Issue No. 8

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Winter 2020

Newsletter

Here for *you*

Jude McCann, FCN CEO

STAYING RESILIENT AS WE SAIL INTO UNCHARTED WATERS

This year has undeniably been stressful for everyone, presenting us with unprecedented challenges on a global scale. Covid-19 has affected those working in the farming industry in the same ways it has many others – by disrupting supply chains, cancelling events and creating fewer opportunities to socialise. But as well as having to contend with the pandemic, British farmers have also had to face many other challenges, from poor and extreme weather to low crop yields. It has, by many standards, been a difficult year.

But as 2020 comes to an end, it is important to look ahead to the future and to stay positive about the opportunities on the horizon. The farming community is resilient and change is inevitable. Rather than resisting the tide, we should swim with it. This year FCN has formed many new and valuable partnerships with organisations wishing to help support the farming community. Farmers have been acknowledged as key workers and we are seeing a positive change in how the British public views the role of farmers and those who work on farms.

Mental health has been at the forefront of many discussions this year. FCN has seen an increase in calls presenting to our national Helpline containing a mental health component – including stress and anxiety caused by factors such as uncertainty around the future. Recently we saw the launch of Ag Mental Health Week (10-16 October) – an industry-wide event that we hope will continue to grow over the coming years. To do our part supporting the farming community, we are working with partners and industry experts to help prepare the farming community for the challenges ahead, providing tips and information around forward planning to help farming businesses adapt.

This year we have come together to mark FCN's Big 25, a celebration of the 25 years FCN has helped those living and working within the farming community. FCN volunteers have raised funds and awareness this year by walking, cycling, sprinting and more for FCN, inviting others to 'walk with' us, just as we walk with the farming community. Our volunteers, friends and supporters are the lifeblood of FCN and they truly help us to continue delivering our essential services to those who need it the most. We wouldn't be here without them and they give us great hope for the future.

For the latest news about all things FCN, continue reading…

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOUR FOR FORMER FCN CEO CHARLES SMITH

FCN's former CEO Charles Smith was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours list published in October. Charles was awarded an MBE for his services to Farming and Agriculture. This is fantastic recognition for everything Charles has done for FCN and the wider industry.

Charles was appointed FCN CEO in 2011. During his time with FCN, the Farm Crisis Network changed its name to The Farming Community Network and there became a greater focus on fundraising and communications, developing FCN to a well-respected charity within farming and the voluntary sector. Charles retired from his role with FCN and was succeeded by Jude McCann earlier this year. Congratulations to Charles for this well-deserved accolade!

FCN VIRTUAL HARVEST SERVICE

FCN hosted a virtual Harvest Service in late October for volunteers, trustees and members of staff. This year the Service was led by Sally Harper, Chaplain (North Wales Group). The Service reflects on 25 years of FCN, those who are stepping down from their roles this year and those who are new to the charity. The Service is available to watch on FCN's YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBZhG5YkJMI

FARMERS' UNION OF WALES VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Vicki Beers, FCN's National Partnerships Manager, David Williams, FCN's Regional Director for Wales and a range of other experts across the industry took part in the Farmers' Union of Wales 'All Wales Mental Health Conference' on Friday 9 October. Vicki presented on FarmWell and David presented on rural isolation and loneliness. The Conference explored the wider context of poor mental health in rural communities and next steps which need to be taken, with input from mental health charities providing hands-on advice.

RESEARCH TO EXPLORE FARMERS' EXPERIENCES OF ISOLATION, LONELINESS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

New research led by the University of Exeter and FCN aims to explore how social isolation, loneliness and mental health issues within the farming community are experienced and managed – and how to improve support available. The research will be conducted by the Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR) and is scheduled to conclude September 2021.

As part of the research, a series of interviews will be conducted with farmers and members of their families in Devon and Cornwall to better understand how different aspects of a farmer's work, life and physical environment can lead to them experiencing heightened feelings of stress, anxiety and loneliness.

A series of workshops are also planned as part of the research project, with the research team working closely with a range of rural charities and public health professionals from Cornwall and Devon to help inform the questions asked at interview and to better understand the scope and nature of issues affecting the farming community. More information about the research is available here: https://bit.ly/2RwW7DW

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listening / supporting / connecting

We are here for *you*

Helpline: 03000 111 999 | e-Helpline: help@fcn.org.uk

Helpline is open 7am to 11pm every day of the year

MAKING A SPLASH WITH FCN'S BIG 25

For 25 years FCN has been supporting the farming community and wider industry through difficult times. Covid-19 may have closed or delayed many events this year, but that hasn't stopped us from finding other ways to celebrate our 25th anniversary and help raise funds to continue the important work that we do supporting the farming community.

With the help of our dedicated volunteers across England and Wales, we made a big splash through FCN's Big 25, raising awareness of the charity and encouraging farmers to reach out to us when they need someone to talk to.

On the weekend of October 10-11 FCN volunteers, staff, friends and family embarked on walks and bike rides in locations across the country in support of FCN. We saw an incredible outpouring of support and raised thousands of pounds for FCN over the two days. This is a fantastic result and helps to show that even while we're apart, we're still able to come together and achieve great things.

Big 25 articles appeared in print, online and broadcast media and FCN received endorsements from high-profile individuals such as Members of Parliament in England and Wales and even TV's Yorkshire Vet himself, Julian Norton!

We hope to continue with FCN Big 25 activities for the rest of the year and beyond – so if there are fundraising ideas you would like to take forward in the coming months, please let us know by emailing vicki@fcn.org.uk

LONDON MARATHON RUNNER RAISES OVER 19K FOR FCN

Keen runner Adrian Rushby ticked off one of his lifelong 'bucket list' goals by running 26.2 miles as part of this year's London Marathon (4 October) - and raised over £19,000 for FCN in the process.

Adrian, 52, from West Oxfordshire, celebrated the London Marathon's 40th anniversary by competing remotely – swapping the streets of London for the winding and hilly roads of the Cotswolds.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, this year's London Marathon saw contestants taking part remotely in local areas across the UK.

Adrian, who is the Production Director at P. D. Hook (Hatcheries) Ltd., has been training for the Marathon since July 2019.

"I'm very proud to have run this year's London Marathon for FCN. A full marathon has always been on my bucket list. And, after watching the thousands of people running every year, I thought I'd better get on and do it and raise funds for a cause I truly believe in," says Adrian. "FCN provides invaluable practical and pastoral support to farmers, helping them with everything from financial difficulties through to more personal issues including long-term illness. Their work really cannot be overstated."

FCN VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING EVENTS

FCN volunteer Teresa Meadows ran a half marathon in support of two causes: FCN and Volunteer Las Tolas. Teresa ran the Great Bardfield Half Marathon - 13.1 miles in total – and raised nearly £1,000 for the two charities. This is fantastic to see and we really appreciate Teresa's efforts.

Meanwhile, volunteer Karen Carter (FCN Devon) embarked on a 50km sponsored bike ride with her niece and nephew to raise money for FCN. It is great see the whole family getting together to help support FCN. Thanks to Benjamin, Holly and Karen for their hard work and generosity!

SUPPORTING THE FARMING COMMUNITY'S #HARVESTHEROES

FCN teamed up with agrochemical company Syngenta to provide the farming community with support and guidance throughout the Harvest period as part of Syngenta's #HarvestHeroes campaign. While recognising the hard work undertaken throughout Harvest, it's important to highlight the struggles that come with this and the support charities such as FCN can provide the farming community during this time. FCN staff have taken part in a number of episodes of Syngenta's 'InContact' podcast, highlighting the importance of resilience, forward planning and more.

BRITAIN'S FITTEST FARMER PARTNERSHIP AND FARMWELL AWARD

This year FCN partnered with *Farmers Weekly* for Britain's Fittest Farmer – an annual competition to determine the fittest farmers in Britain. The 20 finalists went head-to-head on Saturday 17 October in a series of challenges. The winners of the overall competition were Emma Ashley, 31, from Hertfordshire and James Arney, 25, from Somerset.

During the finale FCN also ran our first 'FCN FarmWell Award' – an opportunity to recognise those who demonstrate how they stay resilient on their farm. We invited contestants to create short 'One Minute Wellness' videos to articulate their personal approach to wellbeing. The winner, Fiona Penfold (pictured), 39, created an inspiring video where she talked through her experiences on the farm in the form of a poem. Fiona's video, and the entries from the other finalists, are available here: www.farmwell.org.uk/fcn-farmwell-award

NEW PROJECT HELPS FARMERS PLAN AHEAD AND STAY RESILIENT THROUGH CHANGE

A new project led by FCN, working closely with a range of partner organisations, is helping farmers in England and Wales plan ahead for the future. FCN's 'Time to Plan' campaign helps to raise awareness about the importance of forward planning and encourages farmers to prepare for change from both personal and business perspectives.

A lack of medium and long-term business planning and later life planning are contributory factors in many cases that present to FCN each year. This can often lead to increased stress as well as contributing to family relationship issues, financial problems and difficulties in managing the farm in older age.

As part of the project, FCN is running an awareness campaign from October 2020 – March 2021. Each month content is being created in partnership with other organisations focusing on different themes, including:

- October: managing through change successfully
- November: planning for the unexpected
- December: diversification
- January: the new post-Brexit support regime
- February: succession planning and retirement
- March: wellbeing and safety.

In the longer term, FCN will be developing a 'Planning Toolkit' to help farming families take positive steps to prepare for the future, building on the FarmWell (farmwell.org.uk) and FarmWell Wales (farmwell.wales) initiatives. To find out more about the project or to get involved, visit: farmwell.org.uk/time-to-plan/ or email mark@fcn.org.uk

Thinking ahead?
Preparing for change?
Planning succession?
Exploring your options?

Free and confidential support from FCN

#TimeToPlan

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK
Here for *you*

FarmWell
INFORMATION | SUPPORT | RESILIENCE

PARTNER WITH FCN

FCN works in partnership with organisations and agricultural businesses across England and Wales to better raise awareness and provide support to our farming community. **If you would like to discuss working in partnership with FCN, please contact Vicki Beers, National Partnerships Manager, on vicki@fcn.org.uk or call 01788 510866.**

FCN SUPPORTING AG MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

10-16 October marked Ag Mental Health Week, organised by Cork dairy farmer Peter Hynes and his wife Paula. The Week hopes to raise awareness around poor mental health in the farming industry in order to encourage change by promoting openness and reducing stigma.

Mental health, including stress, anxiety and depression, is a serious issue in farming. Nearly half of all calls made to FCN's support Helpline over the past four months have related to mental health, showing the prevalence of mental health concerns amongst the farming community.

Many organisations came together for Ag Mental Health Week to raise awareness of the importance of positive discussions around mental health. This initiative helps to show what we can achieve when we come together as an industry.

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#MENTALHEALTH CONCERNS SUCH AS STRESS AND ANXIETY ARE THE AMONG THE LEADING ISSUES IN FARMING

#AgMentalHealthWeek
10-16 October

ARLA HELPING TO PROMOTE FCN HELPLINE

FCN has teamed up with Arla Foods UK. FCN's Helpline information will be carried on the rear of Arla milk tankers, helping to raise awareness of the work the charity does supporting the farming community. In Scotland, FarmWell and RSABI details will be carried on Arla tankers.

These sorts of initiatives are a fantastic way of helping to raise awareness of FCN and our Helpline amongst those we need to reach.

LAUNCH OF NEW FEMALE FOCUSED FARMING FORUM

FCN has teamed up with industry ambassador, farmer's wife and mother Milly Fyfe, the Farming Forum and the Farm Safety Foundation to launch Home on the Farm - a new online network developed to support females in farming and farming families throughout the UK. Taking the form of a new section of the Farming Forum website, Home on the Farm is a new online community for females in farming where they can have conversations about issues that matter to them, concerns for their family and the future and share advice and experiences.

Find out more about Home on the Farm and how to join the Forum here: https://bit.ly/2FLcpH8

FCN SUPPORTING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout October and November FCN welcomed Hannah Westwood as our Digital Marketing Assistant. This was part of a funded internship programme operated by the University of Leicester. During this challenging time for UK students and the wider employment market, we wanted to play our part in supporting young people and providing work experience and opportunities. Hannah, who is in her final year at the University, has a background in volunteering with the NHS and provided great support across our digital channels.

FCN is keen to work with other universities and organisations which are able to fund placements. We're happy to provide training and get interns stuck into a wide variety of exciting projects. Email Alex Phillimore on alex@fcn.org.uk with suggestions.

HOW TO SUPPORT FCN

"FCN has been a great help and friend, giving knowledgeable and sympathetic support, and always taking the time to talk" - Jim and Sue, Farmers, Northumberland

Please help us to continue supporting British farmers. With British farming facing an uncertain future, FCN is getting ready to meet the challenges that it will undoubtedly face – but this will not be possible without your support.

FCN relies solely on donations and grants in order to continue supporting our farmers. We are grateful for anyone who is willing to support our work. There are a number of ways you can support FCN, such as:

Fundraising – although many fundraising events this year in support of FCN's 25th anniversary have been cancelled or postponed, we encourage you to continue to celebrate. Celebrations could include sponsored walks and cycles, bake sales, corporate sponsorships, or anything else you can think of. Please let us know how you will be celebrating 25 years of FCN supporting the farming community.

Volunteering – we welcome anyone passionate about helping the farming community to join as a volunteer. There are numerous volunteering roles available, including taking Helpline calls, handling casework, fundraising and publicity. More information is available at: fcn.org.uk/volunteering.

Share your story – FCN treats all cases confidentially, but we are grateful to anyone who is willing to talk publicly about the support they have received from FCN. Please email Alex Phillimore, Marketing and Communications Manager, on alex@fcn.org.uk if you would like to share your story.

Donate – go to fcn.org.uk and click "Donate" in the top right hand corner, or send a cheque, made payable to "FCN" or "The Farming Community Network", to The Farming Community Network, Manor Farm, West Haddon, Northamptonshire, NN6 7AQ. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to donate directly. If you would like to discuss how you can support the work of FCN, call the FCN head office on 01788 510866 or email help@fcn.org.uk The office is open 9-5 Monday - Friday.

R·A·B·I Supporting Farming Families | FCN Here for you | Addington Fund | FORAGE AID Farmers Helping Farmers | RSABI Supporting People in Scottish Agriculture

Don't feel alone this Winter

The UK's Farming Help organisations are reminding people in the farming community not to suffer in silence this winter. If you are experiencing tough times, or you are concerned about a neighbour or friend...

Call us on

03000 111 999

(if in Scotland call 0300 111 4166)

You will speak initially to a member of our Helpline team who understands the pressures of farming & the rural community. They will listen in confidence and can then connect you directly with further support if you wish.

Telephone: 03000 111 999 Email: help@fcn.org.uk

Helpline operated by The Farming Community Network on behalf of Farming Help members.

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SCAN ME

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