AGRI 2019

Welcome to a new AGRI year!

Day two of 2019 and AGRI was on the front foot sharing a fringe event at the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) with the Rural Youth Project. Sponsored by KUHN, we posed the deliberately controversial question “Will there be a next generation?” and proved to a packed room of industry representatives, OFC scholars, emerging leaders, politicians and young farmers that there would be.

It was a great opportunity to share the AGRI work and the lead-up to both the Agriculture Bill and Brexit, but also to share with confidence the hopes, concerns and needs of young people who live and work in rural areas. Young farmers shared their personal and professional experiences of entering and remaining in the industry and Radnor YFC’s video made it very clear what Welsh young farmers wanted for their future.

The one certainty for the future is that change is happening. The importance of all farming and rural community networks is to be strong and resourceful to help spread information, support, opportunities and to provide stability in uncertain times.

Siân Pritchard is managing director of KUHN Farm Machinery and an active supporter of NFYFC AGRI. YFC members James Hutchinson, Kate Bennett and Anna Jones are part of Siân’s UK team. Look out for news of KUHN at shows and events throughout the year.

KUHN supports the AGRI steering group and its various activities, hosts YFC meetings and visits and will advertise your YFC events in local UK dealerships.
It’s a new AGRI year and hopefully we can all keep ourselves cheerful and prepared for what promises to be an unconventional time ahead!

With a new NFYFC strategy in the making - and Brexit - we’re talking about change but delivering pilot events to gain some feedback, as well as delivering the tried and trusted events that we know will stand the test of time and finance.

Starting with the joint Oxford Farming Conference fringe event, AGRI shared messages of its work to the industry and young farmers as well as with YFC county staff at their January conference. The first pilot regional AGRI event - Take Control of your Future - took place in Derbyshire and gave young farmers, conservationists, Defra and industry representatives a chance to discuss what’s needed and wanted in a post-Brexit farming future.

We’ll be working with other YFC areas to help develop and promote future events and continue to bang the drum at a variety of places to represent your future farming and rural voice.

There’s lots of training, events, courses, videos and online guides available from the NFYFC website to help make 2019 a successful YFC year.

David Goodwin
NFYFC AGRI Chair 2019-20
Questions for YFCs

We’ve been asking YFC members what they’d like to see in future NFYFC strategy decisions, so a few questions for consideration:

• What are the 5-10 most important rural and agricultural topics for the members you represent?

• Please advise on visits/meetings that you and your members consider important for your rural and agricultural future

• Do you agree with the current AGRI work?
  - Future farming and rural considerations for the next generation - research, national representation on industry and government groups
  - Events, training, industry & government liaison, partnerships, PR and communication.

Send your thoughts and answers to David Goodwin or Sarah Palmer and we’ll make sure that these are shared with the NFYFC strategy group.

Exit from the EU

NFYFC is sharing materials developed by the UK Government to help businesses prepare for all scenarios following our exit from the EU.

(If there’s anything that you are unsure of regarding what’s happening, or what the AGRI position paper stance is, you can have a quick catch-up here.)

As part of this on-going communication, the Government has prepared leaflets and short videos. These focus on traders preparing for a no-deal EU Exit at the UK Border (if this situation were to arise) and all sign-post clearly to detailed information available at www.gov.uk/euexit. They include high-level context, audience-specific checklists and sources of further information.

You can read details within the leaflet or click here for a link to a short video on YouTube which covers the same content.

It would be great if you could help share these materials with everyone.
AGRI travelled to Derbyshire in February and hosted a new pilot event at Bakewell market – a mini-conference comprising workshops, speakers and conservation conversation and debate, topped off with a farm visit to the Chatsworth Estate.

"2019 was not going to be ‘a business-as-usual’ year and we needed to try out new events," said Derbyshire’s co-opted AGRI member Kate Wainwright. "As a partner of a rural accountancy business, I base myself at Bakewell market one day a week to see clients, so thought it would be a great opportunity to hold a pilot regional event. The aim was for YFC members to meet and discuss future farming and rural topics. With a range of workshops, discussion and debate we could get together to enjoy some food, drink and a farm walk."

Guest speakers were Rosie East from Defra’s ELM - Environmental Land Management (scheme design team); David Howlett, Chatsworth Estate farm manager; Ben Thorley, a Derbyshire young farmer and new entrant as well as Warwickshire young farmer; David Goodwin, a partner in his family tenanted mixed farm; A Focus on Nature’s chair Peter Cooper and NFU’s regional director Gordon Corner. They led some animated and constructive discussion considering a range of questions with YFC members who took part in all of the five workshops. Considerations included:

• what should be invested in our environmental future?
• will future agri-schemes be fit for purpose?
• how do we promote sustainable ‘conservation agriculture’ to our future funders - the tax-payer?
• how important is food security and are farmers doing enough to explain their part in maintaining the environment whilst producing food?
• who should pay for our environment and wildlife?
• how important is food security?

Young farmers questioned if landlords might be lowering rents following the removal of the Basic Payment System (BPS). The future Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme could be key to answering that question and delegates welcomed the opportunity to have initial discussions with Rosie East from Defra’s ELM scheme design team. A message came across loud and clear that a culture and attitude change is needed for a future business climate and career incentives, as well as investment for further efficiency. Grant schemes are welcome and YFC certainly helps with many of the skills needed for careers.

There’s certainly room for more ambassadors but, equally, is this yet another ask for farmers who are already hard-pushed? We’re all responsible for educating, marketing and providing factual messages, but let’s find people who are good at it and get behind it.

Do we really understand our consumers enough and what induces them to shop and share? There’s room for innovation in marketing and the positive use of social media could play an integral part in both informing and selling. Coupled with the necessary data to prove carbon footprint and carbon sequestration, we would have a more positive story to tell.

"Demonstrating a willingness to collaborate with other organisations helps us to understand different perspectives and ensure we ask ourselves those important questions that we sometimes take for granted. Inter-generational discussion is key, as are the discussions we have with Defra and industry, as we’re all in this together. We face a time of change and we want to play a part in contributing our ideas and practical concerns. The debate panel agreed that we need proof of our industry’s carbon sequestration and some immediate practical advice of ‘back to basics of the carbon cycle’ is a must,” said AGRI vice chair David Goodwin.

Chatsworth Estate farm manager David Howlett pointed out that as an industry we’re not very good at selling the positive environment story that reflects farmers’ valuable contribution. David gave a guided tour of Dunsa Farm on Sunday morning to explain and show delegates his high welfare cattle and sheep systems and the farmland and moorland surrounding Chatsworth used for grazing. A system that comprises 200 pedigree Limousin cows, 50 pedigree Luing cows, 30 pedigree Hereford cows, 2,000 North of England mule sheep, 500 Swaledale and 800 Lleyn sheep. With a final destination of the renowned Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop, the field to fork story ended on a high note.
YFC Update

Oxford Farming Conference Fringe Event

The next generation of farmers came out in force to support their place in the industry at the NFYFC’s and Rural Youth Project’s Fringe event at the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) in January.

Young farmers from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, including OFC scholar Lee Pritchard, a livestock farmer from Glamorgan, shared their stories about the challenges involved in progressing a career in the industry today.

Lee said: “The NFYFC fringe event opened my eyes to just how bright our future is when you saw how full the room was with people - and not just young people - wanting to see the younger generation getting on.”

Opening the session, KUHN’s Siân Pritchard emphasised her pride in the industry, the career opportunities available and KUHN’s commitment to supporting young farmers.

Wales YFC’s Rural Affairs Conference

Wales YFC members embraced change to adapt to new market trends at the fourth Rural Affairs Conference organised by Wales YFC and CCF (Clynderwen and Cardiganshire Farmers).

Six inspirational speakers inspired members to become innovators of change within the agriculture industry at January’s marketing-themed conference held at the Royal Welsh Showground.

Key marketing themes for future market trends and new agriculture adaptations helped highlight the opportunities for young farmers to increase efficiency in their agricultural enterprises.

The line-up of speakers featured a host of some of the UK’s inspiring farmers, award winners, mentors and market researchers including: Rob Cumine from Natural Wagyu; Pelcomb Farm’s Michael Smith; 2017 Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year winners Matt and Pip Smith; Rhug Estate Farm Manager Gareth Jones; Levercliff’s Mark Grant; and AHDB’s Senior Consumer Insight Analyst Susie Stannard.

Farming Connect’s Venture

**Venture** is designed to help match farmers and landowners who are looking to step back from the industry with new entrants looking for a way into farming. It guides people on both sides through the key steps required to find a potential business partner. An integrated package of training, mentoring, specialist advice and business support equips participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to help them achieve their goals.

Contact **Einir Haf Davies**
Rheolwr Datblygu a Mentora - Cyswllt Ffermio
Development and Mentoring Manager - Farming Connect
Positive communication!

New resources from AHDB have helped YFC members share positive messages about the food industry.

Following Februdairy, understanding how to respond to the latest consumer trends and campaigns can be difficult for those that want to support the industry.

NFYFC has teamed up with AHDB to provide information, social media assets and videos that can be used to help YFC members celebrate the industry. The information guide includes popular hashtags and shares advice on the dos and don’ts of how to respond to negative posts.

You can also download dairy social media assets, information and links to videos on the NFYFC website to use and share. Or you can retweet or share any of NFYFC’s posts that the Federation makes. There’s news and there’s fake news and you can get to grips with the reality of consumer trends better by visiting the AHDB website which contains facts and stats to back up your posts.

And if tackling social media issues is becoming a hot topic of debate in your club, why not update and train your YFC members, leaders and supporters on social media using the NFYFC Curve module The Power of Social Media?

Club programming for YFCs?

AHDB is happy to provide talks for YFC clubs or offer an invitation to all of its open events and the opportunity for tailored visits for local clubs or national groups - just contact sarah.palmer@nfyfc.org.uk to register your interest or for further details.

LEAF Demonstration Farms are working, commercial farms practising Integrated Farm Management (IFM). Visit the link to pinpoint a farm in your area. This is a great option if you’re planning your new programme or want somewhere to visit when you organise a club exchange.

Countryside Classroom helps teachers to find resources, places to visit and school support relating to the themes of food, farming and the natural environment. The site contains a range of quality assured educational content from hundreds of contributors including components from the NFYFC Future Farming Curve module. You can use the many NFYFC resources to help YFC members share positive and informative messages about British food and farming.

Rural Connectivity

One of the usual suspects on the next generation list of ‘could do better’ is rural connectivity. Businesses, school and community work as well as social lives suffer if there’s a continuing problem in rural areas. The Rural Services Network bulletin reports the National Farmers’ Union (NFU) has published results of a recent survey that highlighted the extent of poor mobile and broadband coverage in remote areas, according to the websites Techradar and ISPPreview.

93 per cent of farmers consider a reliable mobile signal to be important for business, but only 19 per cent said they had access to one indoors. Just 16 per cent of farmers have access to superfast broadband, a four per cent increase from 2015.

NFU vice president Stuart Roberts called on Environment Secretary Michael Gove to remember his pledge of £200 million of funding for rural connectivity to ensure that farmers can access the same levels of connectivity as the rest of the country.
**Spreading the AGRI word.....**

Did you know that NFYFC and AGRI have representation on many industry groups to help share your views? Here’s a few of the topical groups that will help to shape your future.

- NFU Council (observer status)
- NFU Next Generation Forum
- NFU Brexit Farming Roundtable
- CLA - Agriculture and Land Use Committee
- LEAF - Advisory Board
- LEAF Education
- Countryside Classroom
- Defra Farming Productivity Roundtable
- Agri-Food Workforce Skills and Development Strategy work streams
- Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG)
- Rural England

Make sure you find out and share what courses, events and training are currently available from the [NFYFC website](https://www.nfyfc.org.uk).

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- **CLA Rep**  
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- **LEAF Rep**  
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- **Co-Options to AGRI Steering Group**  
  Jake Sayer, William de Feyter, NFU Next Generation Forum  
  Chair, Simon Gadd

- **NFYFC’s Curve module - Future Farming** was launched at November’s [Ag Careers Live](https://www.nfyfc.org.uk) event where NFYFC and Leaf Education exhibited and provided YFC input to a panel discussion and the Mentors’ Corner. The new training module will help spread the message of the diverse range of careers available in the food and farming industries.

We joined forces with farmers, landowners and environmental groups calling for the Government to commit to long-term funding for the policies detailed in the new Agriculture Bill. An AGRI group met with Lord Curry in November to share views and AGRI has supported the Campaign for Local Abattoirs.

**Resources**

- *We really need to talk* video and guide featuring top succession advice from Siân Bushell.

The [new showing guide](https://www.nfyfc.org.uk) - a Defra-funded project in association with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust that was launched earlier this year and available for all young YFC members who would like to learn more about showing livestock.

If you would like to raise any AGRI matters with the steering group or would like further information, please contact your [Area reps](https://www.nfyfc.org.uk) or NFYFC.