

Rural Briefing – September 2010 issue

To register your interest in any of the items below, or further information please contact –

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- Rural Practitioners Group – Thursday 16th September
- Crossing the Threshold 2010 Conference – Community Use of the Church Buildings. Thursday 30th September
- Harvest Thanksgiving Resources
- Harvest Briefing Report 2010
- County Harvest Service at Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday 10th October
- Ring Bells for International Year of Biodiversity
- Farming Help Charities (Kent Farmline, RABI)

Rural Practitioners Group – Thursday 16th September

The next meeting will be held at Biddenden, and will begin at 10am with coffee at All Saints, Biddenden. Lunch as usual will be at a local pub.

If you are unable to attend the September meeting, the final meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday 9th November when we will be visiting Kingsdown and Ringwould.

Crossing the Threshold 2010 – Thursday 30th September

A day for churches to come and hear about opportunities and projects that can help their presence in the community. There will be presentations, seminars, workshops and a market place from a number of organisations to help churches explore how they might use and adapt their buildings for wider community use.

The costs will be either, £40 per individual, £60 for parish rate (two people attending).

To find out more – www.crossingthethreshold2010.co.uk

To register your interest crossingthethreshold2010@googlemail.com

Harvest Thanksgiving Resources

If you are looking for new resources for your Harvest Thanksgiving, the Arthur Rank Centre has a pool of resources from various organisations and on a number of themes. Many are downloadable from their website.

http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications_and_resources/rural_worship_resources/search/index.asp

Harvest Briefing 2010

After a turbulent start to August prices wheat markets harvest delivery prices ranged from £133 to £140/t up on average £20.00 a ton dearer than last year depending on region. Persistent rain across much of the country at the end of August meant that many farmers found it difficult to get crops in. The relative calm may be short lived with the on going uncertainty of, if and when the Ukraine decides to limit exports and whether Russia will need to import grain in 2010-2011.

Cattle and sheep sales for the first six months of 2010 were down by 7% and 12% respectively compared to the same period last year. Whilst sheep prices remained relatively buoyant the average cattle price between January and June was 10p/kg lower than for the same period last year.

There has been a significant slump in the wholesale egg market. The price of medium eggs on the open market fell from about £1/dozen in the Spring to as low as 40p by mid July. There is a surplus of eggs and no mechanism for relieving the downward pressure on prices.

Farming is now officially the most dangerous industry. Thirty eight agricultural workers were killed at work between April 2009 and March 2010. Seven members of the public were also killed in work related accidents in the sector. In addition to farming's death toll there were more than 100,000 injuries of which 20,000 were serious debilitating injuries, although the true picture is unknown because farming is the worst sector by far for under reporting injury.

Public support for farmers reaches a five year high. Three quarters of people think of farmers favourably or very favourably up from 68% in 2005. With a growing demand for food as the world population increases, 86% of people agree that farming will be more important in the future. 52% of people strongly agreed that farmers should grow crops for bio-fuels and, a similar proportion said their trust in farmers would not be undermined if they came out in favour of GM crops while 17% were strongly opposed to GM crops being grown in Britain. NFU president Peter Kendall said "These figure clearly demonstrate that the general public supports British farming and recognises the importance of food production to our future."

County Harvest Service – Canterbury Cathedral.

The County Harvest service this year is to be held on **Sunday 10th October, 6.30pm** at Canterbury Cathedral. This year's focus is the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and is part of the national calendar of celebrations. The preacher will be the Bishop of Dover.

The Kent RABI work hard each year to raise funds for those whom the charity supports. Last year, the County raised the most nationally, raising more than £62,000. All are welcome to join in the celebrations of this organisation's work.

Ring for the International Year of Biodiversity

The call from the United Nations for bells to be rung on 22 September whilst world leaders debate biodiversity issues is being taken up by churches around this country.

With almost three weeks to go churches in Winchester, Bristol, Ely, Oxford, Canterbury and London dioceses have registered that their bells will ring out on the day.

Lunchtime on a Wednesday is not the ideal time for church bellringers to turn out, but where a full team cannot be gathered a token ring is being organised. In some cases churches with only one bell will be taking part.

The request from the UN is for any bell to be rung and so public buildings and schools are also being encouraged to participate as part of the UN's International Year of Biodiversity. The UN is hoping that bells all around the world will ring at some time during the day to show concern for world's biodiversity and churches as far away as Australia have registered that their bells will be ringing.

There is still time to organise something and churches planning to take part should let Ruth Watkinson know at 020 7591 1865 ruth.watkinson@c-of-e.org.uk

Rural Charities and Organisation

Kent Farmline – www.kentfarmline.org.uk Helpline 0845 458 3218

Action with Communities in Rural Kent – www.ruralkent.org
(Information on various subjects shops, transport etc, also funding workshops and charities)

Farm Crisis Network and the RABI email www.farminghelp.org.uk or telephone the helpline 07002 326 326.