

# Rural Report

A monthly newsletter focusing on issues of rural life and farming of relevance to the work of the Church of England in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

Information is drawn from organisations connected with the countryside (in its widest sense) within Suffolk and beyond.

The newsletter will produce brief reports giving factual information on a range of issues. Items may be of general interest or provide opportunity for prayer.

If more details are needed on any of the topics mentioned, please contact Brian Chester at [bc@bcnewslink.com](mailto:bc@bcnewslink.com) or call 01379 669157

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A Suffolk poultry farmer is flying high with his PECK range of protein egg drinks. Matthew Havers of Kings Farm Foods, Eye gained a £40,000 Innovation Grant Initiative to research and develop his idea to increase income on free range egg farms. He saw a gap in the health food market for flavoured egg white drinks using good eggs which did not make shop grade. He has now gained a £10,000 award from the Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative as he continues to 'reinvent' the way eggs are used.

Large-scale farming enterprises could suffer most from a hard Brexit, according to farm manager Julian Gold. Using a Brexit impact assessment developed by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, he has calculated that the 750 hectare arable estate he manages in Oxfordshire could see its present profit of £40,000 turned into a loss of £170,000. *Farmers Weekly*

A Soil Association claim of a massive increase in pesticide use on UK farms has been challenged by the UK Crop Protection Association. According to the SA the amount of pesticide active ingredients applied to wheat, potatoes and onions, has increased by between six and 18 times over the past 40 years. The CPA says that while the area of farmland treated by pesticides has risen from 44,981,520ha in 1990 to 80,274,553ha in 2015, the weight of active ingredients applied fell by about 50 per cent - from 34.5m kg to 17.8m kg.

Pork promotion in the new year will aim at 'midweek meals'. The aim is to catch consumer interest with the message that pork is rich in protein, low in sodium and provides ten vitamins and minerals that can contribute to good health and wellbeing.

The price producers receive for their pigs has been in decline for 12 weeks.

A report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare has revealed that dog attacks on livestock cost the farming sector £1.3m last year. The report says government must recognise that livestock worrying is a national social and economic issue, and it encourages farmers to report all attacks to the police. Producers are known to suffer both financial and emotional stress.

A study is underway of the Staffordshire-based charity Farm Fresh Revolution, set up to distribute fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and eggs to parents of children at primary schools where a high percentage of families have an income of less than £12,000 a year, with the aim of replicating the scheme elsewhere in the UK. [www.farmfreshrevolution.com](http://www.farmfreshrevolution.com)

Spending time in the countryside is better for your brain than spending time in town, say researchers from the universities of Surrey, Exeter, Plymouth and Plymouth Marine Laboratory who worked with Natural England to examine the feelings of 4,500 people. Rural green and coastal settings were seen to give the greatest benefit.

Farm support is scheduled for change. Defra Secretary of State Michael Gove has made clear his intention to 'simplify and streamline' a system he has described as 'inefficient, ineffective, inequitable and environmentally harmful'.

"It will soon be time for every landowning farmer to make choices about whether their land is delivering the best income opportunities, whether they need to farm differently, or use the land for other purposes." Essex and Cambridgeshire farmer Tim Breitmeyer, new president of the Country Land and Business Association.

EU member states, in a majority vote, have re-authorised the use of the herbicide glyphosate for five years. Eighteen states voted in favour; eight against. The decision has been welcomed by UK farmers.

According to a research report social enterprise can be effective in providing long term sustainability for many, but not all, places of worship. The study was commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund and carried out by the Plunkett Foundation and Germinate: The Arthur Rank Centre. For more details visit: <http://germinate.net/social-enterprises-rural-places-worship/>

*This newsletter is prepared under the guidance of the Diocesan Rural Affairs Group set up as a means of identifying emerging rural issues and considering how the church should respond.*

