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The farms available are Oldfield Farm, Landbeach, Middle Farm, Landbeach, Dawsons Farm, Warboys, Marshalls Farm, Faracet, Wolvey Holes Farm, Coveney, Fen Bridge Farm, Cottenham, Flaggrass Hill Farm, March and Manor Farm, Girton. A view day was held on Wednesday 15 February and we had a large turnout as expected. We would like to extend a big thank you to all the tenants who opened up their farms for the day.

A total of 37 applications have been received this year, and at the time of going to press we are in the process of shortlisting applicants for second interview.

Eight holdings were advertised nationally in early January after being advertised to existing tenants in the October newsletter.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tenancy workshop
In order to help applicants and give them a better understanding of what we are looking for, a Tenancy Workshop was held at the East of England Showground, Peterborough on Friday 2nd December 2016. The day was well attended and featured presentations from Hugo, Robert and Anna on the application process and the application forms and budgets.

We also had insightful presentations from two existing tenants Sean Goodger and James Neal. Feedback from the day was very positive, and the results were seen in the standard of applications we received, and hopefully will receive, in the future. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time and helped on the day.

What would you like to see featured in Farms news?

From October 2017 we are looking at modernising the newsletter, as many of our longstanding tenants will know the newsletter has kept the same form for the last 10 years. We think it is now time for a change!

We are assessing the content in future publications and we would like your input.

Please let us know your favourite parts and whether there is anything that you would like to read about that is currently not included.

Please contact Anna Hicks with any ideas, thoughts or comments on the current format and changes for forthcoming publications.
The meetings were chaired by Councillor Roger Hickford, Chair of the Council’s Assets and Investments Committee, who provided a Member’s view alongside the general estate update from Hugo Mallaby. This was followed by a lively question and answer session at each venue, particularly regarding the strategic review.

The meetings are important, and we look forward to seeing lots of you at next year’s meetings. Please do let us know if there are any topics that you would like to see covered.

**Open Farm Sunday**

This year Open Farm Sunday is on Sunday 11 June 2017. The event is run by LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) who actively encourage farms of all shapes and sizes to open their gates to the public. No matter how small the event, involving people and helping them to understand farming can give the industry a massive boost. According to LEAF, the key is to showcase the huge variety of farms producing great food with care for the countryside.

There are many farms in the region that take part, so if you feel this year you would like to join in there is a lot of help available from LEAF to help you organise your event.

For more details see the LEAF website at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org).

**Maintenance on the Estate**

As in previous years, we are continuing with the 5 year rolling programme of maintenance, despite increased pressure on budgets.

For properties due this year, inspections for any maintenance required are underway. Electrical installations will be checked by Data Facilities and up and over barn doors will be serviced by Security Gates & Doors.

Even if it is not your year to have the 5 year check, general maintenance requests can be considered at any time.

If you have maintenance requests please contact Sarah Goodier on (01223) 699095.
The definition of a free market can be complex but, put simply, it is the ability for prices to be set through competition with the main winner ‘usually’ being the person who can produce goods at the cheapest price. BUT over the years we have all learnt that cheap does not necessarily mean good and this is where markets start to create their own niche. This can be either in the form of perceived added value or just through very good marketing but in reality, to remain sustainable, producers need to create a brand in a free market economy or they have to compete with the masses at least cost.

Over the years market differentiation has appeared in the UK domestic cereal and oilseed sectors. Farmers have been growing commodities on contract for some consumers to ensure the consumer has what they need / desire to produce the final end product, rather than just buying commodity available in the free market. In a similar way different grades of wheat and other commodities have attracted a price differential be it positive or negative to reflect the availability and quality of product – but ‘branding’ a commodity that is grown around the world and is substitutable with other similar commodities – wheat for maize or barley or rice, is far from easy.

Come March 2019 – 2 years after we have invoked Article 50 to leave the EU what happens to our access to the EU free market that we are currently exposed to and do we really enter a global free market for our cereal and oilseed products? To me the answer is to ask the consumers domestically in the UK, across the EU and around the World. If the UK were to open its doors to all imports from anywhere around the world the most important thing will be the UK consumers perception of value. In a world full of commodities, does price dictate demand or does value? When I say value I am refereeing to standards. We have all seen the issues with cheap inferior quality domestic products which may break or catch fire but what value does the public really put of their food?

So taking this back domestically I would be looking at the following areas to see which to implement into my business;

- Growing what you and your farm are good and suitable for your local markets
- Understanding the specifications and quality of the customers you are aiming for
- Controlling costs and large expenditure by purchasing kit, sharing storage and combining inputs with local farmers.

Henry Gale
Farm Business Advisor, Openfield
Preparing for farming life after Brexit

After months of speculation, legal challenge and debate the clock is finally ticking on Britain’s exit from the European Union.

The outcome of the negotiations now getting underway will have a profound impact on farm businesses in Cambridgeshire. Agriculture is the sector most affected by Brexit and the NFU is determined to ensure that any future arrangements will enable farm businesses to be competitive, profitable and progressive.

As NFU President Meurig Raymond told the NFU’s annual conference in February the three ‘cornerstones’ for a new domestic agricultural policy, should be:

• To enhance the productivity and competitiveness of farm businesses;
• To recognise and reward the environmental goods that farmers deliver; and
• To mitigate volatility where it impacts their commercial viability.

The balance of these three elements will be dependent on the deal the government achieves with the UK’s former EU partners.

If the government secures a free trading arrangement with the EU, ensuring UK farmers are not disadvantaged by future trade deals outside the EU, and ensuring the industry’s labour needs are met, there is scope for an ambitious new policy involving a wide range of measures that focus on productive, resilient, sustainable and profitable farm businesses.

If we get a bad deal for farming, then measures to manage volatility, such as direct payments, will remain vital to help farm businesses compete in an uncertain world.

This outcome from Brexit will also dictate the pace at which the country moves from the current system to a new agricultural policy. It is vital that the government sets out transitional arrangements at an early stage to ensure continuity and certainty for farm businesses when we leave the EU.

The NFU believes farming should maintain current levels of public investment through this new policy framework, but recognises that, in future, this may be delivered in different ways, directly or indirectly to farmers.

These measures could include fiscal incentives, environmental schemes or ensuring farmers benefit from cutting edge developments in research and development. Another aim is to agree a common framework for agricultural policy across the UK.

Brexit will play a major role in shaping the future of our industry. To this end, the NFU has set up a new EU Exit and International Trade Department and changed the way its London office operates, to mirror changes at Westminster.

In the meantime, the NFU continues with the day job working on issues affecting our members’ businesses from glyphosate, to rural crime and major infrastructure schemes such as the A14.

Hannah Padfield
NFU County Adviser, Cambridgeshire

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East of England Awards – Robbie Dean and Tom Mead

Congratulations Tom Mead and Robbie Dean who took the top two places in the Young Farmers Class at the East of England Awards.

Tom Mead, who won the award, said ‘I was very pleased to win the award and feel that entering into the competition is very worthwhile as it is a great opportunity to show judges around the farm and get invaluable feedback’.

Robbie Dean, who was the runner up, said, “I entered the East of England Agricultural Society Farm Business awards as I saw it as an opportunity for someone dispassionate to give me some feedback on my business and to gain from their expertise to improve my farm. I was also proud of what I had achieved since I gained my tenancy on the estate and I hoped to get some recognition for it. I spent most of a morning showing the judges around the farm between the June thunderstorms during which time they quizzed me on every aspect of my business including both financial and crop husbandry areas. I was surprised and delighted when I found out that was reserve in the young farmer category of the competition.”
I have recently moved to Stonebridge Farm, March with my husband Dan to develop a multifaceted equine business. We produce, breed and show our own stock as well as client's horses. Our horses are supreme and multiple champions in every society we have competed with nationally and internationally. Our breeding program is exciting with the development of the modern British miniature. We have sold our horses across the globe and many of them compete to high levels with their new families. Some of our stock can be viewed at www.usminiaturehorses.com and can also be seen in some of the national advertising show campaigns and national magazine articles this year.

The other half of the business is trimming horse's feet. When asked to discuss equine podiatry, my initial response is panic – where do I begin? It is a well-kept secret that equine podiatrists study behaviour, nutrition, anatomy, environment, trimming, pathologies, boots and follow various case studies pathological and non-pathological to name a few. Even with all this knowledge, the real world is a far more peculiar place than I could have anticipated.

Their own breed – I own and show my own miniature horses and, speaking from personal experience, a diet that is suitable for a miniature horse to glow for the show ring comes into direct conflict with the diet we know should be the ideal feeding regime for an equine. I would suggest the
health of the animal is always the most important consideration, even when it means we have to on occasion think outside of the normal box. My best advice is actually the simplest concept of all. You get out what you put in. If you feed your horse a balanced healthy diet and provide them with a clean environment with social needs and physical/fitness aspects met, you will have a healthy, happy, well rounded horse with lovely feet. If any one of these needs are not adequately met, you will, over time, see a detrimental effect on your horse’s health.

There is an alarming attitude in the equine community that, because the horse or pony is miniature, its rights to the same treatments as a ridden horse are diminished. I believe that every animal, regardless of purpose or value, deserves the right to the same level of care and consideration. In fact, the last show I attended I witnessed a miniature with medial capsule shift and as a result quite pronounced flare, I ask you, would you take a ridden horse to a show with feet like that?

Finally – We trim all equine hooves in an empathetical way. Our techniques are based on the ethos of ‘do no harm’ and ‘restore correct and natural balance’.

Navicular syndrome, laminitis, thrush, cracks, white line disease, collapsed heels, narrow frog, thin soles, false sole, central sulcus infection, chipped hoof, flaring and many other problems can be aided.
Rent Payment – if you think you will be late

Do not forget that it is vital you give us as much notice as possible if you are going to be late paying your rent. Telling us early means we have a greater chance of stopping the Direct Debit, avoiding expensive costs all round. Please do not cancel your Direct Debit as it causes a great deal of time consuming and expensive problems for us.

This year’s Muckspreaders Cup will be held on Friday 9 June 2017 at Sutton Cricket Ground. The current title is held by the tenants – but will the cup be snatched by the Council or will the tenants retain their silverware? Either way, it is an excellent and fun evening so if you can bowl a corker or smash a six, then get in touch with Dale Abblitt who will be more than willing to have you on the tenants’ team.

Even if you do not play, please come along for a beer on what has always been a most enjoyable event.

For details contact either Dale Abblitt on 07798 643002 or Anna Hicks on 01223 728190.

Cup Fever Returns

Competitions are on again this year for the challenge of trying to win the Coronation Bowl, and Millennium Cup.

The Coronation Bowl is awarded for the best farm business and the Millennium Cup focuses on diversification.

The Jubilee Cup is being renamed the Christopher Burton Memorial Cup and will be awarded to the best new entrant (within their first five years on the Estate).

We are therefore looking for applicants, whether you have applied before or not, everyone is welcome to have a go.

Judging for both Competitions will take place in June/July. If you would like to enter this year, or would like to nominate someone, please contact Anna either by email at Anna.Hicks@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk or telephone 01223 728190 for an application form.

This year’s Muckspreaders Cup will

Strategic Review

UPDATE

The main estate objectives have been agreed in principle, and were set out at the Tenants Meetings. They are:

1. To run the estate commercially to maximise income and development returns;
2. To manage the estate to promote rural businesses and healthy living and to protect the environment.

We are in the process of finalising estate policies to underpin these objectives and anticipate that these will be published shortly after May’s elections.

To keep up to date with the latest news, events and farms to let search ‘Cambridgeshire County Farms’ on Facebook and send a request to join the group.