Issue No. 15

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Summer 2024

Here for you

# WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN FARMING AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Jude McCann, FCN CEO

This year so far has been especially challenging for UK farmers, with the weather, market volatility and animal disease among the issues many have faced. The resilience of our farming community cannot be overstated during this difficult economic and environmental climate. The pressures on our sector have resulted in a busy period for FCN, with demand on our services increasing in recent months.

It is important during this time to focus on the positives and the things in our lives we have control over. Increasingly FCN and our volunteers are providing 'proactive' support, trying to help people before they reach a crisis point. This includes hosting social events to bring local farmers together; providing useful information and resources to help farm businesses explore their options via our FarmWell website; and working in collaboration with other organisations to get farmers thinking about their health and wellbeing.

Our new UK-wide project with Macmillan Cancer Support is a prime example of this. We are working collaboratively to address cancer inequalities in farming and rural communities, helping to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms, and providing information about how Macmillan Cancer Support can help people living with cancer and their family members. We hope this will make a real difference to those affected by cancer.

Throughout this newsletter there are many examples of collaboration in action. We are at our strongest when we work together with others to provide support to our farming community. We are thankful to our volunteers, our supporters and all those who work with FCN for your ongoing commitment, help and dedication.

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

**- Dr Jude McCann, Chief Executive Officer, The Farming Community Network**

# FCN ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

FCN has launched a new UK-wide partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, which will help to improve the support available to those living with cancer in rural areas. As part of this partnership we are raising awareness in rural communities of the signs and symptoms of cancer and building referral bridges to and from Macmillan's services.

Farmers, farm workers and people living in rural communities can have lower access to cancer services and support due to the nature of their work and rural life in often isolated areas. Farmers can be particularly at-risk of certain types of cancer – such as skin cancer or prostate cancer.

The sooner people can access cancer interventions and support, the sooner they can start their journey to recovery and remission. As well as encouraging early intervention, through this project we also hope to gather ideas in farming and rural communities on what would improve support for those in farming or in rural communities who are living with cancer.

# HIS MAJESTY THE KING RETAINS PATRONAGE OF FCN

FCN is delighted that His Majesty The King has announced his continuing Patronage and support for the vital work of our charity; 'walking with' people within our farming community and helping them to find a positive way forward through any issues or challenges. We thank him for his stalwart and unwavering support for farming, rural communities and the countryside.

# FCN PART OF PRINCE WILLIAM'S NEW MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

FCN is to be part of Prince William's new mental health strategy for The Duchy of Cornwall Estate - helping to set a positive example by supporting farming and rural communities who live and work on the land. We will be delivering a number of wellbeing workshops to farmers and employees of the Estate in the coming months, helping to ensure we're all looking after ourselves and the people around us.

# FCN LAUNCHES SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We've teamed up with Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust to launch a new Scholarship - which will support the health and wellbeing of people in the farming community.

The Scholarship is inspired by Warwickshire farmers Andy and Lynda Eadon, who lost their son Len to suicide in January 2022. They have since made it their mission through their 'Len's Light' campaign to raise awareness of the challenges of mental health in rural and farming communities and to ensure that nobody feels alone.

The FCN / Len's Light Nuffield Farming Scholarship will sponsor Nuffield Scholars focusing on topics that support people in farming and rural communities; help to address issues of loneliness and isolation; explore health inequalities in farming / rural communities; or encourage a positive mindset and help to build resilience.

FCN Trustee Barbara Bray MBE, NSch 2017, announced the Scholarship during the annual Nuffield Farming reception at the Balmoral Show in May 2024. Read more: **fcn.org.uk/news-and-events**

# FCN ATTENDS A RANGE OF EXCITING CONFERENCES

FCN has recently attended or delivered talks or training at a range of conferences, helping to raise awareness of the support we can provide people in the farming community. **This includes:**

**29th November -** National TB Conference. FCN's Jude McCann and Stephen Dennis joined a number of speakers and over 260 delegates from DEFRA, the NFU, the APHA and many other organisations to discuss a much-needed collaborative approach towards a TB-free future.

**30th November -** Service Dealer Conference. We provided a range of 'Wellbeing workshops' to delegates.

**3rd - 5th January -** Oxford Farming Conference. FCN staff, volunteers, ambassadors and trustees came together to network, learn and explore the important theme of 'Power in Diversity'.

**20th - 21st February -** National Farmers' Union (NFU) Conference. FCN volunteers, trustees and staff attended the 2024 NFU Conference. We also joined Minette Batters for her closing address as she stepped down from the role of NFU President.

**1st March -** IAgSA Conference. FCN volunteers did a great job representing FCN at this year's Institute of Agricultural Secretaries and Administrators (IAgSA) conference.

**12th March -** Warwickshire Rural Hub Conference. The FCN team engaged with a wide range of organisations working hard to support farmers and people in rural communities in Warwickshire and beyond.

**20th - 21st March -** The Royal Countryside Fund (RCF) annual Farm Support Groups Conference. An excellent opportunity to network with other charities and support organisations in the farming sector.

Many thanks to everyone who has represented FCN at these events, and for all the other charities and organisations that are working hard to support our farming community.

# CHRISTOPHER JONES MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Saturday 15th June we held a memorial service at St. Peter's Church, Grandborough for FCN's Founder, Christopher Jones MBE, who passed away last year. The service was led by Rev. Canon Sally Fogden, supported by Rev. Canon Barbara Clutton and Rev. Matt Jeffery. It was a lovely ceremony remembering Christopher and attended by friends and family from far and wide. We will continue to build upon his legacy through our work.

# FCN RESEARCHING IMPACTS OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS ON UK FARMERS

FCN is conducting research to better understand the impacts of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) on farmers, their families and their businesses. We had over 470 responses to a recent survey from farmers across the UK, and have conducted 120 in-depth interviews with farmers and other stakeholders, including vets, bankers and government officials. The findings of this study will increase our knowledge of the lived experiences of farmers impacted by bTB, helping to improve the support services FCN provides.

This research builds upon a 2009 study FCN conducted into the stress caused by bTB. We will be sharing some of our findings and recommendations in the coming months.

# FCN BREAKING BARRIERS BOARD APPRENTICESHIP – A WARM WELCOME TO HAKEEM

Hakeem Ojo is working with FCN this year as part of our Breaking Barriers Board Apprenticeship. This Apprenticeship has been designed to help young people from underrepresented groups in agriculture gain Board experience with FCN.

Hakeem has held various roles within the UK agricultural, food and retail space and is currently working in the buying and procurement team of an industry-leading food manufacturing company. Hakeem is an advocate for sustainable practices, diversity and technology in our industry, and is dedicated to fostering positive change within the agricultural community.

# LAMMA 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

This year FCN attended the LAMMA Show (Birmingham NEC) from 17th – 18th January. Staff, volunteers, trustees and ambassadors came together to raise awareness of FCN and to discuss a range of important topics – from health and wellbeing to careers in farming.

On Wednesday 17th we took part in a live interview with Agriconnect TV and had some excellent conversations with attendees. Then on Thursday 18th, we chaired a panel discussion debating the topic 'Is it time to change how we talk about mental health challenges in farming?'. We discussed what role we can all play in helping to create a healthy and prosperous industry that takes care of its people and is attractive to new entrants and young farmers.

The panel consisted of Olivia Midgley (Farmers Guardian), farmers Stuart Roberts (FCN trustee) and Charles Anyan (FCN ambassador), and Hannah Garner from PAPYRUS, Prevention of Young Suicide. This session was chaired by FCN's Senior Partnerships Manager, Georgina Lamb.

This was followed by FCN chairing a session with Jobs in Agriculture focused on young farmers and the important role they play in inspiring others. This session was chaired by FCN's Marketing and Events Officer, Rachel Davey, and featured young farmers Will Roobottom and Bizza Walters.

# FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Corporate partnerships and support from allied industries, societies, other charities, and associations are extremely important to all aspects of our work at FCN. We are always very grateful for everyone who chooses to support our charity. Below are just a few of the fantastic fundraisers we have seen over the last few months. We wish we had space to include everyone's stories!

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.

If you represent an organisation and would like to partner with or work alongside FCN, please email Georgina Lamb, Senior Partnerships Manager, on **georgina@fcn.org.uk**

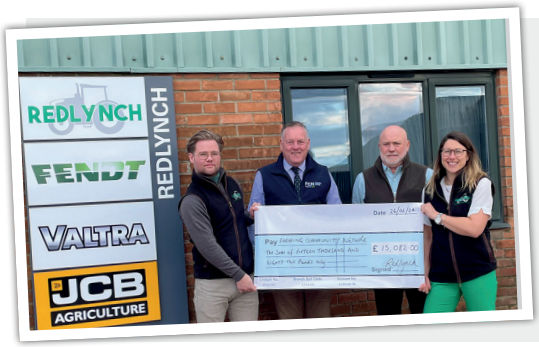
# NEW PARTNERSHIPS

We are delighted by the many new partnerships we have forged over the last few months. Our corporate partners help to open vital doors for FCN, providing us with important opportunities to help more people. Our new partners include Pitchup.com, Bolt Burdon Kemp, Openfield, Platts Agriculture, Guard My Farm and Macmillan Cancer Support. We also thank our many long-standing partners for continuing to support the work of FCN.

# TOM'S IRONMAN CHALLENGE IN SUPPORT OF FCN

FCN volunteer and Harper Adams student Tom York will be taking on the UK's Ultimate Triathlon in late June - a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile cycle ride and a 26.2 mile run - to raise awareness of mental health issues in farming and rural communities.

Tom has been regularly vlogging about training for this feat of strength and endurance. His videos are positive and empowering, encouraging positive health and wellbeing. Well done, Tom!




# SOUTH WEST FARMING COMMUNITY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR FCN

Redlynch Machinery in Somerset recently raised over **£15,000** for FCN - an incredible feat and greatly appreciated by all of us. FCN would like to thank Nick Heal and all the team at Redlynch for the amazing efforts.

Also thanks to all who gave at the fundraising ball in December.

# WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPHY EVENT SUPPORTS FCN

Many thanks to FCN volunteers Malcolm and Kath Harrison who earlier this year attended Leicester's Guildhall for an event hosted by Women in Philanthropy, where it was announced FCN would be among three charities to receive **£5,000**. There was also a tour of the lovely Leicester Cathedral next door. Thank you to all of our hard working volunteers.

# LONDON MARATHON RUNNERS SUPPORT FCN

Well done to Farmers Weekly's Philip Case (photographed) and the NFU Mutual's Jasmine Drury for running the London Marathon in support of FCN earlier this year. This was an incredible effort and they should both be very proud of their achievement.

Philip smashed his fundraising target – raising over **£1,500** for FCN. Well done, Philip!

# TEAMING UP WITH YANA TO BRING NORFOLK FARMING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

In January FCN teamed up with the charity YANA to host a community event which saw over 200 guests in attendance. They enjoyed a free hog roast and pint and chatted into the night. Comedian John Ryan delivered on his promise; everyone laughed and learnt something new.

Thanks to the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association, YANA and all involved in making this event such a success.

# DORSET QUIZ EVENINGS BRING FARMERS TOGETHER

Following on last year's successful 'Yarn in a Barn' event in Dorset, FCN volunteers in the county hosted two quiz evenings in January, welcoming over 200 people to the events.

One evening was held at Symondsbury Tythe Barn and the other at the Udder Farm shop. Both evenings started with a supper followed by the quiz. The evening was supported by farmers and affiliated industry, helping FCN's Dorset Group to promote awareness of what the charity does.

Many thanks to Barber's Cheese, Mole Valley Farmers and ABP for donating fantastic prizes for the evenings.

# TRAINING: WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

"The content was excellent and allowed for good discussion and sharing within the group"

FCN continues to deliver Wellbeing Support for the Agricultural Community training to a wide range of agri-businesses and organisations. This is bespoke training developed by FCN and informed by calls to our Helpline and cases we are supporting on.

It focuses on supporting ourselves and the people around us, understanding the pressures and stresses involved in farming, and helping us to feel more confident having difficult conversations and discussing mental health and wellbeing. Email **training@fcn.org.uk** for more information.

# FCN FARMWELL EVENTS

Building upon our 'Yarn in a Barn' initiative, FCN will be hosting FarmWell community events throughout 2024 - April 2025 – providing social opportunities to bring local farmers together, discuss topical issues, and share insights and experience.

Please keep an eye on our social media channels to keep up to date with where our FarmWell events are taking place, or visit our website: **fcn.org.uk/farmwell-events**

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF FCN

2025 will mark 30 years of FCN 'walking with' our farming community. Over the years we have helped thousands of farmers and their families through difficult times and periods of change.

We have been described as a 'lifeline' by many of the people we have supported. Please consider choosing FCN as a charity to support in 2025 for any fundraisers or other activities you may be planning.

# HOW TO SUPPORT FCN

*"FCN have caused a breakthrough! We still have some problems with the farm business partnership but FCN have acted as a mediator and helped the situation with their impartiality and sensitivity"*
David, Farmer, Suffolk

We all rely on farmers three times a day. With British farming under increasing pressure, FCN is here to help farmers and farming families through the challenges and 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 the 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**

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
- 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 if you would like to share your story (details such as name and age will be anonymised).
- Donate - visit 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. The office is open 9-5 Monday - Friday.

# A SPECIAL 'THANK YOU' TO YOUNG FARMERS

So many Young Farmers' Clubs have done impeccable work in recent months raising awareness of FCN, as well as vital funds through their activities. Thank you to everyone! We are very grateful for all Young Farmers who get involved with our charity.

For anyone who would like to show support for FCN, you can download a digital **'Proud to Support'** badge via the FCN website here: **fcn.org.uk/donate**

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