Rural support networks

The YANA Project, which provides confidential support, mental health awareness and funding for counselling for those in farming and rural industries across Norfolk and Suffolk, is frequently asked if there are similar organisations in other parts of the country.

After much research, YANA has compiled and funded a directory of the many regional support groups and key national charities which can specifically help those in our rural communities. The directory will be distributed to relevant businesses, charities and organisations across the UK so that contact details of the network of groups is readily available. The booklet also provides advice on how to recognise symptoms of stress and depression and how best to help a client, colleague, friend or family. The directory is also available online at www.yanahelp.org

Jo Hoey from YANA (You Are Not Alone) explained that there is no cost for this first edition of 1,000 copies of the directory as the charity had received sizable donations following the tragic death of a Norfolk farmer: “We wanted to make good use of the income and do something tangible in his memory. We hope that this directory will mean that many more people will be aware of the help that is available, how to access it and, importantly, how to be supportive to others. We are so grateful to The Worshipful Company of Farmers and Farm Safety Foundation who have enthusiastically supported our work.”

“We believe this booklet will demonstrate the huge benefits of similar charities working together to provide a real network throughout the UK. We want those facing difficulties in rural life to truly understand that ‘You Are Not Alone’ – good support is available.”

For copies of the directory email: johoey@yanahelp.org
Have you ever wanted to recruit a young person but worry about what’s involved?

TrAC Apprenticeships Norfolk (TrAC AN) is working alongside Norfolk County Council and is providing bespoke support to employers who are able to, and willing to offer a minimum of a 6-month work placement to help vulnerable young people aged between 16-24 embark onto, and complete apprenticeships. This project is part-funded by LIFT (European Social Fund) and Skills Deal.

If you are a Norfolk employer with less than 250 employees, you could help us to support care leavers, looked after children and other vulnerable young people complete apprenticeships in line with the national average by becoming a host company.

With a large array of apprenticeships available in the agricultural sector, there are many possible opportunities within your business to boost your workforce by taking on a TrAC AN apprentice for a fixed duration.

TrAC AN is the employer and has an award-winning approach to apprentice management. TrAC AN provides a full apprentice management service including co-ordinating and funding apprenticeship training, provision of pastoral care, progress reviews as well as managing the apprentice’s wages, training, holiday and sick pay. TrAC AN simply invoices you for the hours worked with a small administration fee, which includes all of the above and the support packages offered for both the apprentice and the host company. You only pay for the time that the apprentice is with you or in training.

You, the host company, and the apprentice will be assigned an Apprentice Development Manager who will manage any issues that may arise and will provide the host company with a bespoke support package including; apprentice mentoring skills, health and safety awareness, mental health first aid awareness and safeguarding training if needed.

A key benefit of taking on an apprentice through TrAC AN is that you only have to commit to a work placement for a young person for a minimum duration of 6 months, with the knowledge that TrAC AN will support the apprentice to complete their entire apprenticeship. You also have the option of hosting the apprentice for the entirety of their apprenticeship, enabling you to flex your workforce to meet your business demands and manage the risk of committing to a long-term employment. You can even ‘try before you buy’ with a TrAC AN apprentice by offering a 2-week work experience placement, giving you the opportunity to be comfortable with the selected candidate and make sure that they fit in with your business.

If you would like to take on a supported apprentice and feel you would benefit from someone to help you through the process, or just have any questions, please feel free to get in contact with a member of the team. 01603 737739 katie@tracweb.co.uk
Did you know that Norfolk County Council has banned the use of sky lanterns, along with the mass release of balloons, on its land?

The Council voted to ban the use of lanterns from all land it owns, including the County Farms Estate, in 2016. The decision was taken by the Council in response to rising concerns about the use and safety of lanterns nationally and the wish for the Council to do what it can to protect the county’s environment, rural businesses and wildlife.

Although popular at parties and events, these lanterns can create serious problems long after they have been enjoyed. There have been a number of high profile incidents involving lanterns which have caused damage to property through fire as well as becoming a menace to wildlife and farm livestock and machinery.

Problems with lanterns:

- Danger to the environment where they could be eaten by animals
- Cause false alarms at sea where they are confused for distress flares
- A danger to aviation as they could be ingested by aircraft engines or create hazards on runways
- They pose a fire risk
- Increase numbers of UFO sightings which can tie up emergency services

A date for your diary

We will be holding our Annual Tenants’ Meeting on Thursday 15 November at the Easton & Otley College Conference Centre (Easton Campus) beginning at 5pm.

We will be sending out invitations to this event in due course and we hope to see as many of you there as possible.
New guide for farmers to help reduce air pollution from ammonia

A new guide published recently by Defra sets out the steps farmers, advisors and contractors can take to reduce ammonia emissions and help improve air quality.

The Clean Air Strategy highlights that agriculture is responsible for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia gas, which ‘over-fertilises’ natural habitats with nitrogen and combines with other pollutants to produce fine Particulate Matter pollution which is harmful to human health.

The Code of Good Agricultural Practice (COGAP) for Reducing Ammonia Emissions sets out simple steps all farmers can take to reduce ammonia emissions, such as using a nutrient management plan to calculate fertiliser application rates.

It also includes more significant changes to slurry storage, spreading equipment and infrastructure, alongside innovative techniques such as slurry and digestate acidification and separation.
Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

“Air pollution is not just an urban issue and with 88% of ammonia emissions coming from farming, the government is taking concerted action.”

“With clear new guidance and financial support we will help farmers across the country to take action, reduce emissions and help improve air quality.”

In addition to the new guidance, Defra is providing a package of financial and technical advice to help farmers reduce their emissions.

Defra is investing £3 million over the next three years to fund a specialist team of experts who will offer support, advice and guidance on the most effective ways to reduce emissions from ammonia on their land. It will fund demonstrations of the latest low-emission spreading equipment and one-to-one advice on reducing ammonia emissions which will be available from Catchment Sensitive Farming officers by the end of this year.

The RDPE Countryside Productivity scheme is currently offering 40% grants towards much of the manure management equipment recommended in the COGAP to reduce ammonia emissions.

This includes low-emission spreading equipment, slurry and digestate storage bags, digestate processing equipment and mild acidification equipment. Farmers in priority catchments for reducing water pollution may also be eligible for grants towards covers for slurry stores and lagoons under the Countryside Stewardship scheme.

The voluntary code has been written by Defra in collaboration with the National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the Agricultural Industries Confederation. The guide includes information on how to reduce emissions when:

- Storing organic manure
- Applying organic manure
- Applying manufactured nitrogen fertiliser
- Feeding livestock
- Housing livestock
New County Farms officer appointed

Tom Proctor will be joining the County Farms team from October as an apprentice rural estate technician.

This new role will support and assist the County Farms team in the delivery of the management of the County Farms Estate through undertaking various practical rural estate management and administrative roles. Through appointing an apprentice, Norfolk County Council is supporting the government reforms for investment in apprenticeships. The changes to apprenticeships opens opportunities at all levels and all ages to undertake relevant qualifications whilst earning a salary; in turn helping to raise skills and aspirations for Norfolk.

We will be introducing Tom to the Estate over the coming months and we hope that you will give him a warm welcome.

RABI support for farming families

Following on from the Annual Tenants’ Meeting, don’t feel alone – the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) is there to assist you in times of need.

This charity provides financial support to the farming community past, present and future.

Please contact Lucy Bellefontaine, who gave a presentation at the tenants meeting, for help.

Lucy Bellefontaine - Regional Manager, East - Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution
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Tel: 01865 724931 Fax: 01865 202025
RABI Helpline: 0808 2819490
Registered Charity No. 208858
Barry Stone
Chair of Business and Property Committee at Norfolk County Council

Cllr Barry Stone is a retired high school teacher, having completed 40 years in the classroom. After leaving Newcastle-upon-Tyne University in 1970 he started teaching in what was then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where he taught in Bulawayo and then Marandellas before moving to South Africa. In 1974 he was called up for one year’s National Service in the Rhodesian Army, completing the officer training course and then seeing active service on and off for the next six years.

After teaching at Christian Brother’s College in Pretoria for five years he returned to the UK with his wife and two young children in 1988 where he taught in Essex for three years before finally settling in Bradwell, Great Yarmouth. Barry taught at Oriel High School, where he was Information Technology Co-ordinator, before moving to Lynn Grove High School in 1999 as Enterprise Co-ordinator, finally retiring in 2010.

He became a Great Yarmouth Borough Councillor for Lothingland in 1996 and a Cabinet Member in 1999 holding the portfolio for Economic Development and Regeneration until stepping down from the Cabinet in 2012. In 2011 he was elected as a County Councillor for Lothingland and was appointed the Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and subsequently held the Cabinet Portfolio for Culture, Customer Services and Communications.

Barry left the Yarmouth area in 2014 and married his now wife Margaret, starting a new life in South Norfolk. He now has the South Norfolk Council District seat of Bressingham and Burston and the county Division of Loddon.

Barry adds:
“I am pleased to have been given the opportunity to chair the Business and Property Committee, which includes responsibility for the oversight and development of County Farms, and am looking forward to exciting yet potentially challenging times ahead.”
Duncan Slade appointed County Farms Manager

As most of you will be aware, the County Farms Manager post has been vacant following Richard Porter’s departure last year.

Following a recruitment process, the Council has appointed Duncan Slade as the County Farms Manager. He will take on the management of the County Farms team in addition to his current substantive role of managing the western estates. It will be a busy 18 months for the team, dealing not only with external challenges, such as Brexit, but also estate restructures and the drive to maximise the value from the estate.