



AGRI Steering Group – Saturday 8th February at 1.30pm Quality Hotel, Birmingham
Road, Allesley, Coventry, CV5 9BA

Chairman: Russell Carrington (Herefordshire)

Vice-chairman: Vacant

Present: Russell Carrington (Chairman [WM]); Vinnie Copper (SE); Ed Ford (E); Paul Hartley (E); Duncan Howie (Co-option [E]); James Hutchinson (SW); Charlotte Johnston (Co-option [WM]); Chris Manley (Co-Option [SW]); Lynsey Martin (SE);

Part Meeting: Bob Blezard (NFYFC BoM); James Eckley (NFYFC CO); Christina Evans (Fundraising Officer); John Hardman (NFYFC Treasurer); Michael Prendergast (EM); Hannah Talbot (NFYFC Vice-Chairman); Claire Worden (NFYFC Chairman)

In attendance: Kate Adams (WM); Alice Cook (E); Ed Humber (SW); Tori Morgan (WM); Julia Pointon (NFYFC Vice Chairman BoM); Caroline Trude (SW); Joanne Wyles (Agricultural and Rural Affairs Officer); Sarah Wynne (WM)

1. Welcome and introductions

RC welcomed everyone to the meeting and as it was the first meeting explained the role of the steering group and its members.

2. Apologies for absence

Chris Bateman (ex-officio[SW]); Becky Hammett (TRIG [SW]); Mike Allton (Staff Representative [WM]); Keith Forster (N); Chris Berry (SW)

3. To confirm Minutes of previous meeting

Attendees were again asked to fill in their contact details and list their expertise for in the event of JW needing to access specialist knowledge. RC enquired whether anyone had signed up as a STEM Ambassador scheme discussed at the last meeting and JW reported that Bright Crop have had little response on the NFYFC13 promotional code so far. LM discussed engagement with schools and PH also shared Norfolk's experience.

RC signed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record.

ACTION:

Promote STEM Ambassadors to membership again, perhaps with an ambassador case study.

4. Additional items for agenda

Christina Evans to talk about Prince's Trust training funding at a convenient point.

Antibiotics meeting report to be given in Industry reports section

LEAF training event to be discussed in Training and Events section

5. Princes Trust training funding application

CE presented to the group the position regarding Prince's Trust funding, previously the Prince's Trust would accept funding applications from Counties. Last year they approached NFYFC as they would prefer to do a national scheme that was more sustainable. Working with HOPS Christina has drafted a training scheme to provide recognised certificates in many skill areas, giving tractor driving as an example. These will not just be basic certificates and the training will be designed to ensure anyone attending is an outstanding candidate and there will also be the opportunity to do work experience. The funding from Prince's Trust would be for the first three years with the hope to get commercial sponsors on board once the scheme is up and running.

ACTION:

To give feedback to JW or CE if there are any forms of training you would like to see.

6. World Youth Agriculture Summit

Caroline Trude presented to the group her experiences from the World Youth Ag Summit in Canada during August 2013. The key messages being that agriculture needs to be more sustainable and we need to waste less food.

7. ARAC name change

JW presented the steering group with the results of the online survey to choose the new name for ARAC. In total 22 votes were cast, 16 (73%) for Agriculture and Rural Issues Steering Group, 2 (9%) for Rural Affairs Steering Group and 4 (18%) for Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Group. It was agreed to put forward for Council to approve the name change to Agriculture and Rural Issues Steering Group using the #YFCagri for social media and acronym AGRI.

Action:

Following Council approval all members to ensure that new name is used and to promote work of the group using #YFCAGRI on social media.
Follow up with a press release to promote the new name, hashtag and forthcoming forum at convention

8. Election for Vice Chair and NFU rep

Vinnie Copper proposed Lynsey Martin for the role of vice-chair, this was seconded by Paul Hartley. No other nominations were received and Lynsey was elected. Paul Hartley said he would consider the role of NFU representative but would like to attend a council meeting first to see what was involved. There were no other nominations so no election was made.

ACTION

PH to attend next NFU Council on AGRI's behalf

9. Area reports

9.1 East Midlands – Nothing to report

9.2 Eastern – Interest in STEM Ambassadors as the counties are hiring EDGE Field Officers to promote land based careers. Also they were not keen on changing the name of ARAC but understand the reasoning.

9.3 South East – Things going better in Kent as some school clubs which closed have reopened as junior clubs. Charles Tassall from Agrichat has invited LM to get NFYFC involved in the radio one takeover that they are doing. LM to find out date.

9.4 South West – Main issue is the flooding. JH gave out the phone number for Sedgemoor market for donations of forage. Wiltshire are organising a load of forage and EF said that Essex were also organising a load. There is also the ARAC Forum at the South West Area weekend on 15th March which will focus on new entrants into farming.

9.5 West Midlands – RC explained that they are focussing on improving communications within the region.

ACTION:

NFYFC to promote Radio 1 takeover once the date is known.

NFYFC to promote charitable work of YFC's in supporting flood victims.

10. Matching service – Steve Webster

Steve discussed over the phone the progress he has made so far on the matching service. He explained that he is slightly behind with the work but that he anticipates that it will all be finished by the deadline of the Defra Grant on 31st March. He spoke about a similar service in Ireland that has been set up and how that is funded, plus, the funding options for a UK matching service including the pros and cons of commercial funding (sponsorship). Steve confirmed that the group still has overall responsibility for the service development and that the working group already comprises 2 AGRI members – CH and DH to help feed in member views.

Action:

JW to ensure that the phase 2 work is completed and keep the steering group updated on progress.

11. NFYFC financial information

John Hardman and James Eckley entered the meeting and handed out the NFYFC end of year accounts and asked members to think about the levy increase before Council on Sunday. The group had the opportunity to quiz John on some of the costs associated with the AGRI steering group.

12. Industry representative reports

12.1 CLA – DH gave his report on the last CLA meeting he attended where they set the agenda for the year ahead as to their main focus areas. These were CAP and single farm payment, Sheep ID, industry reform, GM, agritech, abstraction licences, farming contingency fund, trailer weights and rat poison. Duncan also raised in the meeting the matching service which was well received. DH's full report is available on request

12.2 LEAF - LM gave a summary of the meeting she attended which was titled Land sparing v land sharing. The meeting looked at the demand for food and how to increase food production but also the need to look after the environment. The group had discussed the merits of all farming being ecologically sound or having some areas which were nature reserves and some allowed to be intensively farmed. LM said she was also waiting for their pollinator report. LM's full report is available on request

12.3 TRIG- JW gave the report in BH absence. That proposals had been put forward to Defra to reform tenancy law and this may be going out to consultation in the spring should Defra choose to act upon it. BH's Report is available on request

12.4 NFU- There was no representative at the last NFU Council meeting however RC had obtained notes from David Hamer and shared the presidential candidates with the room.

12.5 Antimicrobial resistance group- CM and LM said their input to the group was welcomed as young farmers are often not represented on such groups. The group had discussed that there was little confidence in farmer's records for treatments and what sensible measures could be put in place to improve this. Also how could the industry move to not routinely use antibiotics and be more responsible? The group concluded that it needed to approach and educate grassroots farmers. CT stated that

the vets she works for already hold awareness meetings and that producers should be encouraged to attend these.

13. Annual Convention

Bob Blezard entered meeting to ask for stewards for Annual Convention and handed out forms. He explained that registration on the Friday was particularly important.

14. South West TB Advisory Service – Ed Humber

EH gave a presentation from the SW TB Advisory Service on the facts behind TB, the new control measures that were introduced on the 1st January and biosecurity measures on farm that could prevent cattle coming in contact with badgers and therefore reducing incidences of TB.

ACTION:

Circulate information / web links from Ed to steering group

15. Training and Events

15.1 JW reported that the Meat for the market events had been very successful with great feedback and that NFYFC are hoping to organise another event before the end of March which will either be at Kenilworth or in the South West.

15.2 JW reported that the Netherlands study tour had sold out with 33 people now attending. Feedback from the group suggested an Autumn date for future trips might suit some people better. A visit to France or Eastern Europe might be an idea for another year.

15.3 JW reported that work had started on the 2014/15 Defra grant application and that most events would be similar to this years 13/14 with the grassland pilot continuing as an annual event. The matching service would not be in the bid this time so money could go towards a soil training and business training pilots instead. JW asked for opinions on what a soil pilot should include and what the business pilot should include and some useful feedback was received.

15.4 JW also reported NFYFC have a LEAF Speak Out Training event on 9th March at the Quality Hotel limited to 14 places, with priority given to office holders.

Action:

NFYFC to publicise members attendance on Holland study tour with thanks to Defra.

JW to complete Defra Grant application and draw on members of the group for any further ideas.

JW to look into opportunities for a study tour to France or Eastern Europe.

16. Oxford Farming Conference/ Oxford Real Farming Conference

RC reported that he had attended both conferences and although very different had enjoyed both. Rebecca Watkins (Herefordshire YFC) represented YFC at ORFC in a debate about family farming. RC suggested that we could engage more with the ORFC in future years as NFYFC were not well represented in many relevant conversations there. At the OFC there was a lot of interest in the future of farming, young people and the use of the media. DH was congratulated for winning his debate and spoke about his experience.

17. CEJA

CM explained the work of CEJA and the working group that sits within AGRI to coordinate NFYFC's involvement, and mentioned that this group had met shortly before the AGRI meeting to discuss NFYFC's draft CEJA strategy.

CM also explained that recently CEJA activity has calmed down because the CAP is now with the member state Governments to implement. CM and two other members are visiting Finland this week to attend a seminar and working group meeting where CEJA are making a declaration about the importance of investing in young farmers. CM also reported on other activities undertaken by the CEJA reps such as the AgrichatUK debate and meeting George Eustice. He also discussed the importance of looking after the sponsors Mole Valley and HOPS and encouraged other members to attend CEJA events when the opportunities arise.

Action:

JW and CEJA reps to complete strategy document for NFYFC involvement in CEJA.

18. Common Agriculture Policy Announcement

JW handed out copies of a short paper summarising the latest CAP announcement from 19th December and stated that we are still waiting to hear the details of the young farmers scheme and rural development programme.

ACTION

JW to provide a summary when further announcements are made.

19. ARAC Manifesto

RC discussed ideas for a theme for 2014 to focus the steering groups work. The theme for the Forum is Agri-technology. RC suggested that the steering group should focus on three main areas:

- Improving internal communications, including giving the AGRI –links people more information and a clear job role, ensuring a good attendance of area representatives and increasing the use of social media, for example by setting up a group on facebook for steering group members.
- Empowering grass-roots members to have a voice on agriculture and rural issues, to speak out in their local communities, local press and to their MPs.
- Focus and communicate on topical themes throughout the year which could include lambing, harvest and the current flooding issues, or more serious topics

like GM, food wastage and EID. Other ideas suggested from the floor were making videos or using Vlogging to promote our activities and having a twitter chat for the launch of #YFCagri It was suggested to do a twitter chat on 9th March following the LEAF Speak Out Training to promote the groups “rebrand”, themes for the year and the forum.

These main areas were agreed by the group and a programme of activities will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

Actions:

- JW and RC to plan a programme of activities for the year ahead based around these themes and involve the group in its development
- JW to set up twitter chat.
- JW Look for any previous policy documents.
- JW develop case study on flooded farm with Cheryl Liddle and promote positive contributions from YFCs.
- JW to prepare briefings for Agri-linkspersons.
- JW to set up a facebook group

21. AGRI Forum

The forum plan document was circulated and discussed. Suggestions were that a poster be made to insert in County Magazines, that invites be sent to industry representatives, there be some sort of prize on offer to someone that attends. JW reported that one speaker had been booked but waiting to hear back from two others. Suggested that if CEJA president can attend he become one of the speakers looking at agri-technology on a European level.

Actions:

- JW to continue with work based on plan and further suggestions.

22. Health and Safety

RC explained that we have Health and Safety as part of the agenda at every meeting and some of the work we have done in the past. There were no reports this meeting.

23. Any Other Business

PH reported that he had heard back from his MP following the lobbying letter and there was general positive feedback from the room for approaching your MP..

JW read a message that had been received on facebook from someone based in London who is interested in linking up with NFYFC on urban farming. This was discussed and the suggestions from the room were that they could link up with the new Young Farmers Club in London, be invited to the ARAC Forum and that they get involved with the Oxford Real Farming Conference.

Drop Box – It was agreed that a drop box folder be created for AGRI files to be shared among steering group members.

Guest speakers for next meeting were discussed and suggestions included Simon Haley from AgrichatUK and also a representative from the Nuffield Scholarships in preparation for their July application deadline.

The procedure for the Chairman responding quickly to questions from the media was also discussed and JE confirmed that the Chairman was able to respond on behalf of NFYFC.

Action:

- JW to respond to Urban Farming request
- JW to create YFC AGRI drop box and invite members.

22. Date of next meeting and close

RC thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting is **Saturday 28th June 2014**

SIGNED.....

DATED.....