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## **AGRI-BIP NEWSLETTER**

### **AGRI-BIP IS BACK IN CORNWALL WITH...**

# **BUSINESS FORWARD**

**Are you interested in improving your business performance?**

**Would you like to develop your ability to use resources efficiently, motivate others, solve problems and manage change?**

**Agri-BIP, The Rural Business School and Lantra are working together to support rural businesses through a new programme of training and support**

**So if you are:-**

- Expanding your business
- Adding a new enterprise
- Starting a new business
- Developing a marketing plan
- In need of a business plan for the bank or grant application
- Diversifying into a new enterprise
- Taking on new staff
- Needing help to manage your staff
- Unsure of what direction to take

**Business Forward can help by providing the skills and qualifications that will ensure your business profits grow**

This practical programme is available to Rural Business Managers, Farmers and Key Staff that live and /work in Cornwall

By working in either small groups, one to one with a specialist on your farm or by attending events you will receive the support & training required for your business to progress. Improve your profitability and skills in a practical environment, away from the classroom with the added opportunity to gain a formal NVQ or VRQ qualification awarded by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

**If you would like more information please contact: -**

**David Hinshelwood at Agri-BIP on 0800 592872 or [team@bipwestdevon.biz](mailto:team@bipwestdevon.biz)**

**Please call us if you think we can help you through Business Forward, the support is totally free of charge! So please contact us immediately because there are limited places and limited funding.**



## Where's my Modulation money gone?

This is a common question that I hear when farmers receive their Single Payment Scheme remittance advice! Before answering I politely point out that actually it's not exactly, "their" money, rather it's a deduction from the payment they receive from the taxpayer for maintaining their land in good agricultural and environmental condition. I then explain that the modulation funds are added to by the Treasury to fund the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). This fund is worth £3.9 billion over the period 2007-2013. The EU Regulation which forms the basis of the RDPE divides its aims into three main areas, which it calls Axes:

- Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors (10% of the total budget).
- Axis 2 - improving the environment and countryside (80% of the total budget - mostly to be invested in existing national schemes such as Environmental Stewardship and English Woodland Grant Scheme).
- Axis 3 - improving the quality of life in rural areas and promoting diversification of the rural economy (10% of the total budget).

The EU rules also say that at least 5% of the overall budget must be channeled through the 'Leader' approach. This is a community-led approach to development, which is called Local Action in the South West. Axis 2 is managed by Natural England through Environmental Stewardship (Entry Level, Organic Entry Level, Higher Level Stewardship and the English Woodland Grant Scheme).

Axis 1 and 3 are managed by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA) and are worth £156.8 million in the region.

The next question is, how can I get hold of some of this funding? Firstly given the biggest amount is being used for Environmental Schemes, examine them closely to see if you could join, the minimum payment is under Entry Level Stewardship (£12/ acre or £30/ ha per annum). Although over 60% of land is now in stewardship a lot of land remains outside, the common reason being stated "I want to cut my hedges every year, that's why I am not joining", this is a fallacy, yes hedges are an option but many other options are available and the majority of farms can join with very few changes to their farming system.

The remainder of the programme is starting to roll out quickly now with many initiatives that offer farmers a chance of capital funding;

RDPE grants for diversification projects that help businesses grow and develop, these are accessed through the South West Rural Enterprise Gateway (SWREG 0845 600 9966). Also available via SWREG 1:1 business support, 70% subsidised.

Training through the vocational training scheme accessed through Duchy College's Rural Business School (0845 458 7485).

Sustainable Woodlands, grants are available for businesses seeking to improve the economic value of woodlands. Contact the Silvanus Trust 01752 846 400.

South West Agricultural Resource Management- An Innovation Fund to assist projects that develop new approaches to resource management, this includes, soils, manures, nutrients, water, energy or organic wastes, access via SWRDA.

Coming soon is the South West Healthy Livestock Initiative, the Uplands Initiative, Soils for Profits (including capital grants); this is modeled on the Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative, and the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Renewable for Farms Initiative which again will offer capital grants for farms.

As you can see the opportunity to reclaim your modulation funds is available and for the right projects significantly more, don't delay if you have a project idea, speak to SWREG.

For farmers and rural businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, further assistance is available by way of European Social Fund projects contracted by the Learning and Skills Council. One of these is Business Forward which is highlighted in this newsletter. Agri-BIP trainers and advisors are available to support the creation of business plans that are required to submit RDPE grant applications under this project, where these are linked to vocational qualifications.

The project can also help with developing existing businesses or adding a new enterprise to a business. Please call us if you think we can help you through Business Forward, the bonus being the support is totally free of charge! Other partners in Business Forward include Lantra, the Rural Business School, Duchy College, and Cornwall College.

### Newsletter Distribution

If you would like to receive your Agri-BIP newsletter by email or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list please send your details through to us at: - E-mail: [team@bipwestdevon.biz](mailto:team@bipwestdevon.biz) / Fax: 01837 659314 or by post.

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