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# AGRI-BIP NEWSLETTER

## Single Payment Scheme Update

By now readers will have received the October 2005 update from Defra regarding the Single Payment Scheme. I am sure you would have rather received your cheque for 2005! The RPA are still confident that payments will take place in February at the moment! Time will tell.

Even though we still have at least 3 months before receipt of the 2005 payment, it is important to be thinking ahead to the Single Payment claim on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2006, if your situation is likely to or has changed. In particular this will include people who are intending to transfer entitlements whether that is through sale or gift, by lease or through inheritance and the rules under which this can take place is becoming clear.

The entitlement transfer system should work within the following timescales: -

- Entitlements can be transferred at any time of the year but you must notify the Rural Payments Agency of your intention to do so at least 6 weeks before the transfer is due to take place. Therefore, if you wish to transfer the entitlements before the last claim date for the 2006 scheme, i.e. the 15<sup>th</sup> May, the last date for entitlement notification to begin is on or before the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2006.

Entitlements that are transferred should comply with the following rules: -

- Firstly, the entitlements must have been valid, and the farmer making the transfer must have complied with the requirement to use 80% of entitlements in year 1. Also they must not have been entitlements that were allocated from the National Reserve unless they have been used for the minimum 5 years before being transferred.

Separate rules apply to the transferring of authorised entitlements such as set aside entitlements and special entitlements as well as National Reserve entitlements. Entitlements maintain their current value i.e. there is no siphon attached to any transfers certainly for the period up to the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

Some of the larger transfer agents have been indicating that there is likely to be a market for entitlements in the early years of the Single Payment Scheme and certainly if anyone is contemplating selling their entitlements for a lump sum, then it will be important to do so in the early years whilst the historic element will have a bearing on the potential value. When all entitlements are merged to similar values, as the flat rate takes over from the historic elements, then the potential for trading would appear to be small.

Under a different subject, farmers should be aware that the 10 month rule becomes more flexible in 2006, farmers will be able to designate two different start dates for different parcels of land on their holdings if they so wish. The ten-month start date window will still run from the 1<sup>st</sup> October to the 30<sup>th</sup> April.

On Set Aside, you will be aware that the set aside rates remain the same in 2006 as they were in 2005. The set aside entitlements will be definitively established in 2006. This means that if there were any errors in the set aside rate, i.e. it should have been above or below 8% in the lowlands once all the calculations have been undertaken this change will not come into effect until 2007. Set Aside entitlements can also be traded in the same manner as other entitlements.

Some changes have occurred in the definition of Permanent crops and Multi-Annual crops, in particular land, which is growing Energy Crops. As a result of these changes, some individuals may be able to make a change to their 2005 SP5 application. This will need to be done by the 16<sup>th</sup> December at the latest. **Stewart Horne - Manager**

## Events Page

### Environmental Stewardship Scheme

If you are undecided about making an application, want to know more about the schemes and how they would fit your farm and business, we are running a number of workshops across the region during the evenings.

### Entry Level Scheme Awareness Workshops

These meetings are scheduled for 7.30pm unless stated otherwise:-

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December – Beambridge Hotel, Wellington

We are also running a series of small workshops to assist people putting together applications. We will help with the completion of the forms, maps and points calculation. These workshops start at 11.00am.

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December – West Devon BIP, Okehampton

### ELS Awareness and Form Filling Workshop – 11.30am start

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December – The George Hotel, South Molton

Other workshops which are taking place during December: -

### Soil Management Planning Workshops – practical sessions – 11.30am – 3.30pm

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December – Cotley Inn, Wambrook, near Chard

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December – Ordulph Arms, Tavistock

### Cut your overhead costs – reduce your telephone and electricity bills – 11.30am start

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December – Teignbridge Business Centre, Heathfield, Newton Abbot

### Bio-Mass Energy Infrastructure Scheme – Grants for Bio-Energy Production – Want to know more come along to this workshop – 11.30am start

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December – West Devon BIP, Okehampton

### Cross Compliance Workshop – 7.30pm start

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December – The Dartbridge Hotel, Buckfastleigh

### Sheep Profitability Workshop – 11.30am – 3.30pm

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December – West Devon BIP, Okehampton

### Increase Your Visitor Numbers Using the Internet

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2005 – The George Hotel, South Molton

The majority of workshops require a small charge of £10 including VAT to attend.  
For more information or to book a place on one of these workshops, please call the office on  
**Freephone 0800 592872.**

### Bio-energy Infrastructure Scheme

With high energy costs energy production on farm is slowly becoming a reality, this has been recognised by Defra with the introduction of the above grant scheme.

Aimed at groups of producers (2+) who work together producing heat and power from sustainable energy sources the scheme offers substantial capital and revenue support.

For an overview of the scheme and information on other forms of renewable energy why not attend the workshop to be held at West Devon BIP, Okehampton on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

For more information, contact the office on  
**Freephone 0800 592872.**

### Sheep Profitability Workshop

The beef workshop held in November proved interesting for the attendees with a frank discussion on how the beef industry can face the future without subsidies.

Sheep producers face a similar challenge given the wide range of performance between different systems and producers. This workshop will cover the areas of sheep production that make the difference between profit and loss, whatever size of your flock you will find it interesting.

This workshop will be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December at West Devon BIP, Okehampton. To book a place, contact the office on  
**Freephone 0800 592872.**

## New for 2006

### **Marketing your products and services using the Internet**

**Are you exploiting new opportunities?** Do you want to generate more visitor numbers? Exhibit in this global market place and boost your sales. Developing a web site or enhancing your existing site enables you to increase visitor bookings, boost income and inform your customers of new products and services. Getting your product out there first, or being quickest to react to changing market trends, can have a huge impact. Discussions with web designers can be fraught with misunderstandings and jargon! Join our workshops and: -

#### **Make a success of Internet Marketing by learning how to:-**

- Understand technical terms of web design and publication.
- Use Internet Marketing Techniques and Tips.
- Manage Search engine registration and linking.
- Effectively use Internet Service Providers

#### **Consider new business opportunities, such as the following:**

- Monitor changes in your market - use email or online questionnaires to gather feedback from customers on new features or services they might find useful. Research the Internet to find new products that may improve your offering.
- Find out what your competitors are doing by looking at their websites and conducting online market research. Are they introducing any new services or special offers? How can you compete? Can you improve on their ideas?
- Setting up an e-commerce shop front - permanently open and capable of selling your goods into new markets around the world.

For more information on these workshops, contact Deborah Turner in the office on  
**Freephone 0800 592872.**

## NEW CLAiT DATES

If you missed the last dates for the CLAiT courses, do not panic as we have more dates coming up in December and during the New Year as detailed below.

If you are interested in attending one of our workshops, then do contact us in the office and book a place. Numbers are limited so it is best to book early to avoid disappointment.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| West Devon Business Information Point, Okehampton -     | Wednesday 4th January '06<br>Wednesday 11th January '06<br>Wednesday 18th January '06 |
| Teignbridge Business Centre, Heathfield, Newton Abbot - | Wednesday 7th December '05<br>Friday 6th January '06<br>Thursday 19th January '06     |
| The George Hotel, South Molton -                        | Thursday 12th January '06<br>Thursday 26th January '06.                               |

Contact us in the office on **Freephone 0800 592872** for more information.

### **Wild Game Meat Handling**

As from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 new legislation requires anyone shooting and supplying game meat to a game dealer needs to be a “trained person”. In order to comply with this legislation, appropriate training and certification in game meat handling will be required to become a “trained person”.

Lantra Awards have devised a training and certification package– **Level 2 Certificate in Wild Game Meat Handling** - a nationally recognised qualification.

The training and certification will:

- Enable the supply of game meat to continue
- minimise liability and protect against litigation
- demonstrate compliance with animal health and welfare strategies
- demonstrate achievement at a national standard of competence

The first training sessions and certification sessions have taken place this week with over 20 attendees. We can arrange free training and certification to land based businesses (farmers and others with holding numbers) in Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, West of England and Wiltshire – but numbers are limited, so if you require the certificate book quickly whilst the funding is available.

### **Reducing Electric and Telephone Bills**

We recently ran a workshop with 9 attendees who were interested in determining how electricity and telephone bills could be reduced. Using the Internet to search for alternative suppliers and services, the morning’s workshop uncovered some interesting situations.

On electric bills it was clear that people who have fixed price contracts that were negotiated over the last two to three years have enjoyed a period of relatively stable and cheap electricity. However, when these contracts come to an end, they will be in for a large increase, in some cases a 30% to 40% increase could be possible if they stay with their current supplier. These increases could be minimised by changing suppliers. In percentage terms the difference between the most expensive and cheapest electricity supplier was some 20% to 25%.

With regards to telephone costs, the advent of the unbundling of the local loop, i.e. a technical term which means that BT will now allow other telephone providers the use of some of the lines, which means that the line rental no longer has to be with BT, it is clear that significant savings can be achieved. In one circumstance, a bill approaching £500 a year could be reduced to just over £200 by moving to a different line provider and different call service provider.

The feedback from the participants during the workshop was positive and even those that had just negotiated new contracts were pleased with the time spent. They felt it worthwhile in terms of understanding how the energy and telephone supply industry works these days and in several circumstances they went away armed with the information that will enable them to save several hundreds of pounds per annum. Because of the success of this workshop, we are proposing to run some more workshops in the future, please see the Events Page for dates and details.

### **Newsletter Distribution**

A big thank you to everyone who has responded to our request for email addresses and fax numbers over the last few months.

We would still like more so please keep them coming if you have not already responded.

You can email, fax or write to us at: -

E-mail: [team@bipwestdevon.biz](mailto:team@bipwestdevon.biz) Fax: 01837 659314

Address: West Devon Business Information Point, FREEPOST EX 1119, Okehampton, EX20 1YZ

### **DISCLAIMER**

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