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New funding opportunities

Wales' Rural Development Plan (RDP) has been approved by Europe.

As part of the RDP, three new grant schemes will be available to support producers and processors.

The **Processing and Marketing Grant** can assist with capital and revenue investments to **add value** to agricultural and forestry products. For forestry enterprises to be eligible, they must employ fewer than 10 people.

The **Supply Chain Efficiencies Scheme** can provide support for collaborative projects that develop new products, processes or technologies in the food and forestry sector. This scheme aims to develop cooperation along the supply chain (e.g. between producers, distributors, processors).

There is no minimum amount

that you must apply for on either of these schemes. In most cases, there is no maximum either.

Neither of these grants can be used to assist with actually growing / producing crops or livestock.

A third project, the **Quality Food Scheme**, is still being developed, but it will offer support to producers achieving recognised quality assurance standards.

If you are interested in applying for any of these grants, it is important that you contact your local Assembly office to get full information and advice on the schemes before embarking on any activities. **Contact points are:**

- North: 01745 586153
- Mid: 01970 613267
- South West: 01792 224530
- South East: 01443 845880

Jargon buster

Sometimes, the terms in the RDP and its associated documents can be confusing or off-putting. Don't be daunted. Here is a quick guide to what some of the terms mean.

Axis—in the EU they refer to some objectives as Axes (axis when singular). There are three primary Axes:

Axis 1 = improving the competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors;

Axis 2 = improving the environment and countryside

Axis 3 = rural quality of life and diversification of the rural economy.

In addition there is what is called the LEADER approach which is also referred to as Axis 4. This is the mechanism for delivering the objectives of Axis 3.

CALU's subject areas:

- Horticulture
- Bio-energy
- Alternative crops
- Alternative livestock
- Farm woodlands

Welfare of livestock in transit

Did you already acquire your certificate of competence? If not, CALU has some facts that might be of help for you:

- There are computer based tests and paper tests available.
- You no longer need to do one test per species. Lantra has developed a single test which covers pigs, cattle, goats, horses and sheep. You will need a separate test for poultry.
- It is not necessarily the driver who needs to have passed the test. As long as there is a person in the vehicle who has the certificate, you are road legal.

There is also 50% funding available from Lantra—01982 552646

Contact your Divisional Office for more information on the tests and legal requirements.

- Caernarfon: 01286 674144
- Carmarthen: 01267 225300
- Llandrindod: 01597 823777

Restoring old orchards



CALUs' orchard event in Conwy

During 2007/08 CALU organised a series of orchard event (previous and upcoming – please see our event list). One event at the Conwy orchard, for example, covered the management of existing orchards and the planting of new ones. Two events in March will start one step earlier, with grafting the fruit tree.

All CALU's workshops combine theory with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience. The orchard events have proved particularly popular, all generating a large response. If you haven't managed to attend one of our orchards events, be assured there will be some more in the year ahead. In the meantime, what about some tips for restoring old orchards?

The first phase when restoring a neglected orchard site is ground clearance. This can be an unpleasant task, but is essential both to provide good access around the trees and to remove any rotting material that might harbor pests and diseases.

Once the trees are visible each tree needs to be assessed. What you will be looking for are any dead, diseased or damaged branches. This includes branches that are rubbing against another branch, wind damaged branches and areas that show signs of diseases or pest damage such as canker and aphids. Any obviously damaged material should be removed. When first pruning an older tree it is recom-

mended to remove no more than approximately one third of the total canopy.

If the remedial pruning has taken out less than one third of the canopy, you can move on to prune for shape and production. When doing this consider not only what you would like the tree to look like but also where you want the fruit to be. Also consider the age of the main branch, is it aging? Do you need to start training a replacement?

A tree might not look as you want it for a few years, you need to be patient and keep working with it. Remember not to let the new growth become too crowded, air flow is important. Also remember to prune back to the 'collar' of a branch as this is where the tree has natural defences that can help the open wound heal more quickly and so reduce the chances of infection getting into the tree. The angle of the wound is also important for other reasons, you do not want water collecting on the wound unless it cannot be helped.

Health and safety is also important. Always wear protective clothing. Only use tools you are familiar with and that are well maintained. If you have standard trees and need to work from a ladder, never do it on your own; ask a friend to help you or contact the experts to do the bigger jobs for you.

DID YOU KNOW...

There are 810 holdings with pigs in Wales.

(Source: HCC)

Pig production—*are things perking up?*

Recently, most of the news relating to pig production has been bad: rising feed prices; companies going into administration; disease problems; and low prices for pig meat. In response to this flood of bad news stories, CALU arranged a meeting for local pig producers in north Wales. The meeting addressed two main topics: feeding pigs to produce a profit; and successful marketing.

Perhaps as useful as the topics addressed at the meeting, was the opportunity for pig producers to meet and share experiences. The overall atmosphere of the meeting suggests that there are good news stories to be had from the pig sector. Especially from the specialist pig producers that make up the majority of Wales' industry.

For example, Llyn farmer, Huw Griffith (www.traedmoch.com) told the meeting how he managed to rear his pigs completely on home grown feed. This offers a bit of a buffer against the vagaries of the market. It also means that Huw can be 100% confident about what his pigs have eaten – something that consumers are increasingly interested in. Huw's next major challenge is to raise the profile of his quality pork products.

Pigs are something of a new addition to Midlist and Glaslyn Wild Pigs farms. Both farms have diversified into pigs in response to requests from their existing customer base. Some people may already be familiar with the delicious buffalo meat produced at Midlist Farm. This is now complemented by pork from the offspring of four Saddleback sows – visit www.northwalesbuffalo.co.uk for more information on the pigs and the pork and bacon products.

Most of the producers at the meeting were rearing traditional pig breeds, but one couple, Pam and Dafydd Parry from Beddgelert, have developed their own wild boar cross breeds. The cross results in a unique flavour to the meat and makes it a highly sought after product.

All in all, whilst acknowledging the difficulties facing the sector, the meeting showed that there are great opportunities for Wales' specialist pig producers.

Adding value to timber

In conjunction with Coed Cymru, CALU held an open day at the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre in the Gwaun Valley east of Fishguard. The Centre is part of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and runs several saws and a carpentry workshop mainly to produce signposts, gates, and stakes for the National Park's own usage. Usually, the Centre is not open to the public with few exceptions such as on CALU's open day. Throughout the day the 50 attendees could watch demonstrations of the different saws and got detailed information e.g. about their capacity.

Have a glance at two of the ma-

chines present. If you want to see all machine, have a look at our homepage in the event link or contact us.



Fig 1: This is Coed Cymru's own construction: a cleft oak stake processor for small diameter logs. Several hundred logs can be processed per day. Furthermore, it is movable and easy to handle.



Fig 2: For the production of wood chips, used as fuel or for animal bedding, the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre runs a wood chipper. Bigger offcuts or smaller and low quality logs are used for chip production. The machine is also transportable so the chip production can be carried out e.g. next to the shed where the chips are then stored.

Be(e) aware!

Beekeepers and authorities in Great Britain are preparing for the arrival of the small hive beetle (SHB, *Aethina tumida*), a beetle indigenous to South Africa and discovered in 1998 for the first time in the United States (Florida) where it is now a widespread threat.

In contrast to the Varroa Mite, SHB does leave the hive for pupation in the soil, preferably in sandy soils. It is this fact that challenges the beekeepers as control might not be

possible throughout the beetles' whole lifecycle. The larvae of the beetle is the threat to the hive as they damage the comb while they feed on honey, pollen and brood. Depending on the grade of infestation, the pest can lead to a collapse of the colony or to deserted hives.

At the moment, SHB is not apparent in UK but experts have little doubt that it will be introduced. The only question is when.

There are different possibilities how

the pest could find its way to Europe: For example in contaminated used beekeeping equipment, imported honey bees, or as stow-away on a ship or plane.

Although these facts might sound disturbing, there are methods to control and manage this pest and infested hives.

If you have any questions, your local bee inspector will provide you with support or alternatively contact CALU.

Due to their great success, the Conwy Beekeepers Association on behalf of CALU will run another beekeeping course for beginners over the winter 2008/09.

If you are interested give us a call!



Adult small hive beetle, 5 - 7 mm long

A short guide to a long story—Global warming

The term **greenhouse gas** (GHG) refers to 1 % of all atmospheric gases. They act as an insulating blanket by trapping some heat from the sun within the atmosphere.

Without these gases the earth's average temperature would be 33°C colder. This natural effect is called the **greenhouse effect**.

The concentrations of some GHGs are increased due to human activities.

This causes an imbalance in the system and leads to rising temperatures on the earth which is known as **global warming**.

In agriculture, the most emitted GHGs are **carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide**. All of these are also naturally occurring. Some sources say that farming and after farm procedures account for 18% of all GHG emissions.

However, a lot about the lifecycle of the GHGs is still unknown and it proves very difficult at the moment to name exact numbers.

In the next issue we will introduce you to **carbon footprints** and **life cycle assessments**.

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Supporting sustainable land use in Wales



Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 27th February 2008—Miscanthus—demonstration of established Miscanthus plots and (conditions permitting) harvesting. Pembrokeshire

Thursday 28th February 2008—WAG Horticulture Conference,

Tuesday 4th March 2008—Fruit tree grafting workshop at Seiont Nursery, nr. Caernarfon

Thursday 6th March 2008—Fruit tree grafting workshop at Treberfedd Farm, nr. Lampeter

7th—9th March 2008—Greener Homes and Buildings, National Exhibition, Builth Wells (public days: 8th/9th March)

Thursday 13th March 2008—WAG Horticulture Conference, Bodelwyddan

Friday 14th March 2008—Managing farm woodlands for game shooting (open day), nr. Machynlleth

Monday 17th March 2008—Low Carbon Land Use Conference, Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth

For more information about any of CALU's events, please contact us.

About CALU



CALU is the Farming Connect Development Centre for alternative land uses. CALU exists to transfer information and technology within the areas of:

- Horticulture
- Bio-energy
- Alternative Livestock
- Alternative Crops
- Farm Woodlands

CALU has three dedicated members of staff and a network of associate specialists covering all the topics within CALU's remit.

CALU ACTIVITIES:

- Open days
- Demonstration events
- Technical leaflets
- Training days
- Press articles
- Crop information sheets
- Project reports
- Talks
- Producer groups
- Agricultural shows
- Information booklets

CALU PARTNERS:

- University of Wales, Bangor
- Welsh College of Horticulture
- ADAS
- Coed Cymru
- Coleg Llysfasi

