



AGRI Steering Group – Saturday 24 October at 1.30pm Quality Hotel, Birmingham  
Road, Allesley, Coventry, CV5 9BA

**Chairman: Lynsey Martin (Kent)**

**Vice-chairman: Sam Dilcock (Yorkshire)**

**Present:** Lynsey Martin (Chair [SE]); Sam Dilcock (Vice-Chair [N]); Russell Carrington (ex Officio[WM]); James Hutchinson (SW); Caroline Trude (SW); Kate Wainwright (EM); William Wright (EM); Harriet Wilson (WM); Becky Heal (TRIG Rep [SW]); Richard Carruthers (N); Ed Ford (E); Gerald Norman (SW); Charlotte Johnston (WM); Danielle McNulty (SW); Jock Muirhead (SW); Cat Ede (SW); Claire Bellew (SW).

**Part Meeting:** James Eckley (NFYFC CEO); Frank Chester (NFYFC Chair BoM) Hannah Talbot (NFYFC Chair); Chris Manley (NFYFC Vice-Chair); Jess Townson (NFYFC Vice-Chair) Christina Evans (Fundraising Officer); Julia Pointon (NFYFC Vice Chairman BoM); Sam Conway (NFYFC Comms Officer)

**In attendance:** Sarah Palmer (Agricultural and Rural Issues Officer)

### 1. Welcome and introductions

LM welcomed all present and introductions followed.

### 2. Apologies for absence

William Wright, Ant Bosen, Cat Vaughn, Richard Bower (NFU Next Generation Forum).

### 3. To confirm Minutes of previous meeting

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

### 4. To receive any additional items for the agenda

Additional items for AOB – Innovation Farmers, RC.

### 5. Area reports and correspondence

5.1. SW – CT reported activity regarding: dairy crisis, milk protests and related challenges; bTB; farm visits and farm business development competition (which included good tenancy training). Positive input to county shows and involvement with Countryfile filming (Rural Plus campaign).

5.2. E A– EF reported positive feedback from the NFYFC Walk the Wool Chain attended by Bedfordshire, request for farm safety training to include grain store safety, working with Cambridgeshire Rural Policing team which has received cut-backs. Noted congratulations and thanks to LM for her considerable action and representation of YFC at dairy industry meetings and events.

5.3. EM– KW highlighted the serious issue of falling lamb prices (particularly in the Uplands) as well as other commodity price lows and requested that these could be incorporated into future industry meetings. Discussion regarding ways of addressing the problem: AGRI to propose list of sector reps for NFU to call upon for media interviews and NFU will provide media training; CM commented on minimum price contract and the need for young farmers to think of innovative solutions. Further discussion regarding marketing and LM alluded to industry discussions. The email circulation from NFYFC during the summer and its consequent negative effect on YFC members was noted. Following discussion, it was agreed that a recommendation should be made for consultation with relevant reps before issuing future guidelines/statements.

5.4. NA–SD reported feedback from members regarding:

-AGRI Forum: positive response for hog roast, Kuhn's input/sponsorship and start time;

-problems regarding rural crime impacted by low numbers of police. Therefore promotion of CCTV to counteract poaching/lamping problems – particularly with quad bike use. Engaging with police at a local level

-abuse of footpaths regarding dogs and fly-tipping

-sourcing land

-drop in commodity prices and manipulation of stats by media regarding falling input prices

-continue with variety of methods for communication

-work with colleges for training venues

-considerations for farm safety to include: dust in grain stores and recommendation for employers to provide masks (and for slurry store work); check workers' safety when lone working by regular contact; consideration when working in public places and advising workers on appropriate use of machinery in such cases; safe work shop practice

#### Correspondence

EXPO Milan – LM attended and gave feedback

HighGround – discussion re further exploration of John Hardman's suggestion to work with military charity HighGround.

**Actions:**

- SP to pursue introductory meeting with HighGround
- SP to send agreed sector reps to NFU
- LM/All to highlight all sector price issues in future industry meetings

**6. Industry rep reports**

- 7.1. CLA– No report from TW but future meetings scheduled.
- 7.2. LEAF– EF reported a record year for Open Farm Sunday attendance: 1,400 farms, 10,000 helpers, 1.6 million visitors since 2006 and 81% of visitors had learnt something. Four of the farms featured in the recent BBC Harvest programmes were LEAF farms. LEAF's *Simply Sustainable Biodiversity* booklet has been launched and posted on the AGRI Facebook page. LEAF work includes Speak Out, support for Countryside Classroom and a forthcoming LEAF conference. (Discussion followed regarding industry sustainability and a whole industry approach.)
- 7.3 TRIG – Recent correspondence from TRIG circulated re RICS Agricultural Arbitrator Application Fee Increase. BH referred to work before the general election which included updating of Agricultural Holdings Act legislation, landlord/tenant responsibility. There are outstanding matters from the Government's Future of Farming Review that the committee could not yet agree on.
- 7.4 NFU-JH highlighted issues following the last NFU Council meeting:
  - new 'Why Farming Matters' primary school booklet launched (highlighted on AGRI Facebook pages and downloadable) at the Conservative Party Fringe meeting by Defra Secretary of State, Liz Truss;
  - the dairy crisis/industry meetings attended by LM - NFU acknowledged YFC presence in the media during this time;
  - statement from RPA's Mark Grimshaw - "on track with BPS payments, but possible delay to common land payments and contingency plans". (Discussion amongst group members re conflicting information from other sources and for need to be vigilant re mental health/work with FCN to pre-empt potential consequences of late payments/low commodity prices. Group acknowledged the exemplary work from FCN and RABI and recommended support from Defra, encouraged members to get involved with FCN or RABI at regional or country level. CT working closely with both and highlighted importance of helping the older generation and the charities' advice on issues such as tax credits. There is an open invitation to both charities to attend AGRI Forum 2016);
  - NFU DG has resigned and position to be filled;
  - £15,000 budgeted for CEJA;
  - bTB cull roll-out;
  - JH to attend forthcoming NFU Tenant Farmers' Conference and Next Generation Forum event;
  - NFU lobbying to encourage procurement of British produce by MoD, NHS and food processors;
  - Future retailer meetings (LM to attend).

**Actions:**

- JH to attend NFU Tenant Farmers' Conference and Next Generation Forum event
- SP to continue dialogue with FCN

**8. 'MyChainReaction'**

Professor Jan Godsell (University of Warwick, WMG) contacted SP whilst in former post at Warwick Business School. Jan's research project regarding supply chains is relevant for YFC members to contribute information, stories of their part in an agricultural/food supply chain. Research findings will be presented to government department BIS. Prof Godsell to present to Council.

**Actions:**

- All to encourage YFC involvement

**9. NFU Next Generation Forum**

CM, LM and SP met with NFU Next Generation Forum Chair and Vice-Chair and NFU staff member on 9.9.2015 to discuss respective work and opportunities for future collaboration. Areas for collaboration included:

- Defra 25 year plan
- CEJA
- visits and study tours
- respective organisation meetings

SD agreed joint-work and CEJA representation would strengthen young farmers' voices nationally and in Europe. JH recommended that members strengthened contact with NFU regional reps. The steering group welcomed future collaboration.

(Forthcoming NFYFC R&R campaign discussed – themed days, agriculture first day. Sam Conway joined the group to explain the campaign. The group was encouraged to share agriculture-related activity. CT to attend next St George's House consultation in 2016.)

**Actions:**

- All to continue to work collaboratively with NFU Next Generation Forum
- CT to attend St George's House consultation

**10. Defra 25 Year Plan**

It was agreed that the committee welcomed the opportunity to consider recommendations to add to the stakeholder précis from Defra stakeholder meetings during the summer. Some questions were posed and discussed, with an agreement that a paper would be written for further input and submitted to Defra. Discussion points included:

- Global trading** -Trade in Europe vs trade with other countries/continents: disadvantage of export tariff; favourable exporting distance from Europe compared with distance from east to west within some countries; haulage costs vs import costs. Equal benefits and disadvantages of global trading.



**-Land-based education**-Discussed in both AgriSkills and AHDB Next Generation Group – need for vocational qualifications and lack of government support for A level subject could detrimentally affect the uptake of apprenticeships.

**-Gaps in SME training**-Need for general business training including understanding contracts and HR. Benefits of learning from other industries. Consideration for new entrants who are hoping to be employed in agriculture but do not currently meet the funding criteria creates more barriers for new entrants. Young people are currently working outside the industry whilst building up capital to enter the industry and need training opportunities. Funding for training remains an issue and suggestions for ‘Loan for training funding/Enterprise Investment’ scheme. Due to time restriction of the meeting, it was suggested that SP devise a discussion document from feedback to date, circulate and continue to consult with members. Defra has advised of a proposed next generation discussion group for the 25 Year Plan in November.

LM highlighted her part in the forthcoming EU Brexit debate and discussion followed regarding pros and cons for in/out Europe, particularly from a young farmer perspective which included: successful small enterprises without subsidies; farm assurance; scientific evidence-based approach for regulation; self-analysis from Europe; rules and regulations that hold back young farmers; access to technology.

**Actions:**

SP to collate input to date and prepare draft discussion paper for circulation and development

LM to gather further feedback from members before the Brexit debate

All to feedback to LM and to contribute to discussion paper

### 11. Training & Events

11.1. Update from Christina Evans, Fundraising

11.2. Defra grant - no decision announced yet but Kuhn has renewed sponsorship for AGRI.

11.3 Jonathan Billings Trust - a 5-year, £1.5 million agricultural training and skills project that will incorporate staff and member training and include additional relevant training such as leadership, food hygiene, H&S and cash management. Aims to help YFC members' career prospects and will include a project manager. KW discussed the issue of obtaining Prince's Countryside Funding and the difficulty in completing the required spend.

11.4. Savills/Innovation for Agriculture - an offer has been received from Savills for support in a dedicated project – possible tenancy/business guide supported by NatWest and training day in London. SP and CE to continue to develop. NFFFC supported a funding bid from Innovation for Agriculture to deliver a 24 month training plan of training – soils and precision livestock events.

**Actions:**

CE and SP to continue development

### 12. Farm Safety and CropTec

Waiting to be advised by JE on date and venue of future HSE Shad.

SD and MB to present at CropTec regarding career promotion – (sprayer operator, skills & CPD and career paths.)

**Actions:**

JE to advise on training date and venue

SD and NB to speak at CropTec

### 13. AGRI Forum 2016

Suggestions from SD and HW for different venues/separate event for the AGRI Forum.

Feedback from AGRI Forum referred to and result of the group's consideration:

Theme: *Living for today – striving for tomorrow!* Chaired by Sam Dilcock. Possible speakers: Matt Naylor; Alan Jagoe; Emma Gray; Jane King; Prof Jan Godsell. It was decided to provide a 'warm up' for the audience and to approach James Chapman and James Price. Sponsorship from Kuhn, exhibitors to include AHDB, sponsors and appropriate industry exhibitors. Locally- sourced bacon rolls.

**Actions:**

SP and CE to liaise re organisation

All to help encourage members to attend, spread word of AGRI Forum and to help with organising the event in May

### 14. Kuhn Dream Machine Competition

Following a meeting with Kuhn in September, CE explained commitment to sponsor's plans and timeline. The competition will go ahead as planned and CE will work with SD to further develop rules for publicising the direct entry competition.

**Actions:**

CE and SD to work with Kuhn for launch at AGRI Forum

### 15AOB

Report from RC and CT re Matching Service pilot launch hosted by Lord Curry at House of Lords. The pilot will most likely be situated in the South West and NFFFC will continue to support the initiative. The Land Partnerships handbook is now available and NFFFC holds further copies. RC and CT will represent NFFFC on Fresh Start matching service pilot steering group meetings.

RC gave a presentation on Innovative Farmers and explained the offer of discounted YFC membership and the donation of its first year's fees to NFYFC  
SD discussed support for NFU's consultation on trailer weights and to discuss with Next Generation reps.  
JE advised that AGRI budget is forecast to break even including the new CEJA spend.  
Request for JM and AM to be co-opted to AGRI in February were agreed.

**Actions:**

RC and CT to attend future Fresh Start advisory meetings  
CE to liaise with Innovative Farmers

**19. Date of next meeting and close**

LM thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 6.52 pm. Date of the next meeting is **Saturday 20 February 2016**

SIGNED.....

DATED.....