

Summer 2022

Here for *you*

# FARMING IS VITAL - WE MUST ENSURE FARMERS CAN THRIVE IN THE YEARS TO COME

The crisis in Ukraine and war in many other parts of the world reminds us all how fragile peace can be. We hope and pray for the innocent people displaced by these global conflicts. But during these difficult times, we are also reminded of the generosity and selflessness of the many people who are supporting those most affected, by raising awareness and providing donations, food and shelter.

High input costs across farming, exacerbated by this ongoing conflict - alongside the many other challenges our great British farmers are facing - are putting unprecedented pressure on people working across agriculture and living in rural communities. This is an incredibly challenging time for everyone – and ensuring our farmers are able to continue their vital work feeding the nation and looking after our countryside is essential.

We are grateful for everyone's ongoing support of FCN.

We have truly been blown away by the number of individuals and organisations keen to work with us and raise awareness of the ways we support the farming community. We hope this newsletter will provide a flavour of some of the exciting and proactive things our charity has been doing in recent months to help create a resilient farming future, as well as highlight the incredible support we have seen from the wider industry.

With great thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers, our staff, and those of you who support us in our mission.

For the latest news about all things FCN, [continue reading...](#)



Jude McCann, FCN CEO

## TRIBUTE TO LORD HENRY PLUMB



Lord Henry Plumb sadly passed away on 15 April and many across agriculture have paid tribute to him and his enduring legacy. Lord Plumb was a supporter of the Agricultural Christian Fellowship (ACF) and his support helped in the creation of FCN - a joint venture between the ACF and Germinate: The Arthur Rank Centre - in 1995.

Christopher Jones, FCN's Founder and Honorary President, said: "Lord Plumb was an enormously influential figure in agriculture for many decades, giving voice to the farming community and advocating for farmers in both his personal and professional life. He was a champion for young people in farming especially, supporting them in realising careers in agriculture and supporting many people and projects through his Foundation. As Chairman of the European Parliament he helped the cause of supporting farmers in difficulty as well as the support he gave to us within FCN. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family."

# NEW STUDY CALLS FOR “CULTURE CHANGE” IN FARMING

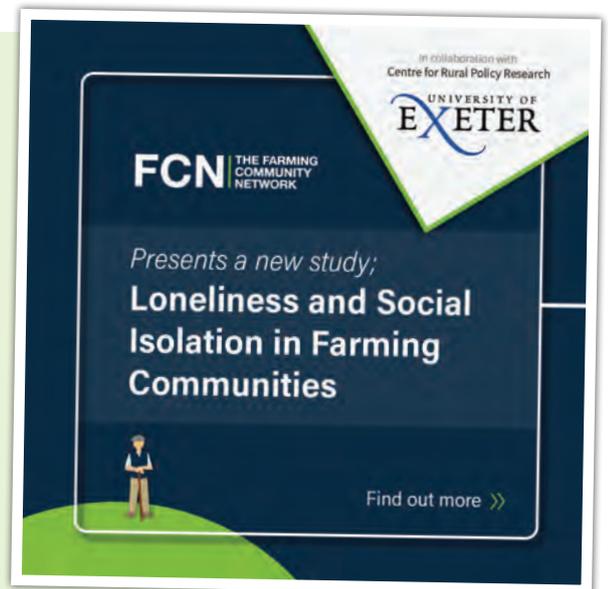
Late last year FCN, working with the University of Exeter's Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR), released the findings of research into mental health in rural areas.

The research shows long hours, working alone and a feeling of being undervalued and disconnected from the wider public are among the key factors which cause loneliness within the farming community. Loneliness was found in the study to be linked to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

The research also provided a number of important recommendations for improving support to farmers, including continued investment in rural broadband; further education and outreach to help the public understand farming and its challenges; and normalising taking time off-farm and finding a healthy work-life balance.

Dr Jude McCann, Chief Executive Officer of FCN, said: “There is a need for a culture change in farming that not only permits farmers to feel they can take a break from work without fear of judgement, but actively promotes it as an essential part of successfully managing a farm business. Taking a break from the farm or having a rest from work is not a waste of time. The truth is it's one of the most productive things you can do.”

Read the full report here: [fcn.org.uk/research](http://fcn.org.uk/research)



## FCN PRESENTS EVIDENCE TO EFRA COMMITTEE

On Tuesday 26 April Jude presented to the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee on the topic of rural mental health. Jude was joined by other representatives from rural communities - including young people, farmers and veterinarians - to highlight the unique pressures on the agricultural community and provide recommendations for improving support.

You can access the recording here: [youtu.be/o2-7w\\_uCFxQ](https://youtu.be/o2-7w_uCFxQ)

## FARMING HELP ALLIANCE SUPPORTING THE FARMING COMMUNITY

The Farming Help alliance of charities (FCN, Addington Fund and Forage Aid) are working together to provide vital support to people in agriculture. Through close working and collaboration, the three charities can provide support for practical and pastoral needs; forage, feed and bedding; housing and emergency relief; mental health and wellbeing; and training and development.

The charities held a reception at the House of Lords on 7 June where representatives from the charities met with a wide number of senior stakeholders to discuss how to ensure farming continues to thrive in the years to come. The charities also had a joined-up presence at the Royal Cornwall and Royal Cheshire shows.

Visit [farminghelp.co.uk](http://farminghelp.co.uk) to find out more about Farming Help.



## MEMORIAL EVENT IN MEMORY OF LEN

Farming and rural communities came together on Sunday 5 June to celebrate the life of young farmer and Harper Adams University graduate Len Eadon, who took his own life on 1 January 2022.

The Len Eadon Farming Family Day was held at Kenilworth Showground, Stoneleigh Park. It was a day full of fun, challenges and reflection in celebration of Len's life. The event also raised funds for FCN, Yellow Wellies and POPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide.

You can watch a short film about Len's life, featuring members of his family, friends and FCN Trustee Barbara Clutton, here: [youtube.com/watch?v=B1FanMCPz1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1FanMCPz1E)

## TRIBUTES FOR CAROLINE DRUMMOND MBE

FCN was saddened to learn of the death of Caroline Drummond MBE, Chief Executive of LEAF, on 23 May.

Caroline was in this vital role since LEAF started in 1991 and she has made an enormous impact across our industry over the decades. Her work promoting sustainable agriculture and outreach work to educate the public about farming has been felt by everyone in our sector and beyond.

Caroline will be missed by all who knew her, and our prayers and thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time. She leaves an amazing legacy which will benefit the farmed environment for generations.



## SHOW SEASON BACK IN FULL SWING

This year FCN has attended a wide range of agricultural shows and events – and we're not slowing down. After two years of show cancellations, it has been wonderful meeting with people across our industry, speaking with farmers and raising awareness of the ways our charity can support others.

We have attended DairyTech, LAMMA, The British Pig and Poultry Fair, Suffolk Show, Herts Show, Cereals, Three Counties Show and many others this year. We were invited to present at LAMMA on stage on the topic of mental health and wellbeing, which was a great opportunity to let people know about the work of our charity supporting the farming community.

In the months to come, we will be attending the Great Yorkshire Show, Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Farm Business Innovation Show and many more. We hope to see you there!

## FCN TRAINING HELPING TO CREATE GREATER RESILIENCE IN FARMING

FCN has been delivering training and awareness sessions to a wide range of organisations over the last few months. Training can be delivered online or in-person.

FCN's Rural+ training, developed with the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs and the DPJ Foundation, is being warmly welcomed by Young Farmers' Clubs and agricultural colleges. The training, which is funded by The Westminster Foundation, supports young people, helping them to understand stress and anxiety, manage personal mental wellbeing, learn how to talk about mental health, and to encourage them to seek support and support others.

As part of a DEFRA-funded project, FCN has also developed an awareness raising session with the other Farming Help charities (Addington Fund and Forage Aid) to help support the farming community in building resilience, managing stress and planning for the future. The session has a number of practical exercises informed by anonymous cases presenting to FCN and encourages discussions. This module is accredited by BASIS and members are eligible for CPD points.

We have also developed a module to support farmers' mental health and wellbeing called 'Wellbeing Support for the Agricultural Community'. This is in response to increase demand from organisations across our industry for training on listening skills, difficult conversations and how to support farmers we may be encountering within our work.

If you would like to learn more about the training available from FCN, please visit [fcn.org.uk/training-and-development/](https://www.fcn.org.uk/training-and-development/)

# CHESHIRE DAIRY QUEENS RAISE OVER £19,000

The Cheshire Dairy Queen Team (2019-21) from the Cheshire Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs has raised a whopping £19,058 for FCN through the sale of their tea towels, sponsorship for walking 874 miles and the Dairy Queen Ball. This is an incredible outpouring of support and we are blown away by their efforts. Thank you to everyone involved!

## FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are always very grateful for the incredible outpouring of support for FCN. On this page are just a few of the fantastic fundraisers we have seen over the last few months.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of everyone who raises awareness of FCN and fundraises for our charity, allowing us to continue providing vital support to everyone across agriculture.

## MARATHONS FOR FCN

FCN Ambassador Charles Anyan and supporter Gareth Stafford ran the Manchester Marathon for FCN in April, raising a whopping £3,800 for FCN.

Meanwhile, Revd David Burrow, Chaplain of the FCN Lancashire Group, ran the Wilmslow half marathon on 20 March in support of FCN, raising over £645.

Thanks to everyone for raising funds for FCN through your hard work and dedication.

## AGROVISTA PARTNERSHIP

We've launched a new partnership between FCN, Agrovista and our friends at RSABI to help provide greater support to the farming community.

The aim is to help open up direct lines of communication between farmers Agrovista is working with who are heading towards or experiencing difficulties and the charities, to help them manage their way through the tough times and move forward.

## BEACON YFC TEAM TRACTOR RUN

In May the Beacon YFC team coordinated their annual tractor run. It was a huge success and they raised an incredible £2,504 for FCN and Beacon YFC. Many thanks to Chris Bird and Rob March for planning the route and all involved in making the day such a huge success.



## DERBYSHIRE FARMER, 67, EMBARKS ON NATION-WIDE BIKERIDE

Retired dairy and sheep farmer Will Appleby, 67, recently embarked on a bike ride from Land's End to John O'Groats in support of FCN. Will raised over £3,400 for FCN during his journey – an incredible feat.



## HARPER ADAMS CHARITY BIKERIDE

Students from Harper Adams University recently embarked on a 250 mile charity bike ride from the University to Scotland in support of FCN, Edale Mountain Rescue and The George Crawford Legacy Trust. The bike ride was in memory of their four friends. The team braved the wind and the rain on their journey and they raised over £10,000! Thanks to everyone for your incredible support for our charities!

# A HUGE 'THANK YOU' TO SUZIE FROM EVERYONE AT FCN

FCN's Somerset Group met to bid a fond farewell to Suzie Wilkinson, FCN's longest-serving volunteer coordinator, who has stepped down from the role. Having started with FCN in 1995 Suzie has tirelessly supported farmers in Somerset and beyond, working with an incredible group of volunteers in the county.

"Suzie has always set the standard with her caring and loving attitude with farming families, supporting them through foot-and-mouth, farm support payment changes and flooding in the Somerset levels - to name a few," said Stephen Dennis, FCN South West Regional Lead.

Thankfully for FCN, Suzie intends to stay on as a volunteer as she and her husband Charlie hopefully have a little more time to relax whilst looking after their own farm.

Suzie said: "What we in FCN do is simple – walking down that farm track, or talking over the phone, we are here to listen. And often the people we listen to haven't been listened to before. Farmers appreciate knowing that someone is on their side. I feel privileged in my role as an FCN volunteer to be let into people's lives.

"I am hugely blessed in Somerset to have worked with an amazing team of volunteers, who are supportive and compassionate. Somerset FCN has been like my baby for 27 years but I am so confident about the excellent team we have here now that I have no regrets or worries about handing it over! I look forward to continuing to volunteer with FCN."

**Thank you for everything, Suzie!**



## FCN IN THE MEDIA

Over 900 articles about FCN and the support we provide farmers and farming families appeared in press in 2021, showing greater awareness of our charity and highlighting some of the pressures farmers are under. This coverage is across a broad range of publications, including local papers, farming press and national media. We also appeared in over 30 TV and radio interviews throughout the year.

In recent months we've appeared on BBC Look East, ITV Central, BBC Farming Today, The Guardian, Farmers Weekly - and even the front page of Farmers Guardian.

Greater engagement with the media means increased awareness of FCN, and it's great to see that many journalists want to learn more about our work supporting farmers and farming families. Thanks everyone for helping to raise awareness of FCN.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: EMILY DAVIES

Emily Davies is one of our volunteers in our Surrey and Sussex Group. Emily's family on her father's side have farmed for generations. Having worked as a journalist, she is passionate about making a positive change for farmers and helping to bridge the gap between farming and the wider public. We've put together a Volunteer Spotlight Q&A with Emily, where she talks about her motivations for volunteering with FCN: [fcn.org.uk/blog/2022/01/21/volunteer-spotlight-emily-davies](https://fcn.org.uk/blog/2022/01/21/volunteer-spotlight-emily-davies)

# YORKSHIRE FARMING FAMILY BRINGS CHILDREN'S AUDIOBOOK TO LIFE

Our children's story book *Sir Port*, which has been designed to teach children and parents/guardians in rural areas how to approach change in a positive way, has released in an audiobook format – and is (fittingly) voiced by a farming family.

The book has been developed by FCN and New Zealand author Pauline McLeod and is supported by the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust.

The book follows the adventures of Sir Port, the beloved family dog, during a particularly heavy flood that causes havoc on the farm.

The story focuses on three generations of the family – the son, Oliver; his mother and father; and their Granny – and shows how they respond during the flood, taking care of their animals and focusing on a brighter day tomorrow when the sun rises again.

Download a copy and listen to the audiobook here: [fcn.org.uk/sir-port](http://fcn.org.uk/sir-port)



## HOW TO SUPPORT FCN

*“FCN's support has been a lifeline for me and my family”*

- Susan, Farmer, Suffolk

We all rely on farmers three times a day. Please help us to continue supporting everyone across agriculture. With British farming facing an uncertain future, FCN is here to help farmers and farming families through the changes ahead – but this will not be possible without your support.

FCN relies solely on donations and grants in order to continue supporting our world-class farmers. A donation from you, your parish, associated clubs or organisations you may belong to could help a member of the farming community access the support they desperately need. Please do help us spread the word and gather support for FCN.

We have been extremely grateful for generous legacies to FCN in recent years. For more information about leaving a gift to FCN in your Will, visit: [fcn.org.uk/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/](http://fcn.org.uk/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/)

There are a number of other ways you can support FCN, such as:

- **Fundraising** - celebrations could include walks, bike rides, corporate sponsorship or any other ideas you may have. We welcome organisations supportive of our work reaching out to us with fundraising ideas.
- **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](http://fcn.org.uk/volunteering)
- **Share your story** - FCN treats all cases confidentially, but we are grateful to anyone who is willing to talk about the support they have received from FCN. Please email Alex Phillimore, Head of Communications and Development, on [alex@fcn.org.uk](mailto:alex@fcn.org.uk) if you would like to share your story (details such as name and age will be anonymised).
- **Donate** - visit [fcn.org.uk](http://fcn.org.uk) and click “Donate Online” 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 this QR code to be taken directly to our donation page.

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](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk). The office is open 9-5 Monday - Friday.



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