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SEPTEMBER 2008



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AGRI-BIP NEWSLETTER

OKEHAMPTON BUSINESS CENTRE OPEN DAY

Friday September 12th is the official opening of the Okehampton Business Centre, and we at Business Information Point would like to invite all readers of this newsletter to come along at anytime between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Local MP Geoffrey Cox will officially open the centre at 2.30 pm.

Throughout the day visitors will have the opportunity to view the latest in environmentally friendly building techniques as well as micro power generation from photo-voltaic panels and the wind turbine along with a wood pellet heating system.

To enable visitors to get as much as possible out of the event we have representatives from the following organisations and projects attending ready to give you help to make your businesses grow and develop: -



Business Information Point

We'll be here to tell you about our latest projects, offering business advice and training. Please stop by for a chat!

Business Link

Will be here brokering solutions for all businesses, young and old

Dartmoor Hill Farm Project

Offer support for Dartmoor's farmers, including the Dartmoor Farmers Association

Dartmoor Partnership

Previously the Dartmoor Tourist Association, see how they are working for Dartmoor's businesses

Devon Association of Renewable Energy

Promote renewable energy in Devon, and offer information on grants and feasibility studies

Devon County Council's IT Training for Producers

Will be here to tell you about their free IT training, software advice and information available on grants for software

Devon Renaissance

Find out more about this rural funding organisation

Devon Rural Network

Meet the people that communicate rural issues to both local and national organisations

Duchy Rural Business School

Would like to tell you about their VTS training, apprenticeships and work based learning

Envision

South West businesses can find out about the environmental advice available

Redundant Building Grant

Are helping rebuild Devon's redundant buildings, find out how

Ruby Country

Assisting businesses through the branding of the Ruby Country area and their network of trails

South West Forest

Making the most of existing and new woodlands, find out what grants are available

South West Rural Enterprise Gateway

Learn about the gateway to the new RDPE grant program

Train to Gain

Find out about the training brokerage and funding available for all businesses

West Devon Food & Drink Network

Are supporting food and drink businesses in the area, see what advice and training they can offer

Women and Work

Learn about Lantra's flagship training grant and support for women in the land based and rural industries

Please drop in at anytime between 10 and 4 pm and we will be pleased to show you round and discuss your needs for the future.

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Bluetongue Update

The Bluetongue vaccine is now available to the majority of farmers in England and Wales however use of the vaccine is falling due to a number of factors, some valid some not. The lack of new cases in England has persuaded some farmers that it is worth gambling and not vaccinating. I have heard rumours floating about regarding the different strains of bluetongue and some people are saying that the vaccine available in England is for the wrong strain. The answer to this is that there are many strains of Bluetongue in Europe (Italy has 6 different strains of the disease). In France Bluetongue 1 has caused 20 or so cases in the south. However the most common strain is Bluetongue 8, and that is the strain which the vaccine available to us covers.

France is suffering immensely at this moment, with at least 1,500 farms per week going down with Bluetongue 8. Cases are as close as Calais and have just re-emerged in Holland. The following case studies have been posted on the internet and describe conditions in both France and Holland:

France

My friends are near Montmorillon, Vienne, dept 86. Some of the cows' noses look like they have stumbled on concrete, more a graze than blisters, also light grazes on their teats. This is hard to differentiate from calf suck marks but it's just 'different'.

Their vaccination is due to go ahead as booked on the 14th. They have been waiting

weeks for the vet to get to them. This delay is now being compounded by the fact his work load has shot up with all the infected stock he is being called out to.

His neighbour is starting to lamb de-seasoned Suffolks for the Christmas trade, many of the lambs are born dead and the stress of lambing then sends the ewes into severe symptoms, death follows quickly. This disease will send farmers out of the business, either financially or through the pressure of dealing with it all.

Holland

A Dutch friend of mine with a large flock was hit badly last year. He suffered a lot of abortions (the majority) in his early lambers. When they did finally get in lamb again, they struggled to the few lambs born alive. He tells me that they are in a shed being nursed until the lambs can be weaned, then they must go. His lambing percentage was 45% (usually c.180%), with a lot of deformed & dead lambs.

In 2007 his mortality rate was 20% across the ewe flocks and he figured out that it had cost him 90,000 euros last year. Losses, financial and mortality, are obviously ongoing.

*He thinks that anyone not vaccinating must be **absolutely mad**.*

Obviously individual farmers must weigh up the risks but I for one am glad that my animals are protected this year.

Stewart Horne

Rural Enterprise Gateway 1 TO 1

The REG 1 to 1 is a new service from the Rural Enterprise Gateway providing individual consultancy of up to one day including a site visit and is 70% funded.

Meet with an advisor to review your current position and discuss your business needs and aspirations. Following the visit you will receive a

plan of practical activities, tailored to your needs, to help you get the most from your livelihood.

To be eligible for 70% funding you should have an agricultural farm holding number and derive the majority of your income from agriculture.

To register your interest and for further information call the gateway on 0845 6009966

EVENTS

Business Information Point has recently started a new project called Rural Innovations which will be operating in West Devon, North Devon and Torridge until December this year. The aim of the project is to encourage businesses to find new ways of working that improve their profits. We would like to invite you to the following events: -

Inside track on flexible working



Thursday 18th September 2008
The Bedford Hotel, Tavistock
9:30 am – 12:30 pm



Changes in legislation scheduled for April 2009, will extend the right of flexible working to an estimated 4.5 million employees in the UK. It is expected that smaller business will probably find it most difficult to prepare for and accommodate these changes. This event will help you find out how flexible working can work to your advantage, offering some practical hints and tips on understanding the expectations of your staff and your customers and getting a solution that fits everyone's needs, including yours!

Guest Speakers include:

Hilary Broadley of Broadley Speaking Limited a successful telemarketing firm which has used flexible working to their advantage. Managing Director, Hilary Broadley, describes the essential practicalities of understanding and planning flexible working so that it can satisfy both your clients and your employees' needs.

Dee Cox of Quality South West who help organizations to improve their performance through people and processes, Dee will be discussing some of the key issues surrounding flexible working, such as retaining skilled staff, recruitment costs and talking about operational and management concerns.

Vincenta Pallett of Bond Pearce Solicitors will give essential legal guidelines on flexible working. What you need to know and why.

A case study for Water Efficiency and Cost Saving

Tuesday 14th October 2008
Okehampton Business Centre, Okehampton
9:30 am – 12:30 pm

We invite you to share in how businesses have been successful in improving water efficiency, and are proud to introduce –



Jon Wood of South West Water – The Water Industry Achievement Awards 2008 first prize winner in the 'sustainability' category in recognition of the suite of schemes set up specifically to help business customers save water and money.



Richard Power of The Silver Springs Hotel – The Hotel is particularly proud of their high standards and has been accredited with the prestigious Gold Award for Green Tourism 2008 for their guest accommodation.



James Jacobs of Envision South West – Giving an overview of additional cost saving environmental improvements (inc. Energy efficiency and Renewable Energy).

Jon Wood comments that ***"Businesses who have made no previous attempts to save water can typically make savings of around 20% with little or no cost and some have even achieved savings as high as 70% with paybacks in as low as three months"***

These events are **free of charge** and, as such, places are allocated on a first come first served basis. To reserve your place simply call us on **free phone 0800 592872** or email us at team@bipwestdevon.biz

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Computer Workshops

Using computers in your farm business? Our IT courses are the ideal place to improve your PC knowledge and 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.

Perhaps now is the time to improve your skills? Whether you are managing records, creating

flyers and posters, or using the Internet and email there is something for everyone.

Listed below are the workshop topics, dates and venues available at present. If you do not see the topic you are interested in or a venue near you please call us on **free phone 0800 592872** and make your request.

Foundation Level Spreadsheets

Why use cash analysis books when a spreadsheet can do the same and much much more. You will use a fast-track learning method to create a new spreadsheet, enter text and numbers and save the data you input. You'll learn how to use formulas to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers, how to analyse the information in your spreadsheet and how to print off different pieces of information from your spreadsheet.

Wednesday 10th September – The Westward Inn, Lee Mill, Ivybridge – 10am – 4pm

Tuesday 16th September – Okehampton Business Centre, Okehampton – 10am – 4pm

Wednesday 24th September – Tavy Business Centre, Tavistock – 10am – 4pm

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.

Thursday 9th October – Okehampton Business Centre – 10am – 4pm

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

Let's Talk Starting in Business

We are running free, practical workshops, in conjunction with Barclays Bank, throughout the autumn to help people to learn what is involved in starting and running a successful business.

The courses will cover the nuts and bolts of starting your business from market research and marketing, through to setting up simple accounts and all the legalities in between. Course dates are as follows: -

Tuesday 30th September – Okehampton Business Centre, Okehampton

Tuesday 28th October - East Devon Business Centre, Sidmouth

Tuesday 25th November – Tavy Business Centre, Tavistock

Workshops will run from 9.30am until 1.30pm

So, if you, a relative or a friend are thinking of starting your own business and would like to come to one of these free workshops please call us to book your place.

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

Agri-BIP at the Beef and Growing Cattle Event September 18th 2008, Hatherleigh

Agri-BIP will be demonstrating the value of slurry and FYM to replace fertilisers for growing both grass and crops. Find us next to the demonstration area. This event is one not to be missed by anyone with an interest in beef, whether its production or consumption!

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

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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, Devon County Council, North Devon Council, local businesses and WDBIP to provide ELS support / Business development support to land based businesses.