



West Devon Business Information Point
 Bridge House
 Rooms 2 & 3
 25 Fore Street
 Okehampton
 EX20 1DL
www.bipwestdevon.biz
team@bipwestdevon.biz

AGRI-BIP NEWSLETTER

Submitted Your 2008 Single Payment Scheme Form? Don't Forget Cross Compliance

By the time you read this most of you will have submitted your SP 5 Form, including ticking the boxes that apply to Cross Compliance on your land. Driving around the countryside I get the impression that many people have forgotten about the 2 metre rule that applies to hedgerows. As time has gone on and crop prices increased the field margins look to have shrunk.

The RPA have just published cross compliance failures and penalties for 2007.

The most common failures are as follows;

- NVZ records
- Cattle ID and movement reporting
- Sheep ID and records
- Animal Welfare, including medicine records, mortality records
- Soil Protection Review
- 2 metre rule (hedgerows)

There were 1858 failures (1679 in 2006) with 422 receiving warning letters; however the penalties do seem to have increased from 2006 with 59 farmers having SPS deductions greater than 5%.

I know any regulations mean increased paperwork but most of these failures can be overcome with some simple recording, if you would like some assistance Agri-BIP can run a workshop to help you set up your systems. Please call us on **Free Phone 0800 592872** to register your interest.

Bluetongue Update

Although the cold weather has meant a slow start to grass and crop growth it has, it appears, slowed the start of new bluetongue outbreaks. However if continental Europe's experience is anything to go by we can expect a rapid increase in outbreaks and extension of the protection zone when temperatures rise.

The good news though is that deliveries of the vaccine have started with farms in the South East due to start vaccination in late April/early May. As production of the vaccine increases the Southwest could receive supplies as early as late June/ July, hopefully before the disease causes too much damage. It is imperative that a) all animal keepers order vaccine from their vet as soon as possible and b) vaccinate when the vaccine becomes available.



Don't think that you'll be ok if everybody else vaccinates theirs, it will just prolong the agony – it's possible that this disease could be eradicated if all possible animals are protected for 2-3 years, meaning a bit of time and money now will save years of vaccination in the future.

Computer Skills for Business

Using computers in your farm business? Our beginner IT courses is the ideal place to improve your PC knowledge. Our IT courses are suitable if you want to run your business smoothly, or just want to feel confident using a PC at work or home. You don't even need to know anything about computers.

Or perhaps now is the time to improve your skills? Whether you are managing records, creating flyers and posters, using the Internet and email there is something for everyone.

These mixed topic workshops will allow you to concentrate on your own needs. For example, if you want to learn how to manipulate spreadsheets, manage records and keep accounts you can do this individually in your own time.

This fast-track learning method will help your business on a day to day basis. Listed below is the range of dates and venues available.

Workshops will be held on the following dates from 10am – 1pm:

Tuesday 20th May - Hallsannery Centre, Bideford

Wednesday 21st May - Cotley Farm, Whimble

Thursday 5th June – Teignbridge Business Centre

Wednesday 18th June – The George Hotel, South Molton

Wednesday 25th June – The White Hart, Modbury

Or why not come along to one of the more specific workshops below: -

How to Insert Digital Images Into Documents and Manipulate Them

Learn how to prepare, manipulate and insert a range of photographs into documents.

Topics covered will be: -

- Downloading digital images from your camera
- Saving digital images to a C.D
- Preparing digital images for the Internet
- Inserting digital images into documents
- Manipulating and formatting digital images
- Preparing digital images to send as an attachment

The exercises in this workshop are based on Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher, but choices should be possible with other processing packages on your computer.

Tuesday 17th June at Tavy Business Centre

How to get your website listed in the Top Ten of Google

Increase income using your website and get it listed in the top ten search results, and effectively increase the sales of your products and services. Discover how to use Google Adwords, online E-commerce solutions, and increase visitor numbers to your website. This jargon free workshop explains the tips and techniques to successful Internet marketing.

**This workshop will be held in June – Date to be confirmed –
Please call to register your interest**

There is a nominal charge of £10 per candidate to attend these workshops

For further information and to book your place please call us on free phone 0800 592872

Rural Development Funding Update

Details are slowly emerging with regard to the new rural development programme. As previously stated the access point is through the South West of England Rural Development Gateway telephone 0800 600 99 66. Further support is available through county based local facilitators who will assist with the development of project ideas.

There are a number of activities that the programme can support. These include;

- Modernisation of agricultural holdings; this includes support for energy crops such as Miscanthus and short rotation coppice. Developing small-scale renewable energy sources such as biogas and anaerobic digestion, wood fuelled heating installations, and installation of wind or hydro turbines.
- Diversification into non-agricultural activities: this will support farmers who wish to move into retailing, manufacturing, service industries, environmental services or renewable energy businesses
- Cooperation is supported to develop new products or processes or new technologies.
- Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises: Support for existing or new businesses wishing to develop environmental service businesses, renewable energy businesses, retailing, manufacturing or service businesses.

Eligible costs for many of these projects would include salaries, ICT equipment, feasibility studies, marketing support, product development, branding and associated costs. Grant rates are likely to be in the range of 40-50%.

There will also be a number of larger regional projects covering the following areas;

- Business support which will include SWREG and its associated groups.
- Business grant and product development support.
- Resource management programme covering soil water energy and waste.
- Sustainable rural tourism programme supply/chain added value.
- A social/community enterprise programme.

Support for training will also be available in a wide range of subjects.

Overall a wide range of support will be funded through this programme spread over 6 years the sums of money available is £157 million with a third of that allocated to Cornwall due to its Convergence status.

Large projects that require grant in excess of £75,000 are being sought over the next few months, smaller projects being welcomed thereafter; if you have any potential activities please ring SWREG to express your interest in the programme.

Increasing Input Prices a Problem or Opportunity?

Apart from house prices everything you buy seems to be increasing in price. For farm businesses feed, fuel, fertiliser, chemical, and steel products seem to be rising day by day, thankfully output prices are rising but are they keeping pace with costs? It is impossible to give a clear answer as every farm business is different in its use of inputs and its sales of crops or animal products.

An analysis of Eblex costing for 2007 adjusted for today's input costs show that an average finisher of beef, on an extensive system, will face increased costs of £150 per head. This does not include any increase in store cattle prices, which will make the next batch more expensive. As we know the sale price of a finished beast has increased significantly to 260p per kg DW increasing the gross price by around £190. With lamb an average increase of £13 per head has been dampened by increasing costs in an average situation of around £10 per head. My own costs indicate that I need an additional 40p per kilo above 2006 prices to maintain margins, which were insufficient for a sustainable business in the first place.

Cereal producers face a similar input price squeeze; with costs running at £120/tonne

based on 3.5 tonnes per acre there is little room for manoeuvre.

These figures, although a generalisation, indicate that profits are slightly improved or maintained even with the current buoyant prices, this is the problem and of course extra capital is needed just to keep the business afloat.

The opportunity comes from being able to change production techniques in a way that reduces costs whilst maintaining sales at these higher levels. This will immediately improve profits, similarly an improvement in performance by way of live weight gain, reduced finishing times, improved lambing, calving percentage or increased crop yields will have a bigger impact on profits than previously. Conversely any instances of poor performance will also have a greater impact on the business.

The starting point for any business is to determine the current situation, financially and physically; armed with this information most businesses can plot a path to increased profits and will be able to take advantage of the increasing global demand for food.

Stewart Horne

Newsletter Distribution

If you would like to receive your Agri-BIP newsletter by email or fax, send your details through to us at: -

E-mail: team@bipwestdevon.biz **Fax:** 01837 659314

Address:

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

DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been taken to ensure the information contained in these notes is correct, however, West Devon Business Information Point will not be liable for any loss arising from the use of these notes or any omissions or errors contained within.

Agri-BIP is funded by Devon Renaissance / SWRDA, Tamar Valley AONB Sustainable Development Fund, West Devon Borough Council, East Devon District Council, Red Meat Industry Forum, local businesses and WDBIP to provide ELS support / Business development support to land based businesses