

**1<sup>st</sup> National Care Farm Conference**

**“Farming for a healthier society, social care and economic opportunities”**

**at**

**Harper Adams University College**

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2005**



## **Executive Summary:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Care Farm Conference was planned and organised by a partnership of Gordon Gatward, Director of the Arthur Rank Centre, Dr Kim A. Jobst, Healthcare Adviser to the Bulmer Foundation, Debbie Wilcox, Manager of the CaRE Network at Harper Adams University College, and Ian Egginton-Metters, Assistant Director of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens. Each organisation separately and synchronously became aware of a number of individuals and/or families offering on-farm health, education and welfare services for people with a range of specialist or particular needs, and the potential for deep, lasting and sustainable healthcare development through engaging with nature, the land and in particular the farming communities of the United Kingdom. These providers often feel isolated and in the absence of a national network lack both the benefits of collaborative action (e.g. marketing, training, service access, etc.), mutual support and political impact.

The team came to the conclusion that a national conference could highlight the work that providers are doing around the country, raise awareness of schemes already underway in Europe, review some of the practical problems associated with offering day care services on farms and focus on how rural communities, and farming in particular, could help to meet the current and future health and social care needs of our society.

With sponsorship secured from Scottish & Newcastle Plc and the Bulmer Foundation, and a venue at Harper Adams University College in Shropshire, the organisers approached potential speakers. Sir Don Curry, Chairman of the Sustainable Farming & Food Implementation Group DEFRA, and Dr Michael Dixon, Chairman of the NHS Alliance, were keenly interested in the subject and kindly agreed to speak, thus taking the first steps towards the aim of a committed alliance between healthcare and agriculture. The organisers were also firmly of the opinion that the conference was about highlighting work which is successfully taking place already. To this end, practitioners from Highfields Happy Hens in Derbyshire, Herefordshire BODS and the Pennyhooks Project in Wiltshire were invited to address the delegates. These three projects, which deal with young offenders and those excluded from mainstream education, disadvantaged youngsters as well as adults and children with all kinds of mental, behavioural and physical challenges, and young people with autism, reflect just a little of the inspirational work taking place in the UK.

The growing development of Care Farms in Holland was highlighted by Ina Kattenbroek, National Coordinator for the Dutch Care Farm National Support Centre. The centre now supports almost 500 farmers across Holland and has grown by over 500% in the last 5 years.

Press releases, coordinated by the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) were sent out, and invitations were circulated to a wide range of organisations and individuals nationally. Over 120 delegates registered to attend, with a number of organisations already involved in this type of work expressing an interest in exhibiting.

Despite blizzards in many parts of the country on the day of the conference, over 120 turned out. Professor Wynne Jones Principal of HAUC, welcomed people to Harper Adams, and highlighted the work already taking place at the University through the CaRE Network. He was followed by Mr Rob Garner, CEO of the Bulmer Foundation, who welcomed delegates on behalf of the sponsors and talked of the Bulmer Foundation's work on health and sustainable land use. Gordon Gatward, Director and CEO of ARC, chaired the day and opened by explaining how the Arthur Rank Centre came to be part of the organisation of the conference and also gave an overview of the work done by Professor Jules Pretty and team at the University of Essex, on the benefits of "green exercise".

Dr Kim A. Jobst was the first keynote speaker.

He discussed the work being developed by the Bulmer Foundation, particularly focusing on the meaning of disease and "diseases of meaning", exemplified by the effect on our nation's health

as a result of alcohol, the epidemic of obesity, heart disease, depression and other complex chronic and autoimmune diseases for which biomolecular medicine has no simple or particularly effective solutions. He highlighted the massive cost to the National Health Service of managing these chronic conditions and went on to address the potential cost-benefits that could result from the extensive development of care farming, leading to what he calls “the concept of humanitarian crop diversification”, or “the growing of people”, the importance of which could not, he said, be overstated.

Sustainability and reconnection were discussed by Sir Don Curry who emphasised how key they were to this conference. He asked why farms should get involved in care farm initiatives in the context of the three pillars of sustainability: 1. economic, 2. environmental and 3. social, and addressed the reasons as he sees them. He went on to discuss some of the difficulties associated with welcoming people on to farms, issues surrounding risk and health and safety, and ended by addressing how we can overcome these challenges and take such bold and far reaching initiatives forward.

Dr Michael Dixon began by saying how care farm initiatives could potentially answer some of the problems faced by the National Health Service at the moment. He looked in detail at the work done by the University of Essex and also mentioned the positive effects that animals can have on the sick. He ended by emphasising the importance of getting successful work analysed and written up to provide credibility.

The practitioners, Dave Davoll (BODS), Roger Hosking (Highfields Happy Hens) and Lydia Otter and Richard Hurford (The Pennyhooks Project), then highlighted how their work was impacting on peoples' lives in practice, explaining how each project had come in to being, discussing individual cases and assessing the problems associated with running a care farm initiative, including the challenges of funding, health and safety and the attitudes of neighbours when dealing with people who may have had criminal records or who are struggling with problems of addiction and withdrawal.

Over lunch there was ample opportunity for delegates to network and look at the exhibitions.

Ina Kattenbroek opened the afternoon session by addressing care farming from a Dutch perspective. She explained the origins and role of the support centre and also the system of quality assurance that is an important part of the success of care farms in Holland. She went on to discuss the approach of the farmer, asking and examining what makes a care farm a good place to be. She ended by stressing the importance of measuring outcomes in order to endorse the value of care farms.

As a final session to the day, delegates were given the opportunity to get into groups and were given four questions to discuss to provide the organisers with feedback and action points for future directions, so as to ensure that this initiative is driven forward **by the practitioners and users for the practitioners and users**. Delegates were also asked to complete and return feedback forms to allow the organisers to assess the impact of the day and give opportunity for further reflection as to the need for a national care farm network. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and can be seen in Appendix 4.

Since the conference, the organisers have met a number of times and have also had a very positive follow-up meeting with Sir Don Curry and Dr Michael Dixon, who have both pledged to offer their continued support and have joined the Steering Committee for the National Network. Rachel Hine, Senior Research Officer on Jules Pretty's team at Essex University has also entered into discussions as to how to develop further research into the benefits associated with care farming. A bid has also been put into the Countryside Agency to employ a full time Project Officer for the initiative to progress effectively and to enable us to appropriately engage with the relevant governmental agencies. This will ensure that the benefits of care farming are better understood and resourced and provide the fullest range of networking opportunities for practitioners and purchasers of services.

## **Contents:**

## **Page:**

<b>1. Background</b>	5
<b>2. Aims</b>	5 - 6
<b>3. Conference Agenda</b>	7
<b>4. Welcome Addresses</b>	
4.1 Professor Wynne Jones	8
4.2 Mr Rob Garner	8 - 9
<b>5. Chairman's Address</b>	10
<b>6. Keynote Speakers</b>	
6.1 Dr Kim Jobst	11 - 16
6.2 Sir Don Curry	16 - 18
6.3 Dr Michael Dixon	18 - 21
6.4 Ms Ina Kattenbroek	21 - 25
<b>7. Practitioners</b>	
7.1 Mr Dave Davoll	25 - 26
7.2 Ms Lydia Otter & Mr Richard Hurford	26 - 30
7.3 Mr Roger Hosking	30 - 31
<b>8. Feedback and Action Points</b>	32
<b>9. Conclusion</b>	33

## **Appendices:**

1. Background to the organisers	34
2. Speaker & Practitioner Biographies	35 - 37
3. Delegate List	38 - 48
4. Summary of feedback from questionnaires	49 - 53

# **Farming for a healthier society, social care and economic opportunities**

## **1. Background:**

A number of concerns have been expressed by different professionals, academics and community groups around the country as to the resources available to provide a positive experience to enhance the physical and mental health of those who are increasingly suffering in our industrialised and commercial society.

Gordon Gatward, Director of the Arthur Rank Centre, Dr Kim A. Jobst, Healthcare Advisor to the Bulmer Foundation and Debbie Wilcox, Project Manager for the CaRE Network at Harper Adams University College, had been working within their own organisations to highlight the benefits that farms, rural areas and working on the land could provide for those most needing help in our society. Ian Egginton-Metters, Assistant Director for the Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens was also part of the organising team.

The partnership between the four has come into being to increase the awareness of a number of individuals or families who can offer on-farm health, education and welfare services for people with a range of specialist or particular needs. These providers often feel isolated and in the absence of a national network, lack both the benefits of collaborative action (e.g. marketing, training, service access etc.) and mutual support.

While the Arthur Rank Centre and Harper Adams University College have strong links with rural and farming communities, the Bulmer Foundation provides the essential contact with the medical world. Through their parent company, Scottish & Newcastle Plc, the Bulmer Foundation was able to provide sponsorship to allow a national care farm conference to be run.

## **2. Aims of the conference and future opportunities**

The conference which took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2005 brought together representatives from the health service, and farming, charitable and voluntary organisations along with farmers who are already providing on-farm health, education and welfare services. The focus was on how rural communities and farming in particular can help to meet the health and social care needs of our society.

Keynote speakers were invited to demonstrate how the NHS, farming and rural communities can work together.

**Dr Michael Dixon OBE**, Chairman of the NHS Alliance and **Dr Kim Jobst** representing the health care sector.

**Sir Donald Curry KB, CBE**, Chairman of the Sustainable Farming & Food Implementation Group, DEFRA, representing the farming sector.

**Ms Ina Kattenbroek**, National Coordinator of the Dutch Care Farm National Support Centre representing care farms in Holland.

Practitioners included:-

Mr Roger Hosking – Highfields Happy Hens

Ms Lydia Otter & Mr Richard Hurford – The Pennyhooks Project

Mr Dave Davoll – Herefordshire BODS

The aims of the conference were to address some of the issues confronting those running on farm enterprises e.g.:

- A review of some of the practical problems e.g. insurance, legislative requirements, health and safety and funding
- An exploration of the economic opportunities for farmers who provide these services
- A consideration of the wider social benefits resulting from these enterprises
- A discussion as to how the Government might encourage more farmers to consider such care provision
- A review of various current social farming/therapeutic projects
- A presentation on how the Care Farm system operates in Holland

Invitations were sent out to organisations within the farming, health, voluntary and community sectors and press releases to local and national journals and newspapers.

On the day, despite poor weather conditions, Harper Adams University College welcomed over 120 delegates from an enormous geographical area.

The day was highly successful, a copy of the agenda, a review of the keynote speeches, practitioners and workshop outcomes follow, together with our conclusions and action points for future direction.

### **3. AGENDA**

- 9.00 – 9.45am           **Registration & Coffee**
- 9.45am                   WELCOME ADDRESS  
**Professor Wynne Jones FRAGS., FIAGR**, Principal, Harper Adams University College  
**Mr Rob Garner MSc., DPA., CertCIPD**, Chief Executive, The Bulmer Foundation
- 10.00am                 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION  
**Rev'd. Dr. Gordon Gatward OBE. FRAGS., FIAGR**, Programme Chairman & Director of the Arthur Rank Centre
- 10.10am                 RETURN TO THE LAND, RETURN TO MEANING: *The Vital Potential of Care Farms for Our Nation's Healthcare.*  
**Professor. Kim A. Jobst MA. DM. MRCP. MFHom.**, Health Adviser to the Bulmer Foundation; Consultant Physician & Medical Homeopath, Visiting Professor in Healthcare and Integrated Medicine, Oxford Brookes University
- 10.40am                 SOCIAL FARMING: *The Value of Practical Farming for Health Provision at a Rehabilitative and Therapeutic Level.*  
**Sir Don Curry KB. CBE. FRAGS.**, Chairman of the Sustainable Farming & Food Implementation Group.
- 11.10am                 **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11.40am                 FROM SWORDS TO PLOUGH SHARES - *Care Farms: An integral part of primary care?*  
**Dr. Michael Dixon OBE. FRCGP.**, Chairman, The NHS Alliance; Trustee, The Prince of Wales' Foundation for Integrated Health; Honorary Senior Lecturer in Integrated Healthcare, Peninsula Medical School
- 12.10pm                 PRESENTATIONS FROM PRACTITIONERS –  
**Mr Roger Hosking**, Highfields Happy Hens,  
**Ms Lydia Otter**, The Pennyhooks Project  
**Mr Dave Davoll**, Herefordshire BODS: Returning disaffected youth to meaningful lives through nature
- 1.00pm                   **LUNCH AND OPPORTUNITY TO MEET PRACTITIONERS AND VIEW INFORMATION STALLS**
- 2.30pm                   THE DUTCH CARE FARM PROGRAMME: *National perspectives, lessons learned & potentials for agricultural diversification, community care and sustainable development.*  
**Ms Ina Kattenbroek**, National Coordinator of the Dutch Care Farm National Support Centre.
- 3.00pm                   DISCUSSION GROUPS & ACTION POINTS FOR FUTURE DIRECTION
- 4.00pm                   **Close and Afternoon tea**

## **4. WELCOME ADDRESSES**

### **4.1 Professor Wynne Jones – Principal, Harper Adams University College**

Welcome to Harper Adams and the very first National Care Farm Conference. I'm welcoming you not only on behalf of the college itself, but also on behalf of our sponsors and collaborators, Scottish & Newcastle, The Arthur Rank Centre and the Bulmer Foundation.

For the last three years we here at Harper Adams University College have been exploring the possibilities which the therapeutic qualities of the countryside offer for development of sustainable rural businesses that offer support for those with special health and welfare needs.

From the outset, our focus has been the opportunity this offers for farm-based business diversification. Much of our work so far through our own CaRE Project has been in connection with short-term respite breaks for those with particular needs and their carers, whether separately or together.

We are convinced, from our experience, of the power of networks. This experience has been gained through our existing WiRE operation and our creation of the National Rural Knowledge Exchange. The experience has taught us that it is rural people themselves that are the driving force behind sustainable economic development in the countryside. Today we are proud to welcome you, so many of whom have already recognised the role that rural areas have to play in building a healthier society. We at Harper Adams are with you all the way. The College is committed to contributing whatever it can to support those involved in providing on-farm health, education or welfare services.

This conference has been driven by the recognition that the countryside can offer so much more than merely temporary respite. This recognition was not confined to ourselves. The Bulmer Foundation and the Arthur Rank Centre have been instrumental in the creation of today's event. We are proud to host this event and I am delighted to introduce you to Gordon Gatward, Director of the Arthur Rank Centre, who will chair the proceedings, and Rob Garner, Chief Executive of the Bulmer Foundation, who will now say a few words.

### **4.2 Mr Rob Garner - Chief Executive, The Bulmer Foundation**

The Bulmer Foundation is an independent Charity established in 2001 by H P Bulmer Ltd, the world's largest cider-makers, to complement the company's own sustainable development strategy, as part of the company's commitment to its rural community. Following the acquisition of Bulmers in 2003, its new owners, Scottish & Newcastle plc, have provided the charity with core funding and have given an increasing range of other forms of support and encouragement. Both Bulmers and S&N are sponsors of this conference – a sign of their commitment to this work and I would like personally to thank the representatives of those two companies who are here today.

The Foundation's mission is to enable and demonstrate sustainable development in conjunction with a fundamental shift in our human understanding and values. It follows from this that we do not believe that a sustainable world can be built from the mindset that has created so much unsustainable practice. Thus much of our focus is in changing mind sets. We seek to do this through a five pronged agenda covering Education, Health, Land Use, Business and Investment.

What is unique about the Foundation is that, to my knowledge, we are the only organisation that is seeking to drive an integrated agenda covering these five programmes with the intention of changing public perceptions in favour of sustainable development, demonstrating 'on the ground' programmes at the same time. It is our focus on integration which defines our work; the way we bring the different aspects of our agenda together that makes the difference.

We live in a society that has placed a premium on individualism over community and sharing. We live apart, separated, in our boxes. Our hospitals and businesses thrive on departments, sections, specialists, people who rarely have time to talk to each other. After 30 years in industry my experience is that great energy, great ideas tend to emerge when we join together, when we cross inter disciplinary boundaries. Only by breaking down these barriers can we really enter each other's world. So it is the integration that is key and this is where the Foundation's approach to care farms comes in.

My favourite definition of education is that it derives from the same etymological stem as to educate, i.e.: to lead out. In our approach to education we are seeking to lead out the potential that lies within each individual. In a care farm environment many individuals come with their sense of potential highly suppressed. We seek to reconnect the individual firstly with themselves, secondly with their fellow human beings, thirdly with nature and fourthly with whatever the individual sees beyond all of that.

In our Land Use strategy we also seek to reconnect. For so long we have separated out farming from food and health. Industrialisation has separated out food production which has led us to a world of food additives, toxins and obesity. At the Foundation we are seeking fundamentally to challenge this, to turn it on its head, to draw out the positive reinforcing links between healthy soil, healthy food and healthy people. We seek to reconnect the chain.

Health and land use are inextricably connected. Care farms seek to bring out the therapeutic benefits of working with nature. This in turn connects with our educational agenda, helping people to reconnect. Care farms also have investment implications for farmers – as we seek to persuade public and private funders this is a wise and cost-effective use of their money. We will use sustainable accounting methodologies which were developed in Bulmers for several years and demonstrate the true cost of many unsustainable practices. When we can show land based therapy is far more cost effective in the short term and even more so in the long term than conventional methods we believe funding will follow.

The Bulmer Foundation seeks to change attitudes and beliefs in favour of sustainable development. Without such changes we believe that no real lasting and profound change in society will occur. We need action as well. That is why the Foundation's mission is to enable and demonstrate.

We are keen to ensure we create a demonstration care farm in Herefordshire as soon as possible to build on what already exists. Hence our link with Adam Evans, a local farmer here today, and the local charity BODS of which you will hear more later.

The key themes are integration and action.

I hope the day will bring us together as a community. If we step into each other's worlds and think together, something really creative will occur. This will lead to real action that makes a positive difference.

## **5. Chairman's Address**

### **Rev'd Dr. Gordon Gatward - Director, The Arthur Rank Centre**

A major part of our work as a charity for the Royal Agricultural Society of England are the social, community, ethical and spiritual issues of rural life. We are also the national rural resources unit for the churches in England.

A couple of years ago we were approached by two social workers who were interested by data they had seen from the USA on how farming was being used to provide therapy for those who need it. These social workers were working with people with drug and alcohol abuse and were very keen to purchase a farm to experiment with this form of therapy.

They came to the Arthur Rank Centre as they know we always 'know a man that can help'. We put them in touch with a Land Agent, who himself was involved with a Care Farm project.

It made us think how wide this practice could be in the UK and how did people meet others to exchange views, experiences and best practices. Once we started looking into it we discovered a large amount of evidence to support care farming. Over the last few weeks we have identified two pieces of research recently reported.

One from the University of Essex where Jules Pretty has been doing some work. He summarises his research "that evidence indicates that exposure to nature can make positive contributions to health, help people recover from pre-existing stresses or problems, have an immunising effect so protecting people from future stress and help them concentrate and think more clearly". (Pretty et al, 2004)

From the University of Loughborough we have Joe Sempik with us today and he and his team have been looking at horticulture and the link with therapy and health. They also found through their research that farming i.e. practical agriculture could also bring benefits. They wrote "that preliminary findings indicate that although people experience a sense of general well being when in contact with nature, the effect is much more pronounced for disabled and marginalised people as it helps them to become less socially excluded, as well as experiencing positive physical and psychological improvements. They also reconnect with their communities, some reaching a higher level of socio-economic identity. These recent developments suggest an interest in nature and animal care as a form of therapy is growing alongside the use of horticulture". (Sempik, 2004)

They are just two recent examples of a great deal of evidence to show that this is a very valuable form of care for people who are damaged and people who are ill. One of the other things we discovered are the number of people who are engaged in this work ,very often individuals, small charities, small organisations who are often doing this work on their own.

The other aspect we found was that whilst in this country it tends to be happening in isolated pockets, in many other countries it is in fact part of government policy, and there is real drive and promotion for the development of the care farm concept.

Returning to Jules Pretty's report it includes this – by 2004 there were

- 500 Care farms in Norway
- 430 in Holland
- 300 in Germany
- 250 in Austria
- 140 in Belgium
- 15 in Slovenia

In the UK no provision has yet been made for such care farms.

What we are hoping is that today we will begin to address that issue.

There are three conference aims: -

- To provide an opportunity for practitioners to meet and share experiences.
- To promote care farming amongst farmers and health and social service professionals.
- To help determine the type of care farm network that needs to be created.

We hope by the end of today to have achieved at least some of them if not all of them.

## **6. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

### **6.1 Dr Kim A. Jobst, Health Advisor to The Bulmer Foundation**

#### **Return to the Land - Return to Meaning: 'The Vital Potential of Care Farms for Our Nation's Healthcare.'**

I shall start with a dramatic statement, but nevertheless one I believe to be true, and it is this: This conference marks the beginning of a whole new phase in the delivery of Healthcare in the United Kingdom. It is for me and for our organising team the realisation of a dream, for we feel that in hosting this first National Care Farm Conference, we are together participating in an historic event, one that one day will be seen to have been a significant moment in transforming health care provision in the UK. That notwithstanding and despite the fact that we emailed and circulated the whole membership of the NHS Alliance as well as many other doctors and medical healthcare providers, only Michael Dixon and I are here!

It is my belief that unless we reconnect the 'soul to the soil' we will not be able fully to enjoy sustainable health. There is something vital to sustainable health in our connection to the land, whether that be through good fresh locally produced food, or whether it be through actually working or enjoying the land in some form or another. However for many that connection has been severed by life circumstances and the way life is lived. Never in our history, especially in the developing world, has it been so important therefore that re-connection takes place. It is the contention of this whole initiative that unless such reconnection to the land, to the soil, takes place it will not be possible fully to enjoy optimal health and the fruits of the planet.

From work in this country and also further afield in Europe, there is little "hard" evidence documenting the extensive benefits of Care Farming. It appears that in the UK so called hard evidence is required before any funding will be made available to begin even any pilot work on Care Farming; a vicious circle of course because it means that any such initiatives at present rely heavily on charitable sources for early funding. In Holland by contrast, the Government recognised the inherent sense in such work and made over 6 years worth of funding available to begin the work, to set in place an infrastructure from which the hard evidence could be derived. How wonderful it would be if we could inspire such an attitude in our Ministers in the UK. Perhaps Sir Don Curry and Dr Dixon will be able help us. I feel certain that they will!

I have titled this talk, "*Return to the Land - Return to Meaning: 'The Vital Potential of Care Farms for Our Nation's Healthcare'*", because I believe that we are not just talking about the care of people, we are also talking about the care of the land. Often people think that when we address care farming we mean only those that are mentally or physically disabled. This is emphatically not the case. We are also specifically addressing those with behavioural, emotional, psychiatric, stress related and addictive disorders, those who have been disaffected, hurt, ostracised and isolated from society for any number of reasons, and this *includes* the farming community as especially farmers themselves.

This, then, is a cyclical process, one in which our roots, the very essence of life itself is at stake, for if we deny our essential dependence on nature, on the soil for our livelihoods the current malaise and epidemic of diseases of meaning will only accelerate.

In this context, the importance of meaning cannot be overstated. In order to understand the connection between the soil and the soul, there *has* to be meaning. This meaning has to have what I refer to as a “vertical dimension” in other words one that links us with a sense of significance greater than ourselves, a spiritual dimension, however that is expressed in an individual’s life. Horizontal meaning addresses only the intellect, the linear intellectual relationship between things and people, but this does not fulfil the human spirit, man’s search for and thirst for meaning. There is an abundance of evidence for this. To develop such work, to go beyond the horizontal and to embrace and work with the vertical will need a different sort of mind set, a difference and deeper understanding. That is what this meeting is about. That is what the practitioners you will hear from are doing and why they are doing it. That is in fact why the work they do works!

One of the quotes that most inspired me as a medical student came from Oliver Wendell Holmes a great physician of the last century. In his address to the medical students at their graduation, he told them that, ‘A mind that is stretched by a new idea can never go back to its original dimensions’. Taking the idea of care farming in to practice is one such example. It is one that will change peoples’ lives for ever and I believe for the better.

When first I approached Dr Michael Dixon to address this conference and explained to him what we are seeking to implement, it was exciting to hear the passion in his voice, and his understanding of the fact that this work could change the health service and healthcare delivery.

Our job is to go out and stretch the minds of those who control the purse strings, those who can make the money flow, those who control decision making at national and international levels (for this is not an idea confined to the UK or even to Europe), those in government and elsewhere who are in a position to make a real difference to the lives of millions.

The question that has haunted me for years and has determined in large measure the reasons for my own somewhat unusual career development is, “Why in the most technologically and scientifically advanced, the most affluent and liberal era of human history are so many people so ill with what I have come to call Diseases of Meaning<sup>1</sup>? By Diseases of Meaning I mean addictions, chronic and incurable mental and physical diseases such as alcohol and substance abuse, depression and other psychiatric disease, obesity, allergies, arthritis, cancer, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, dysmenorrhoea, migraine, skin diseases and many others. Why all these diseases when we have the largest pharmaceutical empire and the most sophisticated medical technological development the world has ever known?!

Let us look at Alcoholism as an archetypal disease of meaning. It is a disease out of control in the UK, worse than anywhere else in Europe and possibly in the world. Having been ethically challenged initially by the fact that The Bulmer Foundation receives its core funding from a company whose aim it is to sell alcohol, I am now happy to do so because it is evident that the Foundation and the company have taken the decision to examine carefully, ‘How they can work to improve the quality and meaning of people’s lives, the reasons that people turn to drink and ways of addressing the meaning of alcohol in their lives, rather than simply address accusations that the organisation is somehow solely responsible for the decisions that people take’. Clearly the company has a part to play but ultimately the responsibility lies with each individual and the society in which the individual resides. To address this, to enable lasting change in peoples’ lives, we need to work on this together; we need to address meaning and the way that meaning affects decisions and behaviours.

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<sup>1</sup> Diseases of Meaning, Manifestations of Health and Metaphor – Jobst KA, Shostak D, Whitehouse PJ. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine: Research on Paradigm, Practice and Policy 1999; 5(6):495-502.

My perspective is a challenging one; that in order to stop people becoming addicted we need to address some fundamental meanings in society and in our culture as a whole, that we need to return to the soil, to an understanding of our roots at a deeply pragmatic and fundamental level, whether that be through city farms or deeply within our rural heritage.

It is my contention, and the belief of this entire initiative that this *shift in consciousness* will be more potent than any Prozac, more potent than any Alco pops, more potent than any cannabis or ecstasy or speed, more potent than any belief that the spirit is to be found stuck in a bottle or at the point of a needle.

In Herefordshire over a quarter of the population regard themselves to be in less than good health or having a long term illness. Remarkably the vast majority of conditions that these people are suffering from can be significantly impacted upon by simple changes in lifestyle, involving the land, exercise, diet and nutrition i.e. an *integrated approach to health care*. For this to be possible there needs to be first and foremost a shift in perception and meaning.

**Alcoholism within England**

Number of people who drink 'heavily' within England	Number of people who drink 'moderately to heavy'
1.8M drink 'very heavily' 35 - 50 units per wk	6.4M drink moderate to heavy in England.

**Source: 'Health in Herefordshire', Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2002, p.19**

Government statistics show alcohol related harm cost the UK over £21 billion in 2003. It is therefore evident that we need only make a tiny change to the numbers of people involved to free relatively vast amounts of money for the development of an initiative such as the Care Farm Network which will be going into reconnecting the soul and the soil. When one considers that that figure includes 1.2 million violent incidents and at least 360,000 alcohol related domestic violence acts, and the fact that when people are allowed to work, to have meaningful activity on farms or on the land, with others, such behaviours diminish dramatically, it is surely self evident that this work is a must!. However, I am also firmly of the opinion that it is young people in particular we need to target, for if we can transform behaviour at an early stage we will be developing deeply effective members of our communities who will sustain meaningful change and growth over generations to come. As a foundation and as a company some inspiring initiatives involving the arts and performance are being developed which it is hoped will serve to inspire young people nationwide.

Let us look also at some simple physical parameters that reflect disease which can and will be positively affected by the care farm Initiative once it spreads nationwide. Obesity is but one example, but one that is in need of urgent attention and sadly, like alcohol, the UK has the worst figures for any developed nation.

## Obesity within England

Levels of Obesity in England	% of obese children in England	Associated Problems of Obesity
67% (2/3) of the population are obese or overweight	23.6% of British children under 4 are overweight, compared with 14.5% ten years earlier.	Obesity is associated with many health problems including coronary heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, osteoarthritis, back pain, psychological damage and stress, and cancer

**Source: House of Commons Health Committee, Obesity, Third Report of Session 2003-2004, Volume 1**

Why are children fat? – I believe it is not simply a matter of too much passive effort in front of a TV. There is no doubt that when children are allowed out into the countryside, they simply can not stop running about. But there is more to the story and this concerns the food we eat, the way it is prepared and most importantly the way it is sourced and grown.

These health problems are what we as a foundation and we as a care farm initiative are about, especially those associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Yes, dealing with them is challenging, but these challenges, are at the very heart of the social responsibility agenda of the National Care Farm Network. I firmly believe that strategic initiatives within the movement can and will make a significant impact on the health and well being of many people currently trapped within the bottle or stuck at the point of a needle. They are searching for meaning desperately and in an inebriated stupor this meaning is to be found elsewhere. Such initiatives as the care farm programme, and subsequently land-based residential initiatives and the urban centres such as city farms where care, nutrition and education can proceed together will serve to help those people create new meanings so that they no longer need to be sought via the spirit in the bottle or at the end of a needle. One needs only talk to some of those engaged in such initiatives to know for certain of the truth of this. The power of nature, of reconnecting and of being busy can not be overstated.

So what is a care farm and the concept of humanitarian crop diversification? This must be addressed first by recognising that Agriculture is at very low ebb in this country, as is Medicine and the medical profession. There is low morale in specialist practice in hospitals as well as in General Practice in the community. The same is found in agriculture. Consider this most damning of statistics: One farmer kills him or herself every 10 days in the UK.



Why? Because they are desperate and they are lonely. They are desperate financially, just as they are emotionally and spiritually. Meaning has all but vanished at a time when farming has been so dreadfully devalued by the political process. So farmers have to diversify. The care farm is an potentially fabulous form of diversification that could bring wealth back to farming. Care farming could be a partnership between farmer and those who benefit from involvement, the care team and my hope is with the national political agenda. It could be an inspirational rejuvenation of meaning nationwide.

The financial implications of such an initiative are far reaching. It costs many thousands of pounds to send an addict out of county from Herefordshire for a 12 to 16 week stay in a residential rehabilitation unit.

With each such placement the box of statutory care has then been ticked, but effectiveness remains a moot point at best. Often there is no follow up, and no evaluation of what has happened. Such service provision can be provided on our own care farm initiative, the BODS-Coppice Farm initiative in Herefordshire, for a fraction of the cost, but to far greater and sustained benefit. We know there is less than a 10 to 20% recidivist rate. Such a venture as this brings together integrated approaches to living, health and well-being, with the powerful therapeutic benefits of being and working with nature, on the land, in the woods and forests and with animals. In some projects, such as the BODS initiative for example, these meaningful experiences are complemented by skilled mentoring and support with professional, therapeutic interventions available where required. This is but one example of the concept of humanitarian crop diversification.

The financial implications of such an initiative are far reaching; if an impact is made on even only 10% of the alcoholic population of Herefordshire, helping them to return to work and to a meaningful role in society, the potential savings are *very, very* great: in Herefordshire alone they would run to a few millions of pounds per annum.

We are currently engaged as a Foundation in research to monetarise the true cost of current care strategies and the potential impact of care farming on them. Such savings *can* and *should* be ploughed back in to the services to further develop plans and render them ever more sustainable and financially viable. It is self evident that this would have a significant impact on drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, allowing many more to be treated and to enter rehabilitation programs, enhancing delivery and meeting ever greater numbers of targets. Derek Wanless, who was commissioned to report on the state of the NHS, summed up the current crisis in care succinctly in stating that 'The Health Service is bankrupt'. It is my belief that this initiative offers a real solution to this impasse particularly if we can inspire a deep partnership with industry, as evidenced in the lead taken by Scottish and Newcastle plc today.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) figures point to depression being the foremost amongst the causes of ill health not only now but especially over the next 15-20 years. In part this assertion is based on the fact that other behaviours such as smoking, over-eating, high alcohol consumption and substance abuse are coping mechanisms for mental ill-health and stress. Clearly all of them have their own serious consequences. Additionally many urgent physical health challenges, including obesity and coronary heart disease are linked to sedentary lifestyles. In the UK, there is evidence for a dramatic fall in physical activity over the past 50 years. Yet it is known that physically active people have a lower risk of dying from coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, strokes, and colon cancer. It is my contention that Care Farming and a greater return to intimacy with the natural environment is one of the most potent ways in which physical and spiritually meaningful activity will re-enter normality, one which also have the added benefit of enabling our society to value farming communities appropriately. Surely then, it is self evident how vitally important and far reaching these ideas are?

If the idea itself is not self evident, let us consider some WHO figures from the mid 1990's when conservative estimates were of 330 million people being depressed world-wide, with predictions that 10 - 20% of the world population would be significantly clinically depressed during their lives. As such Depression fed a *\$7 billion* market for anti-depressant drugs in the mid 1990's, led by Prozac, which earned \$2.6 billion in 1998. In the USA alone depression cost society *\$44 billion* a year of which *\$12.4 billion* was for treatment but *\$7.5 billion for the costs of suicide*. The rest, over *\$24 billion*, was believed to be for lost productivity. Furthermore at that time at least 106,000 people died as a result of routine best practice therapeutic pharmaceutical prescribing in hospitals in 1994 in the USA.

Surely these figures alone make it an imperative that we look to safer, more cost effective ways to impact on the root causes of depression which is arguably *the* archetypal disease of meaning of our time. Is there evidence for such a potential impact of care farming?

There is, not least being that conducted by Professor Pretty and his group which showed dramatic improvements in well-being and most importantly self esteem after only one day's exposure. What then might a prolonged period of five days a week over some months enable? The thought is exciting. The potential enormous. The imperative urgent!

A large amount of information and evidence regarding the benefits of "green exercise" can be found in the slide appendix at the back of this report.

Locally it is very important that we work in partnership with NHS communities, integrated with Local Authority and other agencies to tackle inequalities. **Care farming must not be an independent or charitable venture.** It **has** to be integrated in to the nation's healthcare agenda. It **must** be picked up by government centrally. That is where the responsibility lies for enabling the real return of responsibility to those who need the care and the opportunities, those who can then give back and re-connect with community and meaning at so many levels. This network or association must become a powerful lobby.

What is interesting about the extant care farm initiatives is how different and diverse they are. What makes them work is that at their heart are charismatic, determined, committed and passionate individuals.

That also is the challenge which will face the organisation if it is to survive: the challenge of uniting, pulling together and working for a common aim. Otherwise factionism will destroy it before it has even begun!

I believe that we stand at a unique moment in time when a very big difference could be made to the lives of many millions of people. The national Care Farm Network is there for its users to take charge of. We have been its custodians to date and will continue to be so until an executive is formed. We look to you and to those who have not been able to come to address us, to come forward, and to unite to make this quiet revolution in healthcare a great moment in our history.

## **6.2 Sir Don Curry KBE, Chairman of the Sustainable Farming & Food Implementation Group, DEFRA**

### **Social Farming: The Value of Practical Farming for Health Provision at a Rehabilitative and Therapeutic Level**

Sustainability and reconnect are key words in what we are addressing at this conference and I would like to position what we are considering today against a background of activity that I am responsible for.

It is tough for the farming industry, which is going through a dramatic period of change, however there are lots of new opportunities for farmers, and care farms represent one of these opportunities. Looking at other multi functional uses for agriculture and land use is a culture change that many farmers are finding excessively challenging, but it is essential we do get back to sustainable farming systems and communities

Sustainability has three pillars: economic, environmental and social. We need each of these three pillars to function in order to achieve sustainability.

The economic and environmental pillars -  
We are encouraging farmers to collaborate, to co-operate and work together and also to think about collaboration which may lead to delivery of other things.



It is essential that we endeavour to continue to improve efficiency on our farms operating in a very commodity driven global environment. However, a business plan based purely on the production of commodities is not a secure business plan. We need to look at ways of differentiating our products by adding value particularly in getting closer to the consumer, if we adopt the right strategies. Some farms have already achieved this and some good examples exist of work which explores other economic activities to become less dependent on commodity production.

The ability of farmers to change is only limited by their imagination for new ideas.

A new scheme from DEFRA that is available "The Entry Level Scheme," will encourage farmers to deliver effective environmental management and to reduce the environmental damage that has taken place over the last 50/60 years.

I am concerned about government attitude towards freeing up international trade. Global trading rules need to be established based on sustainability to protect fragile economies to allow us to proceed in a global market in a better way.

I am also deeply concerned about the lack of young people who are working in agriculture and the countryside generally. It is so important that we begin with children in city schools to introduce them to the countryside. Many of the challenges would be resolved if children had better understanding of what the countryside can deliver.

We bring together the need for better nutrition and better diet for school children and also the procurement of food locally and regionally to use in school meals to deliver nutritional standards. We could establish a network of farms to produce the food to the schools; the children can visit the farms doing curriculum projects on the farms. We could remove a lot of the social problems if we give the children insight into at an early stage.

Changes within DEFRA and the agents of DEFRA - The Countryside Agency will become the Commission for Rural Communities. This is a significant period of change and the role of the organisations that Gordon Gatward represents, the RABI, Farm Crisis Network (FCN) and many others that are providing support at a time when there are casualties is more important than ever before.

Care Farm initiatives – why should farms get involved? The case is made already. For the farming industry this is not just a diversification opportunity to generate some income by using farms as a base for social care but is also a social responsibility. We have as farmers to respond to this challenge - farmers have a role to help to reconnect with the public on this level. Reconnection is what we are about, it is essential to reconnect people who live in cities with ourselves who live in the countryside. If we go back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war there were land army girls sent out into the countryside to work on the farms from cities and establish important links with farming families. Evacuees were sent from cities to farms that established links and friends with families in the countryside and were being reconnected.

With this different generation we have this serious disconnect between the cities and the countryside. We have an opportunity to establish some of these connections and to see the farm and the countryside as a therapeutic place to be.

There are now difficulties as school children are not allowed to touch animals, not allowed to wash hands in stream. There is a development of personal interest to become engaged in environmental stewardship. Once you embark on a trip you become increasingly involved in that activity. Once you become interested in delivering better habitats it becomes fascinating. If you become interested in social care you will find it increasingly rewarding. Follow through the individuals who have experience with care farm involvement to see how they progress and benefit from the experience.

So we need to raise the role of farming in the eyes of the wider public. Enhance our image; do ourselves some good in terms of the self esteem we are held in terms of the wider picture.

How to take it forward?

- We need to bring a wide audience to the table, we need to have clear communications, and we need to engage a wide range of stakeholders to have an interest in this. There is a need to meet lots of people and also there is no point in reinventing wheels.
- Learn from others experience. Use good case studies and build on this.
- Incorporate training as a part of this programme. Undoubtedly our industry is going through change, the need for advice and training is fundamental. This will require leadership.
- NHS potential funding.
- Initiate the corporate responsibility policies, CR Policy; look for sponsorship from some of the private companies.
- A new Stewardship scheme - new tree planting scheme – rather than planting conifers children plant fruit trees, then go back and pick the fruit and use it in school dinners – explore that idea.
- Children could grow their own vegetables with local farmers support. Declining number of school funds – a neighbouring farm could give a couple of acres to the school.
- LEAF (Linking Environment & Farming) – accreditation programme, risk assessment and evaluations.

We are putting together a map of all the farms in England that are currently taking school visits, and through this map identify where there are gaps and work towards encouraging schools to see if there is a local farm in your area which you can visit.

### **6.3 Dr Michael Dixon OBE – Chairman, The NHS Alliance**

#### **'From Swords to Plough shares'**

I am here today because I have the feeling that this is entirely new and different. I have always wanted to be a pioneer and rub shoulders with pioneers, and never wanted to miss the beginning of a good revolution. This I feel is the start of an entirely new movement and I identify with the new thinking. In the Health Service we have a problem with sustainability, with costs escalating such that we will be unable to afford to continue unless we go 'upstream' and look at what people can do for themselves. We should also look at what the local environment and social culture can do as well.

I would like to look at three topics: -

- The potential physical and mental benefits of Care Farms.
- The changing face of British primary care.
- Converging paths and future thoughts i.e. the paths of health and agriculture could converge.

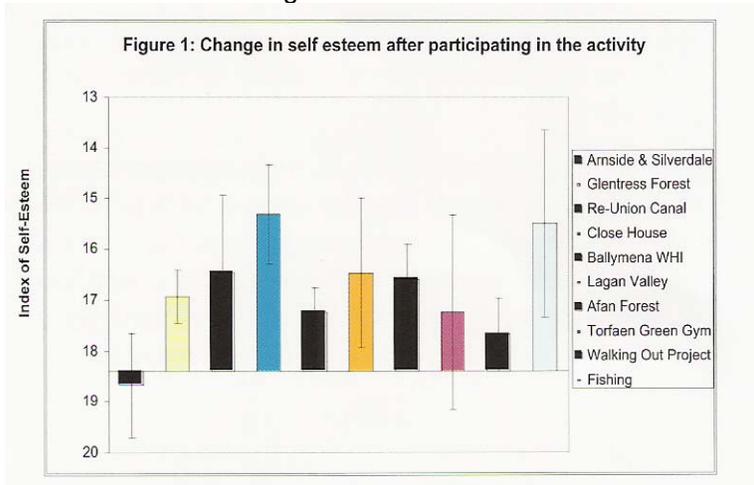
*The potential physical and mental benefits of Care Farms:*

We have earlier heard about the work of Jules Pretty and colleagues<sup>2</sup> from the University of Essex which was commissioned by the Countryside Recreation Network. Their work looked at 10 different forms of country activity from planting trees to people going fishing.

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<sup>2</sup> Pretty J, Griffin M, Peacock J, Hine R, Sellens M & South N. A Countryside for Health and Well-Being: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise.

They appraised the psychological benefits and the effect on self esteem and the sense of achievement from doing these tasks.



Mental health is a really big issue because it is not only causing widespread unhappiness and morbidity but also it is costing the nation a huge amount in tax payers' money. The facts about mental health are as follows:

- 91million working days lost each year due to mental health problems.
- 38% of incapacity benefit claims are made because of mental conditions.
- Treatment of mental illness annual cost equals £3.8 billion (12.7% of total).

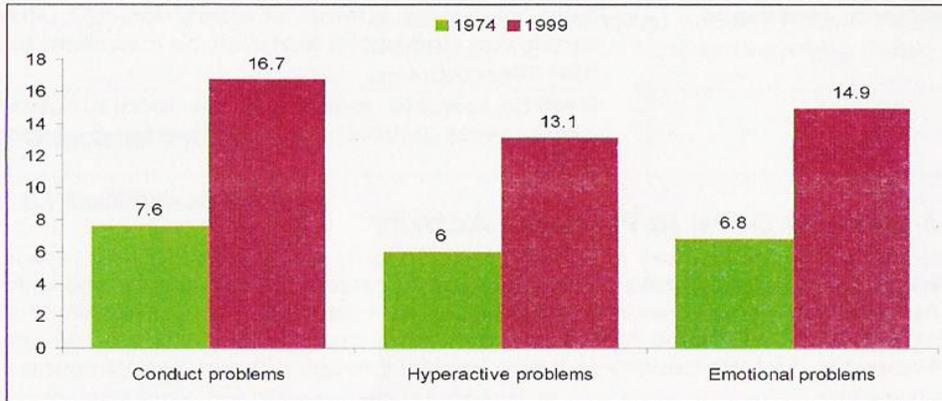
It is something we need to sort out by any means at our disposal. On the one hand we have anti-depressants and all the rest of that particular approach, all of which have their own limitations, but we are increasingly being told as GP's to use non drug options. From the Mental Health Foundation Report (Halliwell, 2005) it was stated that GPs would like to have an alternative to drug therapy but that non-drug treatment options are difficult to access (e.g. counselling/CBT). Interestingly 15% had used exercise as a therapeutic option.

The favourite option at the moment is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). However as a GP I can only afford to send one patient per year for this on my GP budget!! We do have 2 healers in my practice who do more for mental health patients than anything else I have seen, but it is my belief that care farms have great potential in that area as well. It is apparent therefore that when considering mental health problems there is quite a hiatus between what we wish to achieve and what we actually can.

Exercise does seem to have a more sustainable benefit on the levels of happiness for those suffering depression. MRI scans and the measure of endorphins can be used to show the evidence of benefit in depression due to exercise.

The issue of children and mental health is also a vital one, as the rate of mental health disorders in children has doubled between 1974 and 1999. In them it has been shown that exercise for children with attention deficit disorders is very important and has a significant lasting positive impact.

Mental health trends in young people



Looking at the physical side – obesity is an enormous problem. A report was commissioned last week because not only is it going to become an epidemic in the next 20 years, but its consequences also will have a major impact in the form of heart disease, diabetes; high blood pressure etc. We know exercise benefits all of these. It is not just the physical side of care farms that matter but also the appreciation of nature that ensues.

A study by Ulrich in 1984 proved that patients whose windows overlooked a field of cows recovered sooner than those looking at brick walls.

In addition one must take in to account the positive effects of animals – e.g. cats on wards for elderly people: patients enjoyed the contact and lived a year or two longer! Furthermore, working with others reduces social isolation. Care farms are in a position to address all these as well as impacting on diet, providing a sense of achievement, improving immunity through contact with animals and exposure to the stimuli of the outside world and natural environment.

#### *The changing face of British Primary Care:*

PCT's are changing, they are becoming more local, more innovative, more focused on how to improve health and not just waiting lists. The big change is practice-based commissioning i.e. budgets handed down to GP's at practice level. It is up to the GP how he or she spends his or her budget and he or she may decide to spend all on hospital admissions or perhaps on alternatives such as care farms which would cost less and hopefully be of more benefit. Any savings could then be spent on preventative medicine. Also, in a few years it may be possible to go to the local practice and ask whether they would be interested in such an idea as a care farm.

There is a new primary care White Paper which I am currently being consulted on. If it is decided that practices will need to spend a specified amount on health then this will be a green light for such care farm schemes to contact their local GP. In my own practice we will have to consider whether to use the funds towards a new gym or perhaps the exercise required could better be provided by local farms more cost effectively with a greater impact on the community as a whole. For example the controversial decision this week by Suffolk PCT that a number of overweight ladies couldn't have new hips if they didn't lose weight, could be viewed as an opportunity to provide different facilities in a local community for people to exercise and loose weight.

Locally in my town in Devon we are developing local integrated centres for health which will include in one centre – PCT staff, nurses, GP's, social care, self help groups, complementary medicine, and input from local organic farmers. I believe that this might be a model for the future. If that is the case, that is where care farms fit in i.e. network system/ kite mark health initiatives within these centres where people can take from a menu of health alternatives.

*Future thoughts:*

Leadership is the only thing that is going to move this forward, but who are going to be the leaders of this initiative? Three possibilities exist:

1. Those who are committed to or want to operate care farms themselves and need to go to commissioners like GPs. *or*
2. Various medics or nurses understanding what you are doing. *or*
3. A known social group e.g. a collaborative group of farm+PCT+nurse etc.

***Remember: 'Power is not given it is seized' Leadership is everything.***

Also there will be a need for what is being done to be 'written up in a language that people can understand. It must be worked around a research agenda that will give it credibility'. Get help from local universities so as to understand what evidence will be required and how to acquire it. This will begin to persuade those with the funds to begin releasing it! Clinical governance needs to be considered which means that thought must be given to the training and qualifications required for the care farmers of the future.

In closing perhaps I might reflect on how 'Changing Attitudes' is central to this whole initiative. One might even suggest that this is a mission that is "going back to the future".

For example:

- In the past, long stay hospitals such as psychiatric hospitals all had a farm associated—clearly patients benefited.
- Green exercise is emerging as supremely effective and cost effective e.g. Green Gyms as an innovative dimension to healthcare provision
- The current need for Changing roles in farming which make it an imperative that farmers look at how people can produce benefit not only for themselves but also for the farming community as a whole. Farmers need to think 'outside of the box'

All these ideas amount in effect to a Redeployment of health in creating very valuable social capital

The vital importance of national organisations in spreading the word. You have begun. I am proud to be associated. I will help; wherever I can!

## **6.4 Ina Kattenbroek, National Coordinator of the Dutch Care Farm National Support Centre**

### **The Dutch Care Farm Programme: National Perspectives and Lessons Learned**

I work for the Dutch National support Centre Agriculture and Care. This centre started in 1999, initially for 3 years, than with an extension for 4 more years. The support Centre is subsidized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Ministry of Health, Well-being and Sports.

The mission of the National Support centre is to realize a professional and sustainable sector of Agriculture and Care, in which clients find, in an uncomplicated manner, a qualitative good place to stay and in which there are few obstacles for farmers. This is done by promoting the concept of agriculture and care in both the agricultural sector and the (wider) care sector. The support centre is a centre for expertise and a help desk; it runs two websites, one with general information and one on which farmers can introduce their facilities. We wrote a handbook, which you can download from one of these websites.

The support centre stimulates the development of care farms by developing a quality system for them. This is work done on a national level. The support Centre co-operates closely with people and organisations who work on a regional level in the field of agriculture and care. These are people working with farmers, organisations, foundations for rural development and also private advisory companies, often small scale (1, 2 or 3 people).

The support Centre informs those people and organisations that work on a regional level and also the farmers, about national policy, and we got informed by them about local developments. We have also come to understand the “bottlenecks” that go with policy so we can inform and try to influence the policy-makers.



The people working on a regional level go to individual farmers to advise them on making a business plan or to assist with client-matching.

These people also organise meetings of (care) farmers in which they exchange experience and knowledge etc.

One of the things that works out really well in those groups of farmers is the ‘study-groups’. I.e. farmers working together on the quality system for care farms. We as the Support Centre can facilitate these courses in co-operation with the regional organisations.

The motto of this quality system is: “**quality you show**”. With the help of a workbook the farmer makes it clear what he has to offer. And that is his quality. With this the farmer makes it clear to the client what he has to offer and the client (or their parents or carers) can judge more easily whether this is what they are looking for. I

Interestingly the farmers often have more to offer than they realize and this system helps them become aware of that, and to make it explicit.

We distinguish 3 main purposes of the quality system:

- tool for the care farmer
- stressing the distinguishing features of the care farm; what is special on your farm
- meet requirements of the ‘quality act care’

The quality-system helps the farmer organize his care activities. An important part is safety. It is important to be aware of potentially hazardous situations for vulnerable clients.

The number of care farms in the Netherlands has expanded from 75 in 1998 to nearly 600 now. Developments in agriculture play a role in this, farmers are looking for ways to diversify their means of income and also developments in care mean that the focus is more on the individual client and on integration in society. The most important success-factor I think, lies in the concept itself: the combination of being in a natural environment, working with animals, plants, a safe environment are a few things that make a care farm a good place to be.

The rapid growth of the number of care farms in the Netherlands is a sign in itself I would say, that the concept is working well.

The majority of these care farms are regular farms, independent entrepreneurs, who combine agricultural production with care activities. The agricultural production is done in the ‘usual’ way. The first farms who took on care activities were mainly ecological and biological-dynamic farms. Because on these farms there is more space for manual labour and the way the farm is set up and the farmer’s attitude, gives more space for care activities. But as time went on, more and more farms that produce in the ‘usual’ way, took on care activities. And nowadays the majority of care farms run agricultural production in a conventional way.

All types of farms take on care, dairy farms, pigs, poultry, crop farms, horticulture etc. And as every farm is unique, every care farm is unique. There is also a lot variety in the number of people that come to the care farms. There are farms where there is 1 client for ½ day a week, and farms where there are 10 or 15 clients every day, 5 days a week. Most care farms welcome 6 to 10 clients.

The biggest group of clients (I call them clients, they are also called assistant-farmers or participants) are people with learning disabilities and people with psychiatric problems. But also people with physical handicaps, elderly people, addicts and ex-addicts find their way to care farms.

Most of the clients come to the farm for day-care, being on the farm, in nature, and working with animals, plants, landscape maintenance, but also for a re-integration course. And sometimes clients live on the farm.

Often there is a mixture of 'target groups' on the farm and we see that this works out really well.

The majority of farmers experience a positive effect of different 'target-groups' working together.

One example is of a man who has been addicted to drugs, working together with a boy with autism. The man said, "I like to have company and I want to learn again to build up social relationships", that is one of his aims of being on the care farm. And he is really investing a lot of time in this relationship and gets in contact with the boy with autism and they are happy working together.



Another really nice example, I think is of the boy with Down Syndrome, who is really keen on going to the farm, going to his job and travels by push-bike. But he can't go by himself, he needs guidance. On the same farm there is somebody with psychiatric problems who lives close to the boy. Every day they travel together to the farm by bike. There are days this man doesn't feel ok, doesn't want to go to the farm, he wants to stay at home, stay in bed. But, this means that the boy can't go to the farm, as he is dependent on guidance. And not going to the farm is a real disaster for him. The man knows this, feels responsible, gets out of his bed, goes to the farm and takes the boy with him. And once on the farm, most of the time he is happy he did come.

Somehow the opportunity for people to go to farms needs to be financed.

The large majority of care on farms in the Netherlands is financed by means of the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act. The possibilities that this Act gives for financing care on farms is an important success-factor for them.

This act is under construction at the moment and it probably will have a big impact on care farms in the sense that the care that is financed out of this Act, is no longer organised and paid on a national level, but on the local level, the council level.

An interesting point to mention is one of the ways of financing that is possible within this Act and hopefully will stay in the future, is the possibility to ask for a personal budget when you need care. When it is indicated you need certain care, you can get a certain amount of money, depending on what type of care you need and how much, and buy your own care. So you as a client can choose if you buy care on a farm or another type of care. This is interesting as the client is more independent in his choice of care and can make a direct agreement with a farmer.

### **Approach of the farmer**

Farmers, like many other people, become interested in taking on care activities when they get to know about it. And the best way to get to know about it and become interested and enthusiastic, is to see it in practise.

This is the start; you hear about it, read about it, and see colleague-farmers doing it and you, as a farmer start thinking whether it might be something for you to take on.

An important thing is that when you as a farmer seriously think about whether this kind of activity fits with you; whether it fits with your personal interest, with your personality and capacities, with your family, (as they become heavily involved too), and with your farm. We really put emphasis on this. In this first step we see that quite a few farmers decide not to go into it.

To take on care activities on your farm, you need a certain amount of idealism as well. Farmers say, "We have a good life, we enjoy being working with animals, plants, in nature and we would like to share this with people who are in need of some extra care".

It is often this mixture of idealism, to want to help other people, and looking for activities to broaden the base of the farm, in order to continue the farm and not being solely dependent on agricultural that drives people into care farming.

If farmers only have an economic motive, I will advise them not to start with care. Because it is not that profitable in a purely financially sense and it takes quite a lot of you. If you are looking for the most profitable activity in an economic sense, besides agricultural production, I advise them to find a job for a certain amount of hours outside the farm.

The experience of many farmers who take on care activities is that it gives a lot of satisfaction. Not only to be able to provide care, but also the social impact for the farmer himself. As farming can be quite a lonely business these days and with providing care you get people on the farm again working with you.

And those people bring another 'world' to the farm, a world with its own problems and difficulties and for some farmers it really helps to put their own problems and difficulties into perspective.

Often, when farmers take on care activities, there is already a connection between agriculture and care, as about 60% of the partners of Dutch farmers already work in care, or have been working in care. The partner has experience in care, often education, and it helps a lot that they already have a link to the care sector.

Having experience or qualifications can be helpful, but it is not an absolute necessity to take on care on the farm. We see farmers do an excellent job without having any education or experience in care.

Many farmers have a talent for looking after other people, but they are not aware of that, it is not developed. And in a way it is quite logical: farmers are used to take care of animals, plants, living creatures, so the step to look after human beings is not that big.

In this process of orientation on care activities on the farm, it is also good to realize the practical side of it. For example, it is important to have enough activities on the farm all year round.

For farms with cattle this is generally easier to realize than horticulture or arable. We recommend farmers to write down on paper which activities can be done in which months so you get an overview. And if needed, you can think of other activities, or more work. And there are many more things to think of, for example in the field of laws and regulations.

For all those topics, as well as the question: are you the right person for providing care, as well as the practical side the Support Centre Agriculture and Care wrote a Handbook.

You can download this Handbook from the internet, or order a hard-copy.

### **What makes a care farm a good place to be ?**

Because on most care farms there are only a few clients at a time, really personal care can be given. There is a lot of attention available for the individual and you see that farmers adjust activities to needs or wishes of clients. For example, if a client likes working in the garden, the garden is enlarged. This is possible because of the small-scale of the enterprise.

A very basic difference in approach towards the client is that in care institutions the approach is based on the limitations of the client, on his handicap or illness, the approach is based on what is not possible.

While the care farmer approaches the client on the basis of his possibilities and potential and gives him work he can do. This often improves the self-confidence and self-esteem of the client.

On a regular farm a certain amount of agricultural production needs to be realized, which means that work on a farm is needed and important, different from activities in a day centre, for example. It is 'real work' and a client can tell other people, "I work on the farm, I have a job and I matter".

A farm is a lively place in society. All kind of people come on the farm, and clients come to know more people and get possibilities to enlarge their social network.

On a farm you deal with nature through the rhythm of the day and the seasons, which can have a healthy effect on people. For example for people with addictions it is found that work on a farm decreases the obsession to use drugs or alcohol. They work on the farm in the daytime, are tired at night, their 'rhythm of life' changes. At the same time on the farm there is a sort of 'freedom' which compares with the 'freedom' on the street and in that respect it meets that demand for 'freedom'.

More generally speaking we see that in our western societies we are more and more detached from nature and also we are less aware of the changing of the seasons. I think it is a good thing to realize that there is a difference in seasons and on a farm it is visible that activities are adjusted to the season. And you can transfer this to your life, as there is a time to sow, a time to harvest and a time to rest. So in this respect I think a farm is a good place to be for all of us, not only when there is need for extra care.

A farm offers good possibilities to learn, or to learn again. In the case of addicts, or ex-addicts, to make contact with people is often threatening, because people have expectations which you might not be able to meet, but animals don't have those expectations.

Animals take you as you are. Getting in touch and connecting with animals can be a first step to getting in contact with other people again. And animals ask to be looked after, need to be fed, they put a demand on you, and it is difficult to walk away from that, especially when these are young animals. This also matters very much for behaviourally-emotionally disturbed kids. They can't connect (in different degrees of course) to humans anymore, they are damaged, and by having the possibility to connect to animals it gives an opening to healing.

This is one example of the positive effect that a care farm can have, on this particular group of clients.

There are many different groups of clients finding their way to care farms and every farmer can tell his own story of positive effects. The thing is that we need to 'scientifically prove' this positive effect. We need to measure the effect that being on a care farm has on a client.

(Because in our society somehow we need to rationalize and to scientifically prove, to make explicit that, in this case, care on farms is effective. It is not enough to say: 'it works well' even as we all feel, or implicitly know that working or being in nature, with plants, with animals has a healthy effect on people).

Up until now there is scientific research on the effect of working with plants, or with animals and recently a study has been completed in which elements of a regular farm are identified as success-factors. By bits and pieces we can scientifically 'prove' that care on farms is effective, but much more needs to be done.

Also in other respects it is a good thing I think to measure the value of care farms.

Care farms raise financial value, for the farmer as it brings in income, but also for society in total, as a place on a care farm is relatively cheap as you look at the quality of care compared to a place in a big institute, but I don't have enough facts and figures yet to make a calculation for you.

A care-farm also raises social value, well-being, for the client, the farmer and his family, for the family of the clients and the neighbourhood to mention a few.

And there is ecological value in the sense of sustainability of farms and therefore maintenance of the rural area, the landscape and even more so when a farm is producing in an ecological way.

Looking at this total package of value that care farms provide is one of the ways to give care-farms a more recognised place in society.

Finally, at the end of my speech, what I would like to stress when we talk about how to organise all this, how to finance, how to scientifically or otherwise prove, is that we really keep in mind what it all is about. And I've got a few photos to express that, as photos say more than I can tell.

## **7. Practitioners**

### **7.1 Mr Dave Davoll – Herefordshire BODS**

BODS provides outdoor adventure, education and craft activities for some of Herefordshire's most disadvantaged and socially excluded people. It provides an invaluable service for many local groups including those who are social excluded, young offenders, ex-offenders, homeless people, individuals on probation and those with mental health issues and many more. BODS gives young people dreams and memories, self esteem, well-being and some chance in life.

BODS was formed in 1987 in London, BODS stands for Bermondsey Outdoors.

I started out by bringing young people from London to Symonds Yat and the Brecon Beacons for weekends of adventure activities. About 5 years ago we were given 80 acres of woodland in rural Herefordshire. This changed my world and the world of many others. We have now been working in Werndee Woods, St Weonards, Herefordshire full time for the last three years.

By being based in the woods and going back to nature we try to help very hurt, abused people to get back their self-esteem and encourage them to become full members of society. We do skill-based work around crafts, heritage, healthy food and cooking. We also run a programme of adventure based activities.

BODS have proved that its practices are successful in enabling and helping deprived and socially excluded people to positively reshape their lives. For example, a 38-year-old drug addict who had lost her three children and had spent 12 years in prison came to the woods and asked if she could cook for the young people. She came for 4 months and her self esteem rose but when we had to close down for 3 weeks in the summer she went right down again. This proves that what we do does have positive outcomes, but we need to be able to offer long-term and consistent care to make a lasting and ongoing impact on peoples' lives.

Life can become so hard and meaningless, especially when your life is in turmoil for whatever reason. We find that the spiritual side of being is missing in many of the people that we work with, but this can shine back when working in and with nature. We often spend time sitting around the campfire, which is a time where people are relaxed and they tell their stories. I have never met people so sad and so abused. We try and build them up to the best of their abilities, but without nature we will never touch them as deeply as the combination of care and nature can.

We aim to grow and build leaders of the future, giving them skills as a base from which they can give back to society. BODS works with these people to try and enable them to participate in a series of ecological projects, woodland adventure and learn survival skills. The aim is to develop opportunities for social education and personal development through experiencing a sense of adventure and meaningful activities in a woodland setting.

BODS is at a stage where local demand for the facilities, training and courses we offer has outgrown capacity. Yet we know that there are many more people who would benefit from our services who we could support, train and provide courses for.

We have entered into a partnership with the Bulmer Foundation with the shared vision of creating an integrated therapeutic environment embracing Werndee Woods and Coppice Farm. We will be supporting Adam, the tenant farmer of Coppice Farm, in establishing a care farm and developing his farm on an organic and sustainable basis. Adam also helps us in Werndee Woods, he talks to people, helps with the wood working, gives self worth to people by just being there. We are intending on expanding the farm and enabling people to get to know the animals and grow crops. We see ourselves moving forward and collaborating with the Bulmer Foundation to achieve this aim.

We have a core ethos that comes with the combination of personalities, love and respect, all underwritten with fun. It is a combination of helping and curing people, mentoring and friendship in the natural environment.

## **7.2 Ms Lydia Otter & Mr Richard Hurford – The Pennyhooks Project**

We have been working with these young people with Autism for 15 years & have been inviting them to the farm first yearly, then quarterly, then weekly & now daily.

My name is Richard Hurford. I have known the Otter family for over 30 years. I am now a part time Probation Service Officer in the Swindon Courts. Lydia is a Special Needs teacher and we run the Farm & Project together. We are greatly supported by Lydia's Father, who retains a big interest in all that happens on the farm and who gave the land to build the new building for the students.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder covers a wide range of disability, from no speech at all to through to what's known as High achieving Aspergers Syndrome.

You may have come across the concept of this in the film 'Rainman' about a man with great skill in calculating numbers. They all share in common the features on this list; poor communication & social understanding & rigidity of thought.



One lad can speak only a few mostly learnt phrases such as 'McDonalds', 'Coke please', & 'Upset'. Yet he can in fact write & draw about what he did yesterday. Usually he carries a list of each activity in the day & writes on his calendar at home to plan weeks ahead.

My Grandfather chose & bought the farm in the Fifties for him & his sons; they were first generation farmers. They built up a dairy herd till the Eighties, when a bypass through the farm made it impractical & so they went into Angus suckler beef. My father sadly had a stroke in 1997 that put him in a wheelchair. Rich & I were here already helping since my mother died, so we and a kind neighbour decided to keep the farm going for Dad.

We took it organic with the Soil Association, completing conversion in 2001, & which meant the farm could at last pay for itself through increased stock value – but still not for anyone to look after it!

We kept our jobs, but I gradually realised it would be a better use of my strength to try to combine everything at the farm; the care of farm, dad & teaching. Fortunately, my head teacher saw this as an opportunity for some of our more severely autistic students & asked us to have them at the farm on a weekly basis.

The Northmoor Trust & the Great Western Community Forest Team kindly gave us a mobile home as a rest room for them & the whole experience proved very beneficial to the lads. I was introduced to the Course & began to run it more frequently as the need arose. Once it reached 5 days a week in 2003/4 we realised that we needed better facilities, & applied for a DEFRA RES grant, which we were fortunate to receive at 40%. The Bailey Thomas Trust very kindly gave us another £50,000, which with a few other donations made us feel that we should take the opportunity now presented to us. We put the remaining £100,000 against the farm & started to build in Sept 04.

It is a beautiful building and we are very glad to see the way that our students are responding, with calmness and hard work, to the opportunities now presented to them.

With characteristic yet extraordinary perseverance, they grasp each new skill as much as they are able. The benefits are being recognised by Parents, Educational Professionals & Social Service Care Managers in Oxfordshire & Wiltshire, who continue to ask us to provide services. It is always a struggle to secure adequate funding; we do it through the good will & determination of all involved and we are also very grateful when charitable donations are given to help get students started. We obviously wish that there was a funding stream that we could rely on.

Our ethos has grown around the students & their wish to emerge into our world as much as they can, but needing at times a great deal of support to do so. My own awareness of autism's impact upon the individual has developed right from my first contact with it in my teens, when I saw a TV programme about Music Therapy, when I was considering my career options; whether to be a vet or a musician!

I saw a therapist playing percussion with a boy who was invited to respond to her rhythm. As he played back to her, I was astounded to realise that he had played the exact response I would have given her. Thus despite appearances, making noises and jerky movements, I realised that there was very much a person inside. So when I in fact became a teacher, it was natural to follow this up. Since then I have been fortunate to work with the communication side and continued to learn at first hand just how much these young people are able to supersede their profound disability if you can tune in to what they can do, rather than what they cannot.

Another lad has cerebral palsy, epilepsy & autism; yet he joins in, supported, with all the activities on the farm. He is also now able to type his thoughts 'I like the donkeys .....I like using the fork to put hay in the barn..... I like Thursday best because the day when I go to see my boss at Pennyhooks Farm'.

Basically, many of the young men we have on the farm would, in their youth have been the kickers, spitters, chuckers, shouters and run away-ers.

I say this not to draw attention to their problems but to draw attention to their determination to overcome them if given the right chance. One young man said to his dad who'd come to watch him feed the cows, 'I'm man now Dad, I'm working.' This supported our determination to try to keep offering the farm experience to them.

**The Course itself** is known as the Countryside Stewardship Course. It was developed by the Northmoor Educational Trust, which is based on an important nature reserve on the Thames The Course is accredited by the National Open Colleges Network, who award certificates of credit for each module that is completed. They send an external moderator to view the evidences of progress that each student shows through diary records, photos & completed worksheets.

I have adapted the curriculum to be in small enough steps that each student can join in, learn & achieve measurable success.

### **The Course has 4 modules;**

**Personal Development, Health & Safety** covers issues around working together safely as a team & allows the development of responsibility and independence too.

**Animal Husbandry** teaches basic animal care. Yesterday a capable 19 yr old girl, who has some difficulty decoding the meaning of words and in moderating her own talking, gave me her course work. She has written 'There is a puppy called Tessie. She has been through the wars. She has been in and out of the vets; her temperature has gone up and down. When she is well again she is so playful but we need to keep our voices calm, not excited, so she won't get tired too quickly. Tessie is getting bigger. She has one blue eye and one brown eye. She is so lovely to hold and play with.' For someone who has difficulty in understanding her impact on others, this shows delightful empathy. Another similar lad said to the pup about her eyes 'Don't worry Tessie, we're all oddball here'; 'Just very special Patrick," I replied.

**Woodland & Wetland** covers conservation matters like tree planting & care, creation & maintenance of ponds, woodland and paths.

The **Leisure & recreation** section deals with teaching the Country Code about appropriate behaviour, & some map skills and basic enjoyment of being outside.

**The modules are further broken down** into learning outcomes, which I use the farm to fulfil (rather than setting out to teach them by themselves), for example wearing overalls and gloves and quietly feeding the cows. This has fulfilled the requirements to behave appropriately, wear protective clothing, be careful not to be bumped by the cows and to know that animals need to be fed and watered.

This may seem a small achievement, but in fact for many students these things are not easily done. New clothes cause anxiety, awareness of danger is low; putting the needs of the animals before their own problems is a new freedom. A cow that moos is worth far more than a teacher who says please feed the cows! I think the satisfaction of a chewing cow who has magically gone quiet is also worth so much more than gold stars to our students – though a jelly baby to munch at our rest place down on the bridge doesn't go amiss either!

The simple idea behind our worksheets is that by giving big enough words and choices, any of the students can show what they know by pointing to the answers. It also flags up what jobs are going to be happening on the farm that day, which has the added benefit of explaining to the staff what is going on.

### **The Farm Itself**

As you will have realised, we use the farm to train and teach the students. I have learnt to interweave the needs of the farm with the needs of the students.

Pennyhooks is a small grassland farm of 120 acres, with a pedigree Angus bull and about 40 cows who feed their calves for 9 months. We make most of our own forage now, with the help of a neighbour. Two fifths of the farm is water meadow containing an award winning County Wildlife Site. We have orchids, English crayfish, & recently returned water voles and a visiting otter. We have put in a new pond & begun some tree & hedge planting. We pollard our willows on a 12 year rotation & use the wood to help heat the building, where we have installed a new dual fuel boiler.

## **The Jobs on the Farm.**

As you can see, the everyday jobs provide a learning opportunity for the students. In the winter, the students join in with the daily feeding & bedding up of the yards. I do all the mechanised work before they come & move the cows to feed behind gates so there is a minimum of need to move students amongst the cattle. This is because we are, of course, always mindful of Health & Safety issues.

I like to greet the students before they start work and to explain what they need to do today. It may be a round bale to push or a square bale to carry, or hay to carry out into the mangers.

Then we walk to the pollarded trees and start the process of moving the logs or the brush. The logs are then taken home and moved to a stack for drying for a year; the students are currently bringing those to the boiler in the new building. The boiler burns logs but can automatically switch to oil to maintain the under floor heating temperature.



In the summer we move electric fences because we strip graze the grass. We also use hand tools to dig thistles and maintain special conservation areas. Last year we built seats beside the new bridge; we have continued to do this around the farm. We also spend time with the domestic animals such as the donkeys, pygmy goats, hens & dogs, which all have their role in drawing the best out of our students.

**A response to need.** I would like to try to briefly explain something about why we have come to think that the farm has therapeutic value.

People with autism experience many different things to us. For instance, they often have difficulty in starting or stopping a movement, but if you give them a verbal cue they are fine. They need a lot of practice to learn a new skill, which the farm of course gives through the routine jobs for instance feeding cows daily for the six winter months. Equally if our students can keep a flow of activity going they are better. So in the yards I will say, 'this way please,' to keep the rhythm of movement going back & forth from bale to bed. And jobs on the farm are always linked by walking, which also keeps their movement flowing.

They also often experience a heightened sensitivity in their senses, where sound is louder, touch is painful & contrast of light & colour is brighter. The farm, although it has all these things to some degree, is at least natural & predictable & also provides plenty of space to withdraw into if things become intolerable. Also, from our point of view, the similarity with animals' sensitivities means that it is not strange for us to be aware of things that can be intensely distressing to others. This has just been further explored in this book by Dr Temple Grandin, entitled 'Animals in Translation - Using the mysteries of Autism to decode animal behaviour.' She uses her own reality as a person with autism to teach about how animals may react; she is responsible for the design of half of America's slaughter houses as a result.

**Where next?** The students have begun to show us that they can learn and retain skills; that they have grown in confidence and responsible behaviour. We have tick boxes fulfilled for all of them to some degree and they will achieve their basic accreditation. We feel very proud of them.

I would like to feel that this could continue in some form in their older adult lives. I have begun to seek like minded people who could possibly make similar jobs available, even if it were for an afternoon a week for a local boy accompanied by a carer.

We would be most grateful for your thoughts about all that we have shared with you and how best to take it forward.

### **7.3 Roger Hosking – Highfields Happy Hens**

I have 15 minutes to talk to you about 25 years of heartache and terrible mistakes that we have got over to run Highfields Happy Hens as it is today.

We look after young offenders and those who have been expelled from school. What we have running at Highfields now could be done on any farm in the country; the one crucial element is that the farmer and his wife need to love young people and more particularly young people who can be really aggressive and nasty.

What we are doing now goes back to 1984; I was helping in an unemployment drop in centre (although I was a farmer at that point) for young people. I didn't really feel that we were really helping them that much and he said, "Well what do you expect us to do? Give them all a job?" I knew what he was saying; their language was filthy, they couldn't read or write or count. In the normal sense of the word they were unemployable. At the same time in 1984, Beryl and I were running an open home for homeless youngsters and I was finding it increasingly difficult to run the farm a cope with very energetic youngsters at the same time. They would break things, were undisciplined and basically out of control. On one particular day, I completely lost my rag with a young lad and said, "If you do that again you'll have to go". After I said it, I realised that all through his life the same thing had happened – he gets it wrong and has to move on. I felt very shocked inside and went and spoke to Beryl. On that morning we reached a crossroads; to stop having an open home as we couldn't manage the farm or to stop being a commercial farm and to dedicate our lives to helping these young people. We made the decision to set our whole farm and our whole lifestyle out to help these young people. We also made the decision to never ever ask anyone to leave. And that's been a hard promise to keep!

That left me with an 120 acre farm which we had decided not to run commercially, which was almost impossible – you can't stop things growing! It just so happened that the next door neighbour was building a huge chicken shed.

It was a 5000 bird free range shed and I was going over each day to help him with it and the young people that were with me at the time came to help me. When the shed was finished, 5000 pullets were put in and he asked me if I would like a part-time job, to which I said yes. I started going over to collect eggs. At that particular point I had a very problematic youngster with us, whose language was dreadful and who couldn't read, write or count but who would come with me every day to collect the eggs. Initially he wasn't that interested but after a week he said to me, "Roger, you don't have to come today – I'll do it." That was quite a step forward for him, but I had to say, "You can't go; you need to be able to count the eggs." So he asked me to teach him. In three weeks he was counting accurately up to 5000. But the key was, I didn't teach him he wanted to learn. He soon learnt to read and write and was keeping the records. He even stopped talking to me and left notes instead as he was so proud he could write.

In 1989, Beryl and I decided that this was the way forward, so we built a shed to hold 2500 birds and we've been amazed by the change that has come over so many youngsters. It truly is a miracle. Every youngster that comes to us is angry, troubled, aggressive, hurt and when they first start collecting the eggs they break them because they are so rough. Within a week though, I can guarantee that every youngster can collect eggs without breaking them. And those angry hands become gentle. Through collecting they learn counting, cleaning, feeding the hens. But they learn social skills too by understanding the need for routine and respect on the farm they start to understand it round the house.

We went on to buy two more sheds and quite rapidly shot up to 20,000 free range hens, collecting 16,000 eggs every single day. By that point I was actually able to employ unemployable young people, because I had the eggs to sell which could pay their wages. People now come to us who have been stealing cars or taking drugs but can now find a sense of pride in themselves as they have a job, something that matters.

When they've been with us a while they actually want to move on to better things. One of our original lads has actually gone on to become a probation officer in Derby. Another girl who was with us has become a prison warden.

One of the big problems we have come up against has been the attitude of our neighbours. We have had so much opposition from them, the parish council, the city council – all have wanted to close us down. Now I feel so proud that we have proved them wrong. We have become quite famous; we have appeared on the television, in the newspapers and a couple of weeks ago I was asked to go to Westminster to tell MP's about Highfields.

We have also become involved with the Youth Offending Service through their Restorative Justice Programme. This is where kids who are too young for a custodial sentence are sent to us by a magistrate – we are their sentence! We have had very positive feedback about this and the YOS have been very pleased with the way things have gone.

In September 2001 the Local Education Authority came to me and asked if we could act as a school for these kids, because often they had been expelled from mainstream education. We officially became a school for one youngster initially. By the end of term he had earned a place in College. The next term they sent me three youngsters and next 9. We now take 20 young people a week that have been expelled from school. They are lovely kids although there always problems! We have to be aware of how we respond and react to their anger, we mustn't respond aggressively back – they are so used to being punished we try to show them another way.

Now we are an official school – we are visited by OFSTED and we are no long residential. Not one of our young people has re-offended and we are the only project in Derby who are getting kids back to school and to us it's so simple!

If I could pass on one message to the people here today, it would be that if you have a heart for young people you can do the same. Don't worry about grants and funding, because basically it's self-supporting. We make garden furniture, we have a farm shop, we sell the eggs etc. You couldn't do it on 500 hens though; it has to generate the work and income to make it pay for itself.

## **8. FEEDBACK & ACTION POINTS**

In the final session of the day, delegates came together and were asked to discuss and feedback four questions in small groups. A sample of the responses are included with the questions below, however for more detail please see Evaluation of Feedback, Appendix 4.

### **1. What support do you need to develop your work in care farming?**

- An umbrella organisation that would provide advice, and give guidance on the next stage
- Acceptance, understanding, awareness as there are often barriers that come up because people are afraid or concerned to get involved
- We need finances from sustainable sources. Government funding with no parity of streams. There needs to be consistency in the support across the country. Value of the service of care farming to be raised but there will probably be a need for 'mind shift'
- Our project is now so well known it is too big for me. I have good but young staff so I need something to pass the project on to in the next few years
- Health & Safety [Executive] support as not touching animals is an obstacle. Need to involve the Department for Education and Skills to get reassurance. Also financial support, and training such as a CEVAS course. A network and manual to pool expertise and pass it on. Look at the Dutch manual. Mentoring in respect of best practices
- Accessible funding not linked to inappropriate standards e.g. Community Care budgets linked to Care Home Standards

## **2. What are the main obstacles to developing care farming?**

- Limited understanding of health and safety legislation, education requirements, funding, insurance etc
- A need to make money. Legislation. Government departments that need to join up are at contrasting ends of the spectrum. The public opinion of farmers. A green activity is seen as a cheap option. Exploitation of service user's i.e. cheap labour. There needs to be change in social policy if we are to overcome these obstacles some of which are public perception
- Isolation & Diversity
- Money. Legislation in respect of insurance, planning and working with local authorities. NIMBYism. Health and Safety issues. Getting the NHS to recognise it and education of the general public and schools

## **3. How can the care farming concept be promoted in the UK?**

- By joining together, increasing awareness and through a client base
- Speaking to government ministers. Good publicity – website, national directory. actively involving purchasers
- Central Advisory Service/Advocacy. A network to affect marketing/publicity/political lobbying aim towards a mind set shift and gather evidence
- Rural life needs to be re-established. Promoting farming, not just care farming e.g.: -.
  - Schools - and put farming back into curriculum
  - Include society in farming,. Start at the top and let it filter down.
  - Building awareness amongst organisations. E.g. YOT, PCT. National Advocacy.
  - Linking it back to health, obesity, education etc issues which are in the news.
  - Introducing 'care farming' to a course at an Agricultural College.
  - Do a risk assessment of eating a McDonalds.
  - A centre of excellence.
  - A sample business plan.
  - Inner-city farm experiences.
- By the Internet. Through Don Curry. Use human stories from families and farmers. Local University to undertake research. Scholastic schemes for colleges

## **4. Do you think that a network and support group will help you? If so how?**

- Overall it should not to go too fast – keep an eye on farmers who are providing the care farming and listen to them. Not enough research to push forward at present. Link Agricultural colleges and obtain research and get over statistics
- Totally agree that we need a network and support group
- Yes – it would be good for signposting – who is good at doing what. There would be ease in getting information and see different examples. Opportunity to meet like-minded people. Ongoing need for network and a clear need for newcomers. It would make the concept credible. It would be good to get a Royal Patronage for the scheme

## **9. CONCLUSION**

The conference was highly successful and highlighted the need for better preventative care to enhance physical and mental health in an increasingly industrialised and commercial society. A new and innovative collaboration between health and agriculture is needed to pave the way in establishing land-based initiatives which will be of benefit to those most needing help in our society.

It is clear from the feedback that there is an enormous desire to come together and share experiences and knowledge and to gain more recognition for this important and often unrecognised area of work in the countryside, and its bridging effect with urban populations. It is also clear however, that there is a need for robust research to back up anecdotal evidence of the success of care farm initiatives. This is needed urgently, to give credibility to this movement and to give health and other services the confidence to invest into it.

# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1:- BACKGROUND TO ORGANISATIONS**

### **Harper Adams University College**

Harper Adams University College is based in Newport, Shropshire. In 2001 it set up the CaRE Network, which supports rural Bed & Breakfast and Holiday Let owners to target a more specialist market. The College is keen to continue its work with individuals and businesses who wish to offer support services and care on farms.

[www.careinthecountryside.net](http://www.careinthecountryside.net)

### **Arthur Rank Centre**

The Arthur Rank Centre is a subsidiary charity of the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) and operates as a partnership between the RASE, the national churches and the Rank Foundation. It functions as the national rural resources for the churches and as part of the RASE's charitable activities.

[www.rase.org.uk](http://www.rase.org.uk)

### **The Bulmer Foundation**

The Bulmer Foundation is an independent Charity established in 2001 by H P Bulmer Ltd, the world's largest cider-makers, to complement the company's own sustainable development strategy, as part of the company's commitment to its rural community. Following the acquisition of Bulmers in 2003, its new owners, Scottish & Newcastle plc, have provided the charity with core funding and have given an increasing range of other forms of support and encouragement. The Foundation's mission is to enable and demonstrate sustainable development in conjunction with a fundamental shift in our human understanding and values. We seek to do this through a five pronged agenda covering Education, Health, Land Use, Business and Investment. It is our focus on integration which defines our work.

[www.bulmerfoundation.org.uk](http://www.bulmerfoundation.org.uk)

### **The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens**

The FCFCG is a UK-wide charity formed in 1980 to support, represent and promote city farms, community gardens, a network of school farms and community allotment groups, approximately 1200 in all. Members range from community orchards to pockets of previously derelict urban green space; from allotment associations to city farms in the poorest inner cities.

[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

## **Appendix 2:- BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Ms Ina Kattenbroek**

Ina Kattenbroek was born into a farming family and still enjoys living in the countryside. She got involved with agriculture and care in 2002 and wrote a masters thesis in 2003 about Care Farms as innovative practices. Since November 2003 she has been working with the Dutch National Support Centre for Agriculture and Care, dealing with different topics, including the quality system for Care Farms, the handbook for agriculture and care, and a project to support the development of 'learn-and-work' courses on farms and nurseries for youngsters with disabilities. Besides this she is working as a volunteer on a care farm and really enjoys the practical work with the people whom it is all about.

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### **Dr. Kim A. Jobst MA. DM. MRCP. MFHom. DipAc.**

Kim Jobst is a Physician with a life long interest in Healing and Holistic Healthcare. His career began in Agricultural Sciences and Forestry at Oxford University before completing his degree in Physiological Sciences and Medicine from the university. He went on to become accredited in Medicine and Homoeopathy from the University Department of Medicine in Glasgow, as well as in Neurodegenerative Diseases and Dementia. As Clinical Director of The Oxford Project To Investigate Memory and Ageing (OPTIMA) at Oxford University, he and his colleagues made fundamental discoveries about the process, diagnosis, prognosis and therapeutics of the Dementias.

Kim trained in Traditional Chinese acupuncture, Homoeopathy and Jungian analytical psychology and has interests in Psychosomatic medicine and the meaning of disease in Health, Well being and Healing. Currently he is Healthcare advisor to the Bulmer Foundation Charity in Hereford, Editor-in-Chief of the peer reviewed, scientific *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine: Research on Paradigm, Practice and Policy*, Visiting Professor in Healthcare and Integrated Medicine at Oxford Brookes University, serves on a number of Scientific Advisory Boards for emerging energy medicine technologies, and runs his own clinical practice in London and Hereford. He was a founding member of the Council of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health.

Kim and his wife live with their three sons and daughter in Herefordshire, England UK.

### **Dr Michael Dixon OBE**

Michael Dixon has been a full time GP in Cullompton for 21 years and Chair of NHS Alliance since 1998.

Nationally he is a member of the National Leadership Network for Health & Social Care (Department of Health) and of the Medical Leaders Professional Council. Locally, he is commissioning lead for Mid Devon Primary Care Trust having co-founded the Mid Devon Commissioning Group that preceded it in 1993.

He was co-author of the NHS Alliance documents:- "Restoring the Vision" (1997); "Implementing the Vision" (2000); "Vision in Practice" (2002); "Engaging GPS in the New NHS" (2003) and "Making a Difference" (2004). His other publications include:-

The Locality Commissioning Handbook (Radcliffe Press 1997)

The Human Effect (Radcliffe Press 2000)

A Practical Guide to Primary Care Groups and Trusts (Radcliffe Press 2000)

Other appointments include:- Senior Associate of the King's Fund (London), Honorary Senior Fellow in Public Policy (HSMC, Birmingham University), Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer at the Peninsula Medical School, Trustee of the Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health and Member of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Research Policy Committee.

He is a writer, researcher and regular speaker on primary care, health policy, complementary medicine and the therapeutic relationship.

His mission is the NHS and, in particular, to champion frontline professionals, managers and patients against inertia, inflexibility and vested interest in the quest for better health and services.

### **Sir Donald Curry KB, CBE, FRAgS,**

Donald Thomas Younger Curry is 60 years old, married with three children.

He chaired the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food which reported to Government in January 2002. The report "Farming and Food, a sustainable future" was widely endorsed by both Government and stakeholders and is regarded as providing an important new vision for the farming and food industry and a blue print for future Government policy. He is currently chairing an implementation group with responsibility for delivering the Government's strategy based on the Policy Commission Report.

He is Chairman of the NFU Mutual Insurance Company having been appointed a non-executive director in 1998, Deputy Chairman in June 2000 and Chairman in June 2003. In January 2000 he was appointed as a Crown Estate Commissioner and was re-appointed in 2004 for a further term.

He was first appointed an MLC Commissioner in October 1986 and was appointed Deputy Chair in January 1992, Acting Chair of the Commission in September 1993, and Chair in April 1994. He was re-appointed for a second term as Chair in April 1997 and retired in April 2001.

He was awarded a CBE for his services to Agriculture in the 1997 New Year's Honours list and a Knighthood in the Birthday Honours in 2001.

He was a founder, and is Chair of 'At Home in the Community', a charity providing care in the North East for people with learning disabilities. In December 2000 he was the first recipient of The Royal Smithfield Club's Bicentenary Trophy awarded for his major contribution to the British meat industry and in June 2004 he was awarded The Royal Agricultural Society's National Agricultural Award.

He farms 250 hectares in Northumberland comprising arable and lowland grass.

### **Highfields Happy Hens – Mr Roger Hosking**

Set in Etwall in the beautiful South Derbyshire countryside our hens lead a blissful life roaming free in lush green fields, but we have a very different story to tell from other free range poultry farms.

The owners, Roger and Beryl Hosking have dedicated their lives to helping young people with big problems find peace, hope and a future through realistic training and companionship, all within a loving Christian environment. Highfields has its own classroom and Special Needs teacher and because all the teaching is directly related to work of the farm, youngsters who have rejected “mainstream” school are more interested in learning.

They now regularly receive referrals from Derby Special Educational Needs Support Service and the Derby Youth Offending Service

[www.highfieldshappyhens.co.uk](http://www.highfieldshappyhens.co.uk) Tel. 01283 732083

### **The Pennyhooks Project – Ms Lydia Otter**

Pennyhooks farm is a small working organic farm with Angus cows and calves, farmed traditionally by the Otter family for 50 years. It also comprises Pennyhooks Brook Marsh, an award winning county wildlife site known for its conservation of water meadows orchids and birds.

Pennyhooks project is a pioneering educational course for teenage students with severe Autism; giving them practical work experience part funded by the European Social Fund, Social Services & Education. It has four modules that have been further developed to encourage access by students with Autism and to help give them successful early work experience, with a view to supported employment on other farms and nature reserves.

- Personal development, health and safety
- Animal husbandry
- Conservation – planting and wetlands management
- Leisure and recreation in the countryside

Tel. 01793 782436

[pennyhooks.farm@virgin.net](mailto:pennyhooks.farm@virgin.net)

### **Herefordshire BODS – Mr Dave Davoll**

BODS is an outdoor education charity that reaches out to those that have the least opportunity to experience adventure.

BODS approach emphasizes safety, fun, and equality of opportunity and participation. We aim to make the most of the unique opportunities for social education and personal developments that adventure and nature provides. We see outdoor activities not simply as recreation. Through adventure, BODS encourages people to:

- value learning
- increase self confidence
- improve inter-personal skills
- develop their own potential

We run adventure activities and heritage crafts. These are ways of engaging young people with Nature and creating a sense of respect for the Environment.

[www.BODS.info](http://www.BODS.info) Tel. 01432 274239

[enquiries@bods.info](mailto:enquiries@bods.info)

**Appendix 3:- DELEGATE LIST**

**PLEASE NOTE: - This is a full delegate list however contact details only appear for delegates who signed and returned the feedback form confirming that they were willing for these to be included in the report. If you would like your details to be made available to others interested in a future care farm initiative please contact Debbie Wilcox – [care@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:care@harper-adams.ac.uk)**

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Mr R Allan	Kilkileen Organics			
Mr Beren Aldridge	Growing Well			
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Ms Christine Butler	West Midlands Public Health Group			
Mrs C Carney	Oak Tree Farm Rural Project			
Mrs Beverley Chittem	Hampton Hayes Farm	Worthen Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 9JJ	bchittem@hamptonhayesfarm.fsnet.co.uk	01743 891388
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Sir Don Curry	DEFRA			
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Mr & Mrs B Samuel	Gilead Foundations Charity Ltd.			
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Mr Mike Vernon	Friends Of Animals League	Foal Farm Jail Lane Biggin Hill Kent TN16 3AX	generalmanager@foalfarm.org.uk	01959 570449
Mr D Wareham	Pershore Group Of Colleges			
Mr Jonathan Whittall	Forum For The Future	9 Imperial Square Cheltenham GL50 1QB Gloucestershire	j.whittall@forumforthefuture.org.uk	01242 262400
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Mr Robert Winfield	Elm Farm Research Centre	Hamstead Marshall Newbury Berkshire RG20 0HR	bob.w@efrc.com	01488 658298
Mr R Woollatt	Cultivations	Nant y Helyg Maentwrog Blaenau Ffestiniog Gwynedd LL41 4HF	richardw.cultivations@ntlworld.com	01766 590480
Mr & Mrs D Young	Lower House Farm			

## Appendix 4:- Evaluation of Feedback from Questionnaires

This analysis is taken from the 79 completed questionnaires. The first three questions have not been included for the purposes of this report – these were merely checking that the delegates had been satisfied with the event rather than eliciting any recommendations.

### Question 4 - Delegates were asked what the main issues were that the conference dealt with.

The issues can be categorised under the following headings:

#### Care Farm Concepts (including benefits, funding and the requirement)

- A real awareness of the benefits that being out of doors can have - inspiring and breaking down barriers
- The overall benefits of working with animals/farms, i.e. general well-being
- Setting out what a care farm is. Practical interaction about how it works
- The overwhelming proof that the time has come for this to take place
- Opening the discussion on funders - proving that passion can make it happen
- Awareness of the care farm concept and future opportunities that this could present
- Highlighted some of society's problems
- The financial savings of care farms over standard rehab. Centres
- Inspiring examples
- Explanation of the idea of 'care farms'
- Different types of organisations that offer care
- Learning what is happening around the country about care in the community
- Bringing a number of areas together (farming, therapy, disability support etc)
- Differentiating between the care farm movement and those 'projects' which were set up for disabled people etc.
- Care/isolation/farming/comradeship
- Social reconnection
- Residential care farms for inner city kids?
- That professional people have a need for us
- Identifying the need - reassurance that it is happening in some places
- The health issues. Benefits to ALL society, plus reduced cost to NHS
- Awareness of the care farm concept and future opportunities that this could present

#### Care Farming

- Renewed perspective about my future in farming - a broader array of options to think about
- The real situation for farmers and what the practicalities and needs are in order to develop as a care farm
- Can care farms produce food and be self-sustaining?
- Is there a concept of care farming in the UK and does my farm fit it?
- Promoting practical ideas to take back to the farm

#### Politics

- Health and agricultural linkage at a policy level. Much clearer understanding of the NHS needs to take this on board
- The need for recognition of the value of care farms; the possibility of a movement to influence government thinking
- Building political support
- Although obvious to us, we still have a long way to go to convince NHS and other funders

- Highlighted how all the 'agencies' need to be pulled together
- Building profile, consensus and a movement which might attract government funds
- A holistic approach to people, communities and the environment; sustainability and not just economic!

#### Networks

- Networking: links with health. Amazed at how much is already going on
- Who is interested in getting involved; the potential and the amazing schemes that are already happening
- A good foundation to start a national network
- Setting up a central support network
- Gathering information; developing networks
- Very encouraging to hear the reports of work already being done; sharing experiences
- A great reassurance that the network is gathering momentum

#### Schools

- School visits on farms. Getting and encouraging children/schools onto farms

#### **Question 5 - Delegates were asked what were the omissions.**

From the 79 responses 51 (65%) gave either "none" as an answer or did not complete the question. From the remaining 28 (35%) the following replies were noted:

- There is a need for case studies demonstrating a care farm as a distinct part of an enterprise farm.
- Resources for Scottish initiatives
- Linkages with education and the national curriculum
- Dealing with bureaucracy and regulation
- National resources
- Clarification of requirements for participating farms
- Project start-up. Available sources for financing, statutory guidance etc
- Relationship with other rural/agricultural groups
- Welfare and environmentally friendly farming
- Constraints on health and social services using farms and projects
- Differentiation between care farms and projects for disabled people
- Transport to care farms
- Gathering evidence of the real value of care farms
- Loop systems for hearing aids
- A framework to move forward
- Origins of care farming and involvement in therapeutic activities
- Benefits of a network
- Drug rehabilitation.

Also included were more general comments about the conference:

- Lack of representation from local government and social services.
- More time needed for group discussions
- Seminars needed to discuss clear roles of policy that need to be recognised.

### **Question 6 - This section concerned the establishment of a network for care farms:**

The delegates were asked if there was an existing network that care farming might attach itself to, rather than creating a new one.

- Agricultural colleges
- Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
- Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS)
- Farmers' networks Farming and Countryside Education (FACE)
- 'Farming for Health Network' Farms for Schools (FFS)
- Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG)
- Fordhall Farm
- Local Food Links
- National Farmers' Union (NFU)
- NHS Alliance
- Social and Therapeutic Horticulture
- Thrive

Also, the representatives were asked if a new network is formed, would they (or a colleague) be interested in being part of the steering group to take it forward. Thirty two suggested names were captured on the questionnaire.

The delegates' suggestions for what a network should provide are detailed below. The comments have been categorised and remain as submitted in the questionnaires. There is a duplication of ideas but this gives a measure of the strength of feeling in that particular area.

#### **Body of Knowledge**

- Evidence to persuade decision makers
- Expertise and experience advocacy
- Sources of funding. Info on the economic benefits for farmers
- Grants, support and information opportunity to share best practice. A website, courses, affiliation, promotional opportunities
- Webpage with national database of contacts
- Helpful information/starter pack, including legislation advice, good practice models etc. Support for areas of work/issues that are unique to care farms
- Offer information share
- Examples of good practice. Include more 'mainstream' health problems
- Understanding of funding streams
- Examples of good practice. Up-to-date legislation/ policy/ H&S info etc.
- Clear and concise contact information: details of provision offered
- Specific and accurate information regarding standards required and funding
- Relevant information - facts, costings, reports, case studies etc.
- Information/website/handbook
- Support, information (current)
- A stepping stone list - who can advise next. Contact details for others.
- E-mail discussion forum. Examples of existing projects that could be visited
- Quality standards; knowledge of how the institutions work; a network of 'demonstration/best practice places.
- Guidance and support on 'how it is done'
- Newsletter/ideas/problem solving.
- Provide info about existing initiatives.

### Lobbying Activities

- Lobbying of government for support
- Political lobby
- Get maximum media attention by quoting a human story, and have a national week for care farms
- Profile' lobbying/professionalism
- Lobby at NHS and government.

### Consultancy

- Consultation to ensure that proposals (e.g. standards and handbook) will truly meet the needs of the great variety of provision and purchasers
- Practical advice and information about how to start
- Advice and info on how to set up a care farm
- Set up advice
- Short cut to a successful farm care incentive
- Help with legal aspects. Ways of accessing Social Services, NHS, LEA etc.
- On-going support and advice
- Practical advice and assistance to farmers
- How to go about setting up a care farm
- Practical guidance to channel people's enthusiasm who don't know what to do next
- Advice on policies and procedures. H & S etc.
- How to use care farms as an intervention treatment rather than a last resort for vulnerable groups
- Help with local planning issues to enable care projects to get off the ground at all
- Support and help with planning from local planning board
- Consultancy advice covering feasibility, planning issues, market demand, sustainability, sources of grants and finance etc.
- Help to set up new places
- Support and advice.

### Resources

- Practical stuff
- Links to funding
- Sharing resources
- Would be happy if funding were identified to run, manage and evaluate a project linking city problems with potential care farms
- Sources of funding and contacts
- Opportunity for sharing skills
- Funding opportunities.

### Relationship Management

- Establish links to other similar schemes/groups - people power. Make people aware so they can consider this before punishment
- The network needs to act as a catalyst to promote partnership with the NHS and SS etc
- Encourage inspectorate to understand what we do
- To make farmers aware that they may be able to make a useful contribution to people and groups less fortunate. Should also be rewarded financially by government
- Communications network. Lobbying (schools, leas, healthcare authorities). Material and support. Break down barriers between potential providers and participants/beneficiaries/purchasers

- Help dealing with agencies
- There is a cultural problem here. Farmers used to DEFRA and not in other sectors. Farm advisers at DEFRA will have kittens dealing with a 'care farm' request!
- Be able to link clients and providers
- Putting providers in touch with all relevant bodies and vice versa - working together
- Provide a forum for farmers/land people/practitioners/NHS/social workers
- Organise contacts
- The network itself should be part of the many other networks already out there - FARMA has a good structure to represent members
- Contacts that would use us to be provided by members who are already used - by youth offending service, pupil referral unit etc.

#### Event Organisation (including training)

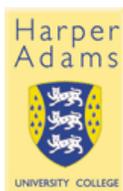
- Annual event – networking
- Training for farmers and carers
- Promotions
- Networking is vital - it's who you know, not what you know
- Training for farmers being very important
- Occasional meetings
- Training
- Networking opportunities
- Offer support and training to farmer 'providers'.

#### Proactive development of Care Farming concept

- Research
- Suggestions for providing evidence and research and opportunities for education and learning more about development and management of care farms
- Looking at and development of research to promote further funding from government and development of information line, problem solving etc.
- Policy work.

#### Central Office/Focus & Accreditation

- Financial/legislative/administrative support
- Central office facility support and advice
- Accreditation
- Care of practice
- Inspection for members
- As the Sector Skills Council for Agriculture, we would be happy to work and help facilitate the skills and staff development area, as well as for the clients.



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