



AGRI Steering Group – Saturday 20 February 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[Herefordshire]); James Hutchinson (SW); Caroline Trude (Devon); Harriet Wilson (WM); Becky Heal (TRIG Rep [Devon]); Ed Ford (E); Gerald Norman (E); Jock Muirhead (Somerset); Claire Bellew (SW); Richard Bower (NFU Next Generation Forum); Sian Pritchard (KUHN); Sarah Dunsby (WM); Catherine Ede (Cornwall); Carys Vaughan (Wales); Hew Willett (Essex); Jordan Shynn (Essex); Colin Poore (SE); David Fellows (Worcestershire [WM President]); Charlotte Middlebrook (Yorkshire); Steve Rogers (Herefordshire); Joshua Fincham (Somerset); Rachel Kendal (East Riding); Tom Wells (E)

Part Meeting: James Eckley (NFYFC CEO); Chris Manley (NFYFC Vice-Chair); Jess Townson (NFYFC Vice-Chair) Christina Evans (Fundraising 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

Kate Wainwright (EM); Richard Carruthers (N); Charlotte Johnston (co-option CEJA rep); Marys Ioan (Wales); Julia Pointon (BoM).

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: Fresh Start Land Enterprise, RC; Farmers For Action Proposed March in London-to discuss three priorities of consideration for those who decide to take part; request for NFYFC to support BVDFree campaign; input from NFYFC to BWMB stand at the NSA event in July and letter from CJ to BoM.

5. Area reports and correspondence

5.1. E A– EF reported on a successful East of England young farmers' discussion group Cultiv8. GN queried the aforementioned march. Support for Open Farm Sunday. Involvement at Cereals via request for YFC to join Aberystwyth University stand.

5.3. SE-LM working closely with South East Agricultural Societies

5.4. Wales (CV) A successful Agri Conference was held on 30 January and pleased that LM and JH attended. Obtained grant from British Science week. Currently developing a beef scheme for YFC with Dunbia/Sainsbury's as well as a forage scheme. Foody Friday-promoting Welsh beef & lamb and setting up new businesses. Sponsorship obtained for purple tractor to celebrate Wales YFC 80th Anniversary.

5.5 NA – SD commented on reaction to poor commodity prices. Young business people want to invest but keep overheads down, members contributing to radio programmes.

5.6 SW (CT) Agri Forum at SW Area weekend on 5 March entitled 'Red Tape and Red Tractors'. Guest speakers include: Neil Parish MP; Julie Edwards; Melanie Sykes and Nicola Lockheart. Members discussing late BPS payments and bTB. Somerset and Devon FYFC have AGRI meetings. Cornwall were successful in securing a Prince's Countryside Fund bid of £40,000, 25% for training. Members make appearances on local radio discussing farming issues and counties will endeavour to encourage members to take up training.

Include environmental awareness and apprenticeship in AGRI manifesto

Correspondence

Highlighted in additional items for the agenda.

Actions:

All to encourage the uptake of training

SP to add points to manifesto

6. Industry rep reports

7.1. CLA– TW explained his position on the CLA Agriculture and Land Use Committee. He attended his last meeting on 25 January and subjects included: the implementation of greening measures; consideration of grass as a crop under the three crop rule; CLA lobbying on abstraction regulation; recent COP21 Sustainable Innovation Forum in Paris and the subsequent progress for agriculture. Opportunities for agri-forestry in Pillar 2 (currently trees are being excluded from BPS areas), possible grant for establishment of woodland, RPA feedback and cash flow issues. (Majority of farmers in AGRI had not yet been paid. Evidence to be collected before meeting with Minister.) Members pressed for a need for more accountability from RPA. The Farm Recovery Fund was discussed and the 'use or lose' concern regarding

the Farm Advice Service. bTB, research from Professor Liz Wellington and finally the value and effectiveness of AHDB.

7.2. LEAF– EF gave an overview of the LEAF Conference held in November which featured Dame Prof Anne Glover as key speaker, Tom Heap, Meurig Raymond and Jake Freestone. Leaflets available for promotion of Open Farm Sunday, encouragement for YFC members to help with farms who are participating and NFYFC Youth Forum have a project to help promote the day. #morethantractors leaflets available to hand out to the public.

7.3 TRIG – BH gave an explanation of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group for the benefit of new members. Previous work included dispute resolution and amendments to the Agricultural Holdings Act.

7.4 NFU-JH read out his paper on recent NFU Council meetings and conferences attended and his more recent work with the NFU Next Generation Forum. He also gave a presentation in conjunction with Richard Bower (NFU Next Generation) on the last NFU Next Generation study tour and meetings. (A paper was circulated to the steering group prior to the meeting.)

JM introduced a suggestion of ensuring that England joined in with the Scottish and Welsh YFC work of working with industry to initiate a dedicated selling scheme for YFC produce. SD and HW supported the notion of investigating working with Dunbia and Wales YFC and to include fresh fruit and vegetables.

Actions:

JH to continue the relationship with Next Generation Forum

SP to start dialogue with Wales YFC and Dunbia

All industry reps to continue reporting back for the benefit of YFC members

8. NFU Next Generation

RB gave an overview of the NFU Next Generation Forum. Last year focussed on 2020, visited all NFU policy boards and now discussing Defra's 25 Year Plan. LM and JH joined the NFU Next Generation Forum meeting in November and JH has continued to attend meetings and study tours. RH looking forward to being involved with CEJA work and striving for agricultural competitiveness. JH shared detail of visits and attendance.

Actions:

SP to finalise arrangements with NFU re CEJA

9. KUHN/Dream Machine

Sian Prichard gave background of her role and sponsorship of AGRI. The KUHN video was played and the opportunity for further advertising of YFC events on KUHN TV was discussed. CE had previously proposed designing a template for YFC county staff/members to use and to advertise on NFYFC website. LM thanked SP for the support from KUHN and looked forward to future work together.

SD explained the Dream Machine competition which asked members to submit a concept for design (for a new piece of machinery or to enhance an existing one) and its various categories. Closing date April 1 and a request for AGRI members to promote to members. Excellent media coverage to date.

Actions:

CE to create template and further publicity for KUHN TV

SP to send details of competition to HE Wales YFC

10. Elections

CM joined the steering group for elections, results of which are as follows:

Chariman: Sam Dilcock

Proposer: Seconder

HW: EF

Vice Chair: Harriet Wilson (won on votes)

(JH and HW were proposed by TW and CV and SD and S-JD respectively)

Co-options:

Jock Muirhead

Proposer: Seconder

EF: SD

Charlotte Middlebrook

Proposer: Seconder

SD: EF

Charlotte Johnston

Proposer: Seconder

HW: JH

CEJA:

Charlotte Johnston

Proposer: Seconder

SD: JH

Tom Wells

Proposer: Seconder

JH: HW

Catherine Bennett

Proposer: Seconder

LM: CV

NFU: James Hutchinson

Proposer: Seconder

NFU Deputy: Harriet Wilson

Proposer: Seconder

LM: SD

CLA: Tom Wells

Proposer: Seconder

SD EF
LEAF: Lynsey Martin
Proposer Seconder
HW TW
LEAF Deputy: Ed Ford
Proposer Seconder
GN JH
TRIG: Becky Heal
Proposer Seconder
CT LM
Fresh Start Land Enterprise: Russell Carrington and Caroline Trude
Proposer Seconder
LM EF

Actions:

SD to report back to Council

11. CEJA /Fresh Start Land Enterprise

Meeting chaired by newly-elected AGRI Chair SD.

11.1 CJ' s paper had been circulated to the committee re the last working group meeting and TW highlighted his work as expert for CDG arable and sugar meeting. The group awaits the BoM decision on the amended MoU for future CEJA membership.

11.2 A discussion re expectations for new entrants/first generation farmers for RC's advisory meeting on 22 February and further questions would be published on Facebook following the meeting. Disconcerting that as yet no support via RDP and young farmers top-up not helpful for those without land. It was noted that there was support in the industry for working without subsidies.

Questions posed to the group from CEJA were amalgamated with the discussion responses which would be fed back to various audiences:

- How has the young farmer top-up been implemented in England and Wales?
- How many young farmers are benefitting from it?
- How much of the 2% is being dedicated to young farmers?
- Are those benefitting from it, happy with it?
- What changes would you make to it if you could?
- Is England and Wales providing young farmers with any form of support within its Rural Development Programme(s)?
 - If so, what measures?
 - How much budget is being dedicated to this?
- How many young farmers are benefitting from these and to what extent?
- Are England and Wales dedicating any other CAP measures/budget to young farmers?

Response from Defra for England:

- Defra did provide the Young Farmers top-up in England.
- Take up of the payment for 2015 was lower than anticipated and is running at about 1,750 applications. This figure will change slightly as the last of the BPS applications 2015 are verified and finalised. At this kind of level Defra does not foresee using all of the 2% allocation from the National Reserve.
- Defra has not assessed whether young farmers are happy with it, it would be useful to hear any feedback from young farmers. Defra has heard from the NFU that the scheme has been welcomed, and that young farmers are including it in their business planning.
- Defra does not anticipate making any changes to the scheme.
- Defra as yet are not making any payments to young farmers as part of RDPE.

Defra has intimated (from stakeholder consultation events) themes for its soon-to-be published 25 Year Plan. Within these themes include:

- the importance of training and continued professional development for optimising business growth and future market opportunities
- an aim to treble the number (and improve the quality) of apprenticeships. This training could be supported under RDPE
- promotion of share farming and franchise opportunities
- Working with UKTI
- support for new collaborative ventures- focused on young farmers and new entrants – and opportunities for a dairy futures market.

Additional feedback from YFC members:

- Young farmer top-up – due to late BPS payments from Defra, it may be difficult to assess impact at this stage. Whilst understanding the reason behind the top-up payment, there are new entrants and first generation farmers who still feel support is lacking. (refer to feedback re RDPE) This has led to a feeling that there should be more support via Pillar 2
- It was felt that bureaucracy was restricting farming progress
- Need for more land to be released for new entrants.

Actions:

SP to feed back further information to CEJA and for use in future meetings.

12. Defra 25 Year Plan and House of Lords Oral evidence/Defra Grant and Innovation for Farmers

12.1 LM, EF, HW and RB had attended the Defra Next Generation event at Harper Adams for input to the Defra 25 Year Plan consultation. SP had chaired a discussion group and the event was well-attended and gave members a good opportunity to discuss concerns, ideas and next generation issues with the Defra team. The launch of



the plan is imminent and future NFYFC work supported by the Defra grant will work to the current themes. Themes for the 2016/17 NFYFC grant have been discussed and a proposal is currently being developed. SP advised of events that were being developed/delivered in the time remaining for the 2015/16 grant which include Council leadership training, an arable precision farming event with GWCT and preparatory work for new training/event pilots.

LM gave evidence with the TFA at a House of Lords' committee on price volatility and SD observed. Positive experience and LM commented on the eagerness of the committee to ask questions and listen to pertinent points of concern.

JE (COO) joined the group to discuss the AGRI budget which was circulated.

SP referred to paper 24c-5-RASE and the successful bid from Innovation for Agriculture supported by NFYFC to the Prince's Countryside Fund for future precision livestock events. The first three events will be held in June and SP is working with CJ on publicity.

Actions:

SP and all to continue to liaise/work with Defra

All-arable precision farming event takes place on 30 March-sign up to attend and encourage others to do so

SP and CJ to publicise and deliver IfA precision livestock events

13. AGRI Forum 2016

Theme: *Living for today – striving for tomorrow!* Chaired by Sam Dilcock. Confirmed speakers: Matt Naylor; Alan Jagoe; Prof Jan Godsell. LM and James Chapman to provide a 'warm up' for the audience. An additional Brexit debate following the main debate and co-ordinated by EurActiv -'Is the reformed CAP the future of farming? Have your say!'. Sponsorship from KUHN, promotional work in progress and a list of exhibitors discussed. Industry guests will be invited. AGRI group to act as stewards and to encourage county members to attend the event. Further details will be circulated to the group and link representatives.

Actions:

SP and NFYFC to develop and deliver AGRI Forum

SP to continue to liaise with EurActiv

All to help encourage members to attend, spread word of AGRI Forum and to help with organising the event on 7 May.

14.AOB

- Confirmation of support for BVDFree campaign.
- Background and update from RC re NFYFC research on matching service and the continued work from Fresh Start Land Enterprise. Discussed issues for the forthcoming FSLE meeting for AGRI feedback which included: upper age limit for participants of the pilot matching service; criteria for joining (in business already or not, new entrants or those with a foot on the ladder); necessary experience and ability to prepare and work to a business plan for inclusion in application process; inclusion of joint ventures and mentoring; venue for a pilot scheme; use of all available communication channels. An age range of up to 35 years old was agreed.
- EF agreed to help organise an Eastern Area focus group for a new land app.
- SP had made provisional arrangements for a visit to NFU Westminster office and House of Commons. AGRI agreed they would like to visit to take place.
- CT reported on recent St George's House consultation and posed the question for AGRI 'what would you most like to change/see happen in agriculture'. Answers will be incorporated into feedback for various meetings/working groups and were used as a benchmark for the consultation's conclusions.
- The FFA march in London was discussed and it was agreed that if YFC members chose to participate, they should be given some constructive advice which included:
 - Good behaviour as the media will be present and targeting young farmers in particular
 - Principles of young farmers – hard-working, stewards of the countryside who wish to be paid fairly for their work
 - Educating ourselves as an industry to ensure that we have taken steps to manage times of low prices. Educating our consumers and retailers on the value of our products
 - Comply with the law regarding march restrictions
- A letter from CJ was read out by TW which had been sent to the BoM and would be reported back to Council. The group acknowledged the right of personal views to be voiced by a member but that this was not a discussion topic for AGRI.

Actions:

RC to feedback points to meeting on 22 February

EF to liaise via Land App focus group

SP to organise visit to NFU & HoC

All to advise YFC members on behaviour if they decide to take part in the FFA march

19. Date of next meeting and close

SD thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.35pm. Date of the next meeting is **Saturday 25 June 2016**

SIGNED.....

DATED.....