Issue No. 17

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Summer Newsletter 2025

Here for you

OUR UK-WIDE APPROACH TO SUPPORT FARMERS' HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Dr Jude McCann, CEO

Since our founding in 1995, The Farming Community Network (FCN) has helped thousands of farmers and farming families to navigate difficult times and periods of significant change. 2025 marks our 30th anniversary – three decades of 'walking with' farmers and farming families, helping people to find a positive way forward.

FCN is here to listen, to support and to help people in our farming communities - whether the issue is personal or business-related. This work is a core part of our charity, made possible thanks to our extensive network of volunteers who understand farming life and its unique challenges. As we look to the future we are developing our support services to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of our vital farming community.

Increasingly in recent years, we have seen the value and impact of our proactive work helping to improve farmers' health, wellbeing and resilience. In this newsletter, you will be able to read more about some of the exciting developments within the charity, including new research projects, community events, campaigns and partnerships.

We are also delighted that Baroness Minette Batters has been appointed as FCN's new Honorary President. We are extremely appreciative of Minette's long-standing support and advocacy for the work of FCN over the years. Minette's expertise, experience and reputation within the agricultural sector will help us in our mission to see farmers thrive, both now and in the future.

As we navigate the challenges and changes ahead, we thank everyone who gets involved in the work of FCN. Our work is only possible thanks to our volunteers and all those who support the charity through donations, collaboration and awareness-raising. Farming is a truly supportive community – and together we can continue to create a healthy and resilient future for farming people.

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

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

BARONESS MINETTE BATTERS APPOINTED HONORARY PRESIDENT OF FCN

Baroness Minette Batters has been appointed as FCN's new Honorary President. Minette will be helping to carry on the legacy of the charity's Founder and former Honorary President, Christopher Jones MBE, who passed away in 2023.

On her appointment, Minette said: "Our industry faces many complex challenges and farming charities such as FCN play a vital role in supporting our farming community through the changes ahead. I look forward to supporting FCN in its mission to help those in need before they reach a point of crisis and supporting farmers' health, wellbeing and resilience."

Minette served as an NFU officeholder for ten years, after being made Deputy President in 2014, and then President in 2018. She stepped down from the role in February 2024. She was made a Deputy Lieutenant to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2021 and was appointed a Cross-Bench Peer (Baroness Batters of Downton) in July 2024.

FARMWELL – SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR FARMING COMMUNITY

Across our FarmWell website and related initiatives we are helping to support farming people before they reach a point of crisis, and working hard to engender positive health and wellbeing in the sector.

The FarmWell websites **(FarmWell / FarmWell.Wales / FarmWell.Cymru)** provide a wide range of information and resources around topics including succession planning, mental and physical health, rural crime and farm safety, helping people to plan ahead and explore their options.

We recently launched the Greenzone Checklist, helping people to identify strengths and highlight areas where additional information or support may be beneficial. Users can download or print off the checklist and examine which areas are 'in hand' and where they might benefit from investigating further. Read more here: **farmwell.org.uk/greenzone**

In the past year we have coordinated over 43 FarmWell community events across the UK, bringing together people in farming and rural communities. These events help to combat loneliness and isolation, develop networks, and a create positive mindset towards change.

FARMING WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOCUS OF NEW RESEARCH

FCN has teamed up with the University of Exeter's Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR) as part of a 3-year research project focusing on the health and wellbeing of women in UK agriculture – including potential stressors in farming and barriers to seeking support. Findings will offer insights into the aspects of farming that women find most positive and the types of challenges they might encounter, as well as their experiences of accessing appropriate healthcare and suggestions for further support.

A survey is now open online and the team are keen to hear from all women over the age of 18 who are either living and/or working on farms:
https://tinyurl.com/womeninfarming

NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS HUMAN IMPACT OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

In January 2025 we published a new FCN-commissioned report that highlights the devastating impacts bovine tuberculosis (bTB) has on UK farmers' health and wellbeing. The report features the contributions of more than 450 farmers across the UK who were surveyed throughout 2023/24. Among the key findings of the report is that many farmers believe the impact of the long-term physical, emotional and financial impact of bTB outweighs having to deal with the shorter-term impact of a disease outbreak.

Farmers also shared that health impacts are generated more by anticipation of statutory testing and the fear engendered in anticipation of an outbreak, than by the disease itself. Download the report here:
fcn.org.uk/research

Following the publication of this report, FCN's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Jude McCann, gave evidence to the EFRA Committee as part of its inquiry into animal disease outbreaks – examining preparedness, response and impact on the farming sectors.

FARMING AND RURAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORT #NIPITINTHEBUD CANCER CAMPAIGN

Farmers and people living in rural communities are being urged to 'nip it in the bud' and get checked for early signs of cancer – as part of a new UK-wide campaign by FCN, working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support. The #NipItInTheBud campaign continues to make a significant impact, with many farmers telling us that they have booked an appointment with their GP as a result.

Key to the campaign is the many people across farming and rural communities who have shared their own cancer stories with FCN. By speaking from experience, they are helping to break the stigma around talking about health and wellbeing in our farming community, whilst promoting a positive message around early detection and getting checked and screened regularly.

In January 2025, during a reception event held at Stormont organised by FCN in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, ministers and stakeholders from across Northern Ireland committed to greater collaboration to help to address cancer care inequalities in farming and rural communities. In June we will be holding an event in Holyrood, bringing together rural stakeholders in Scotland.

FCN SPONSORS NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIP

FCN is proud to be teaming up with Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust for a second year to sponsor a new Scholarship. The FCN/Len's Light Nuffield Farming Scholarship will sponsor Nuffield Scholars focusing on topics that support the health and wellbeing of people in farming and rural communities. We welcome applications for this Scholarship from across the UK.

Topics of particular interest include health inequalities and inequities (e.g. dementia, cancer); barriers to accessing support and healthcare services / provisions; interventions to engender a positive mindset and to build resilience. The deadline for applications is 31st July 2025. Read more: **nuffieldscholar.org/scholarships/how-apply**

FUNDRAISERS IN SUPPORT OF FCN

Thank you to everyone who supports the work of FCN. We are grateful to the many individuals, Young Farmers' Clubs, agri-businesses, veterinary practices and other organisations that fundraise for the charity. Fundraising helps us to continue to support farming people through the challenges and changes ahead, ensuring FCN is available to help 365 days of the year.

Some recent fundraisers for FCN include:
University of Exeter PhD student Veronica White has been cycling across England to explore visions for the future of farming as part of her research. She is travelling from Land's End in Cornwall to the Scottish border on her bike in a bid to interview female farmers. Veronica is aiming to cycle more than 1,200 miles (1,931km/h) by July.

Our friends at Cultura Connect covered over 1,000 miles - through walking, running, and jogging – in support of FCN.

Withleigh YFC is one of a number of Young Farmers' Clubs who have supported FCN this year – raising an incredible £2,000 for the charity.

A number of supporters took part in the London and Manchester Marathons in April, including FCN Ambassador Charles Anyan.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THE WORK OF FCN

British farmers work tirelessly to produce the food we eat and serve as custodians of our idyllic countryside and natural environment. However, our vital farming community also faces an uncertain future. Against a backdrop of market volatility, political instability and a rapidly changing climate, many farmers are worried about what the future holds for them, their families and their businesses.

The services of FCN are arguably needed now more than ever before. Since our founding in 1995, FCN now helps over 10,000 people each year to find a way forward through any challenges they may be facing. It is thanks to the efforts of our committed volunteers that many people are still farming today. We have been called a 'lifeline', a 'trusted friend' and a 'vital part of British agriculture'.

There are a number of ways you can get involved or support FCN, including:

• **Make a donation** – visit **fcn.org.uk/donate** or send a cheque, made payable to "FCN" or "The Farming Community Network", to The Farming Community Network, Bragborough Hall Business Centre, Welton Rd, Braunston, Northamptonshire, NN11 7JG.

Alternatively you can scan this QR code to be taken directly to our donation page.

• **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 can be anonymised).

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.

LEAVE A LEGACY TO FCN AND LEAVE BEHIND A STRONG, RESILIENT AND THRIVING UK FARMING COMMUNITY

"Leaving a legacy allows you to help and support individuals and organisations you are passionate about long after you are gone. It lays a seed and implants a memory that will last a lifetime. It is a privilege to be leaving a legacy to FCN."
- **Roger Jefcoate CBE DL**

A lifetime advocate for UK agriculture and the farming community, Roger Jefcoate CBE DL has decided to leave a legacy to FCN in his Will. This is essential, he says, in helping to support the future of British farming, and to build further sustainability into a charity that provides vital support to farmers and their families during difficult times and periods of change.

Gifts left to FCN make a real and lasting difference by helping to ensure that everyone can access our services when they need it most – improving the health and wellbeing of farming generations to come. Visit FCN's website to learn more about how legacies support the work of our charity: **fcn.org.uk/legacies**

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