, specialist residential rehab unit or at home, there is often concern from service users and their managers/parents that the day is not sufficiently filled. The gaps between organised sessions or activities can lead to boredom, anxiety or in some cases a tendency to regress through inadvisable actions taken by the service user, adopted more by default than personal choice. This situation does not occur on a farm.

Getting to grips with what a farm can offer

Most farms are outdoor and indoor multi-activity sites and there is likely to be one suitable for your group (up to 6 persons) within 20 minutes travel time - it's advisable to visit at least two before making a choice.

Depending on the people you support, you might be looking for training towards re-introduction to the workplace, team youth projects, worthwhile jobs to do or an attractive place of tranquility. Activities available to choose from are usually centred on the farming calendar but can include all year round animal husbandry and environmental/conservation work. On some farms, non-farming activities such as cooking, art work or music therapy can be made available.

In between sessions... it's fun

On planned or impromptu breaks, there is always something physical to do, quiet areas to visit or access to farm animals, poultry and pets (dogs, cats, horses and orphan lambs are commonplace) - all unchallenging company. Some farms have fishing ponds. Even for those with mobility issues, electric all terrain, fun to drive vehicles can now be acquired (contact us for details), which are expertly designed for a disabled or elderly person to enjoy the whole farm safely, including increasingly popular woodland tracks, with others or alone.

No more funds needed

The emphasis is not on managers/carers having to seek more funds for a trial farm visit but rather 'diverting' funds and evaluating the expected increased benefit outcome by individual assessment of this option compared to the existing situation. In evaluating the results, it is expected that you will notice, in addition to that person's improvements, certain systemic benefits - eg an individual's carer or family member will be happier, carer time can reduce or their job made less challenging.

Parting shot: After the first farm visit most don't need any persuasion to return.

LUCKY DIP TAKE YOUR PICK

Funds to encourage young, old or disabled

LEAF with Sensory Trust are launching a new drive to connect the disengaged with nature through food and farming and will provide funding of up to £150 per visit to selected farmers.

Training to start an enterprise

CEVAS courses, go to www.face-online.org.uk/cevas. Also Care Farming West Midlands can supply you with a 'Starter Pack' for £17.25 including VAT. To order, go to www.ncfi.org.uk/westmidlands/uploads/starter

A quick glimpse of care farming by video:

www.cyreniansfarm.org.uk/video.aspx
www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/mar/12/care.farms



Attention: Farmers

Trial a care enterprise on your farm now

Our last newsletter (Spring 2009 - now downloadable from our website) gave some guidance on how to evaluate if your farm might be suitable for a care enterprise. If you have an interest, the chances are you will have identified possibilities on your farm; as the different scales and types of enterprise possible, in fact, exclude very few family farms.

First let's make some assumptions - your farm could be OK, your family are all supportive, you and any other proposed active parties have sufficient time, energy and empathy to start a new diversification. What next?

Before any invitation the homework

Clearly, you need to invite the managers supporting any possible groups of 'farm helpers' to preview the farm and you. However, I am afraid there is some 'homework' to do first.

Facilities: You need to find some cover for wet days, area for meal breaks and provision of toilets, ideally a separate custom built building but a part of the farmhouse may be sufficient for a trial with some groups.

Activities: First identify which group is most likely to visit, then what activities your farm can offer this particular group. nb Don't worry - it may take a little time before you can stack up activities as part of your normal routine. Next find out what activities the group currently does elsewhere and lastly, fine tune your own list to discuss with the managers when they visit.

Income: Discuss openly with the managers and possibly other funding parties (eg Natural England), a fully transparent list of your costs, including VAT as appropriate, to include your family/own/staff time at an appropriate 'contractors' rate. All groups come with a different mix of income, supervisory costs and capital expenditure involved; consider this matrix, be selective and be prepared to accept a lower financial return in the first year to get 'your foot on the ladder'.

Managing the risks: Management involves identifying what level of extra risk actually exists after consultation with other care farmers and the manager, then carefully assessing what further precautions are necessary. Looked at positively, this is an incentive to upgrade your training and deal with any gaps in your Health and Safety policies or insurance on your existing operations related to

employees, or other 'people' issues on the farm, e.g. a shoot. The new risk level can, if desired, be reduced significantly for a trial enterprise by picking a low risk, small group (say 3 people 2 afternoons per week). Request the manager carries out the risk assessment jointly with you and bring their own supervisors at all times.

A final point: Don't attempt to turn the farm or your family life into something artificial - that is not the basis for a long term venture. **The farm helpers are seeking** the USPs (unique selling points) of your farm, **what is already there**, ie a commercial business not an institution, a variety of meaningful jobs to do or quiet areas readily available, social inclusivity, indirect animal therapy on tap as well as animal husbandry training and more emphasis on Nature, healthy food and its sources.

Good luck: You can now send out the invitation(s) - the manager(s) visiting is likely to be impressed! Remember **it is these conversations that really matter** in taking the next step with enthusiasm and goodwill, notwithstanding many necessary hours on homework and emails which will have preceded the visit.

Parting shot: We think you will want to try a small supervised group now for a host of reasons, not least because individuals with Direct Care and Health payments to spend will be in the next 'wave'.

WOODLAND IN THE SOUTH EAST
 Did you know one quarter of the county's woodland is in the South east and currently only 10% of the potential sustainable yield is taken

Everything we do has risk - driving to and from the site is probably the most risky thing these people do all day. Good management of risk allows people to expand their horizons and boundaries.

Source : Manager of the Houghton Project, Herefordshire

I enjoy working here, it's much better than regular rehab where you often find yourself at a loose end with nothing to do between therapy sessions.

Source : Mr Bird, farm helper, at Risdon Farm, Devon (FW April 2008)

I saw able people being pushed into frustrating day-care services, where they were mollycoddled rather than allowed to do anything.

Source : Stephanie Pedrick (ex social care worker for a national charity), now care farm manager in Cornwall.

Every single farmer has the most enormous contribution to make to the wellbeing of society.

Source : Dame Fiona Reynolds, Director General of the National Trust (British Farmer & Grower, July 2009)

Some think that farmyard activities are old fashioned....but it can be genuinely therapeutic. I once witnessed a man, an elective mute, who started talking to a goat, presumably because it was non-threatening to him.

Source : M.Cane, social worker, Wiltshire (Community Care magazine 27.8.09)

GPs should consider referral for green exercise as a treatment option for every patient experiencing mental distress.

Source : Mind (a leading mental health charity) 2007

RESULT

'He was a young offender who had left school with no qualifications or skills. He was now working in a supportive environment on a chicken farm just outside the city. He was gradually feeling accepted and useful for the first time in his life, even though he could not read or write. Then the farmer was ill for a few days. The young lad said he would collect the eggs on his own. The farmer was pleased that he was keen to do it but reminded him that he could not count or write, so could not record the eggs that had been produced. His reply was "teach me!" A few days later he was counting the eggs, recording the day's total and drawing the production graphs. He was working on a 'care farm' set up particularly to help young people like him find their own value, a purpose and fulfilment in life.'

Source: Kingschurch, Berkshire

If it's worth doing, take the risk

Whether you think you can or you can't, you're absolutely right (Henry Ford)



Stephen Sellers

I am aiming to keep this newsletter an easy read for your next cup of coffee.

My instructions are now coming from both farmers and service user managers. It is clear on both sides that a service of information, contacts and 'make it happen' will be of value to many who are starting a care enterprise on their farm or are looking for a rural site for the people they support. Since my last newsletter, a similar service has been set up in the West Midlands (thanks to regional funding) and similar may occur soon in other regions.

Here in the South East, my particular service focuses on assisting in the establishment of small scale trial care enterprises (say 3 people visiting twice a week for half a day) that can be absorbed into a typical diversified family farm without significant restructuring or staff increases – this is in contrast to those farmers running already or looking to develop a major care farming operation from the outset, involving many more visitors and consequent changes.

The next step – to learn more about care farming and how it can boost the wellbeing of 'farm helpers' (service users) and farm income, look at the National Care Farming Initiative website www.ncfi.org.uk or contact Stephen Sellers on 01420 538793 stephen@newfarmhorizons.co.uk www.newfarmhorizons.co.uk

Incoming Calls

Q: *My son is autistic - which farm might he enjoy?*

A: I would suggest one with animals, as there could be a line of communication there not available to us. Some sensory experiences can be a hit; I've seen how popular sandy molehills can be!

NATURAL ENGLAND INITIATIVE
Natural England's aim under their recent launch of the 'Natural Health Service' is to enable every GP or community nurse to be able to signpost patients to an approved health walk or outdoor activity programme.
www.naturalengland.org.uk

Q: Have you heard anything recently that would keep the young people visiting us motivated?

A: Yes - evidently enterprise is cool, so if you can build that aspect into your regular activities, one of them may reach the Dragon's Den in the future! Also, you might let them video their own work.

Q: *I am wondering whether I could set up a trial care farming enterprise on our farm. I've read I need to provide 'meaningful work' for visitors - what does this mean?*

A: It means normal farm work within the group's capabilities that allows people to make decisions and choices, with a sense of equality and ideally for reward, although I would not worry about the reward aspect for your trial.

Tips for people with potential

Save the VAT.... If you have a long-term physical or mental impairment or a chronic condition such as diabetes, you don't have to pay VAT on certain services, eg the installation, adaptation, servicing or maintenance of your disability equipment, certain building alterations to your home and the hire of certain disability equipment.

PAYE problems over many with a mental or physical impairment, now receiving Direct Payments, will increasingly be looking, often with a carer's help, to employ someone and then are confronted with PAYE – the system for deducting taxes on wages. It may be worth contacting Penderels Trust (a charity, specifically supporting independent living) who can provide a national PAYE bureau service. T: 02476 511375

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