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RURAL Round-up



*Great is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven with repose*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Let us know what you think, email us at edu@swale.gov.uk



Avoid the Agriculture aggro, keep your workers safe!

According to a recent report published by the HSE, agriculture, forestry and fishing is the riskiest industry sector in terms of fatal injuries. One in a hundred workers (employees and the self-employed) work in agriculture, but it accounts for one in five fatal injuries to workers.

Latest results show that 27 fatal injuries to workers in 2013/14p, the average over the previous five years was 33 - the worker fatality rate is higher than any other industry section and almost half (48%) of the workers who were fatally injured were farmers, while about one in seven were farm or forestry workers.

So what can be done about protecting the workforce in this apparently high-risk sector? Alex Ness of Savills UK Health & Safety says "Farming will never be risk free, but nobody wants to see their employees or anyone else getting hurt. At the end of the day, health & safety is about looking after people".

Perhaps as a result of the level of risk involved in agriculture, the sector is highly regulated and to fall foul of the rules could irrevocably damage your business. To make sure you are compliant, visit www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture.

App'y to help the farming industry

As the agriculture sector continues to embrace more and more tech to assist in the smooth operations of farms, there is clear opportunity for mobile app builders. Both 'Farmers Weekly' and 'Savills Rural' have taken time to review some of the most helpful smartphone apps

WaterAware aims to help farmers and advisers reduce the risk of key pesticides entering water by offering a field-based risk assessment, integrating soil type, weather and soil moisture deficit information to provide farmers with a simple yes-or-no guide to whether they should apply pellets or spray crops in terms of the potential risk to surface water.

FarmGraze Calculates the amount of grass in a field and allows the user to quickly monitor the performance of swards

Grainmate accesses the essential grain market information such as futures and ForEx prices. It also lets farmers sell their grain whilst on the move.

Bayer Pest Spotter Helps you to identify crop pests present in fields of growing crops and also provides information on how best to eradicate/tackle them.

Moo Monitor links the farms office computer to a mobile to send an alert to a herdsman when a cow is in heat or showing signs or symptoms of sickness.

Get Connected

Kent Businesses Go Superfast: Connection Vouchers

Kent County Council are administering a new grant scheme, funded by the Government, which will allow businesses in eligible towns in Kent & Medway to access funding to get better broadband.

Businesses can apply for grants of up to £3000 to cover the installation of the broadband. Companies will continue to pay any VAT charged and the monthly line rental to the service provider.

To find out if your business is eligible for the scheme and apply:

1. Simply visit: www.kent.gov.uk/ConnectionVouchers
2. Enter your postcode and see if you are eligible for up to £3000

Time however is short - 25,000 small businesses have already taken advantage of the scheme and the fund is finite – once it's gone, it's gone

Heard the buzz about the new 'Bee-keeping Apprenticeship'?

The Bee Farmers' Association has developed this unique apprenticeship scheme in partnership with Rowse Honey. The scheme is open to 16 to 24-year-olds and aims to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to make a successful career in the bee farming industry. Those successfully completing the three-year programme are awarded a Diploma Towards Excellence in Bee Farming by the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers.

Launched in 2014 to much interest, the first cohort of seven young people are placed with some of the most experienced bee farmers in the United Kingdom (UK).

Recruitment is on an annual basis, with programmes commencing each spring.

David Wainwright, chairman of the Bee farmers Associations says "There are beekeepers with a lot of knowledge that needs to be passed on to a younger generation before it's too late. There's a lot of talk about small-scale beekeeping, but nothing on the larger scale. We should be developing the bee industry as a whole."

If you are a farmer wanting to know more about contract pollination, want to know more about bee-keeping apprenticeships or if you are interested in the concept of large scale beekeeping as income diversification, there's more information on their website www.beefarmers.co.uk.

Need funding for your rural business? Take a look at LEADER...

LEADER is a well-established method of providing rural development funding at the local level and looks to support projects in their area that will help grow the rural economy.

The funds will be given to projects that will deliver jobs and growth (or contribute to delivering jobs and growth) and supporting the rural economy. Funding is available to farmers, foresters, other local businesses and rural communities. The funding is applied for through a rigorous application process and a degree of match funding is required from the applicant in most cases.

The priorities that LEADER will consider funding for are;

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry productivity

For more information contact **Huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk** .

...Or how about the Countryside Stewardship Scheme?

Countryside Stewardship provides incentives for land managers to look after their environment. The scheme is open to all eligible farmers, woodland owners, foresters and other land managers through a competitive application process.

Unlike previous rural development schemes, applications for most elements of Countryside Stewardship are competitive, which means that applications will be scored against criteria, and that not everyone who applies will be successful. Targeting and scoring will encourage applicants to choose options that help achieve the environmental priorities in their local area.

The main priority for Countryside Stewardship is to protect and enhance the natural environment, in particular the diversity of wildlife (biodiversity) and water quality. Other outcomes include:

- flood management
- the historic environment
- landscape character
- genetic conservation
- educational access

The scheme will be jointly run by Natural England, Forestry Commission England and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on behalf of Defra

Further info can be found at **www.gov.uk/countrysidestewardship**