

# 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 01572 757600

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**The National Pig Association** is in discussion with its allied industry members about the possibility of expanding its existing network to provide mental health support to pig producers. The initiative is being developed in collaboration with the Farming Community Network, a charity that supports farmers through difficult times. NPA Allied Industry Group chairman, Hugh Crabtree said there is growing evidence that mental health issues are increasingly taking their toll on farm businesses. *FarmingUK*

**Results from** the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's Loddington Farm in Leicestershire and RSPB's Hope Farm in Cambridgeshire, have shown that targeted management can help bird populations to increase at a faster rate than in surrounding regions.

*"I would urge the public to be vigilant and report any suspected incidents of hare-coursing in progress by calling 999. Members of the public should not place themselves in danger. The persons involved in this kind of criminality are often dangerous offenders who are willing to use violence on anyone to assist their escape."*  
Sergeant Brian Calver from the Suffolk Rural Policing Team.

**Vets' views** on Brexit are becoming increasingly negative, according to new figures from the British Veterinary Association. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of vets now see Brexit as a threat rather than an opportunity for the UK veterinary profession, compared to just half in autumn 2016.

**East of England** farmers are probably facing 'the greatest period of uncertainty for a generation', according to a landowners' leader. Brexit, rural crime, housing and connectivity will be among the challenges for the region's farmers, landowners and rural businesses in 2019, says Ben Underwood, director of the Country Land and Business Association East. *East Anglian Daily Times*

**The number** of shoppers who say they will 'trade up' and buy Red Tractor food instead of cheaper alternatives has increased by 1.4million following the assurance scheme's autumn advertising campaign.

*"Farmers of this landscape (grassland) see themselves both as producers of great food, and managers of the environment. It has been unfair, of late, to see the amount of criticism levied against livestock producers in the debate around climate change."*  
Tenant Farmers Association chief executive, George Dunn. The association says that agriculture is responsible for only ten per cent of UK emissions.

**The National** Sheep Association has raised concerns over the impact on abattoirs of the proposed £30,000 wage threshold for skilled labour in the government's immigration White Paper. The salaries of abattoir vets often do not reach the £30k cut off, says the association.

**Different wavelengths** of light could be used to overcome issues with the taste of fruits, salads and herbs grown indoors, says a report in *Horizon*, EU Research and Innovation Magazine. Controlled environment farming has benefits in reducing the land, fertilisers, energy and water needed to cultivate plants – but, presently, produce can lack the depth of flavour of crops grown outside.

*"I want 2019 to be the start of a national conversation with those who have an interest in home grown food – farmers and growers, processors, retailers, policy makers and the British people. We are being presented with a unique opportunity to shape our food policy and ensure our food security for generations to come and it's a chance we must grab with both hands."* New Year message from NFU President Minette Batters.

### Did you know that...in a year

Hens on East Anglian farms lay 107 million eggs

Farmers grow enough wheat to produce 5,774 million loaves of bread

The barley grown in East Anglia could produce 2.5 million pints of beer

Our dairy cows produce 288 million litres of milk

*(Figures produced by the NFU and based on Defra's June Census 2010.*

*The egg total could be higher now and the litres of milk, lower)*

*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.*

