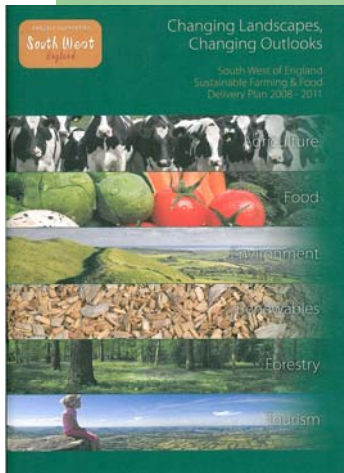


Moving Forward

Changing Landscapes, Changing Outlooks—SFF newsletter



Development of a SW Delivery Plan for Biodiversity in International Year of Biodiversity

2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations and in the South West we are taking this opportunity to refresh our thinking about our work across the region to help safeguard our natural heritage. Biodiversity South West, a partnership of statutory, voluntary and business organisations formed in 1999, launched Nature Map in 2006. Nature Map identifies across the SW where most of the major biodiversity habitats are found and where targets to maintain, restore and re-create wildlife might be best met. Biodiversity South West's partners working with landowners across the South West have achieved a great deal since the launch of Nature Map to begin to deliver this 50 year vision. International Year of Biodiversity is about celebrating these achievements, taking stock and looking to the future to build on our current achievements.

Across the South West we have seen some major achievements for biodiversity and there is plenty to celebrate. Natural England have worked with landowners to secure more than 37,673 ha of biodiversity in HLS schemes across the SW.



However evidence indicates that we have failed to halt the loss of biodiversity, and many of our widespread habitats and species continue to decline. Biodiversity South West is now working with its partners to develop a Delivery Plan for Biodiversity for the next 5 years which highlights those key landscapes where we need to pull together to deliver real biodiversity benefits on the ground, that not only see benefits for wildlife but enhances the public goods that wildlife rich landscapes can bring. The natural environment is one of the South West's greatest assets, for the value it brings to our lives and the economy and for the role it plays in providing vital support for food production and natural resources. In International Year of Biodiversity we are keen to help play our part working with others to ensure that we can continue to benefit from this well into the future and work to ensure we meet the European target to halt biodiversity loss by 2020. For more information about Biodiversity South West, Nature Map and the Delivery Plan for Biodiversity please visit www.biodiversitysouthwest.co.uk

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An introduction to the new Natural England Director SW

'Taste the Tatties'—A Blog

Taste the Tatties, the SFF funded project featured in April's newsletter to connect Somerset schoolchildren with their local farm, is well underway and is keeping the public informed of progress through a blog, featured on the Farmers Weekly website. Taste The Tatties was set up in response to the alarming research results surrounding children's misunderstandings of food origins; according to a recent survey carried out by the Potato Council 6 out of 10 children believed potatoes grew on trees!

The blog will be regularly updated with any dramas, highlights, fascinating facts etc that may befall the project throughout its existence. Visit the blog at www.fwi.co.uk/community/blogs/taste-tatties-harvest/default.aspx

South West
England

Post-budget Agencies Shake-up

June's Budget confirmed the Government's intention to replace the Regional Development Agencies, and to encourage the development of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to take their place. There is still a range of important detail to be clarified – precisely what work will be carried out locally, what nationally and what not at all – and this is likely to be laid out in the White Paper which will be published later in the summer.

The RDA's will remain in existence until March 2012 with the LEP's being developed for next year.

Also, the delivery of public services for which Defra is responsible will be shaken up to line up with the coalition Government's commitments on service delivery, according to Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman.

Mrs Spelman also announced that Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency would be merged as soon as possible.



"These two agencies both work to combat animal diseases, and by bringing together their services, expertise and scientific capability, we will improve our resilience and create a strong organisation that provides a range of services from on farm advice and emergency response to the world-class laboratory work and science for which we are rightly recognised."

It is intended that the forthcoming Public Bodies (Reform) Bill announced in the Queen's Speech will provide the legislative vehicle under which the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) will stop operating.

The merger of Animal Health and VLA will go ahead shortly, with as little disruption to staff and customers as possible. A single Chief Executive for the new agency will be appointed this summer.

Visit www.defra.gov.uk for further information.



Soils4Profit breaks the 500 barrier

Good soil, nutrient and manure management is crucial to every farming business. Where this is done well, the result can be reduced cost, increased profit, reduced run-off and a number of other environmental benefits.

Soils for Profit (S4P), a project helping farmers and land-owners improve the management and use of their soils, nutrients and manures recently celebrated its 500th on-farm advisory visit. These free advisory visits delivered by Natural England and its contractors provide farmers with practical advice and an action plan written specifically for their land-holding. This plan includes detailed technical information on resource use and a set of recommended actions some of which may be eligible for support through a capital grant scheme funded by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA).

Steve Marston, Natural England lead for Soils for Profit, said: "We are pleased to be working with the Environment Agency to deliver the S4P project over the next three and half years. We have already had a lot of interest in this initiative and to date 575 of the 700 applicants have received an on-farm advisory visit. One example of a beneficiary is a farmer who operates a mixed farm near Salisbury in Wiltshire who took up the offer of a free visit from a Soils for Profit adviser. His action plan contained a number of recommendations including the use of a variable rate fertiliser applicator and a GPS system to spread the fertiliser more accurately. He subsequently made a successful application to the SWARM small grant scheme."

A survey earlier this year also revealed the positive impact that the farm visits have made with three quarters of those responding saying that the advice they received was helpful.

Soils for Profit is one element of the South West Agricultural Resource Management (SWARM) initiative which is open to all farming businesses in the region with over 5 hectares of land. SWARM is designed to help farmers have more profitable and resilient businesses by managing resources more efficiently whilst reducing the impact of their activities on the environment. SWARM is a collaboration between SWRDA, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Business Link and is funded through the Rural Development Programme for England.

Those interested in registering for a free S4P advisory visit should contact Natural England on 0300 060 1244, email:

soils4profit@naturalengland.org.uk or visit the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk. S4P is also currently working on a programme of on farm group events including machinery demonstrations to commence later this year.



Community Adaptation Toolkit launch

20th July sees the Greening Campaign's launch of its Community Adaptation Toolkit on July 20 at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London.

The Greening Campaign was set up in response to the threat of global warming. It is an innovative idea to help motivate people to reduce their energy consumption and therefore lower their personal and community carbon footprint. The campaign was so successful it was taken up by several other local communities. It is now operating across England, with enquires coming from across the world. The Greening Campaign is fun, structured, and makes fighting climate change visible in the community.

The launch will be aimed at communities, businesses and local authorities alike, and speakers will include: Caroline Spelman, Environment Secretary (TBC), Niko Dobi-Rozsa of Global Environmental Social Business, Mark Broadmeadow of the Forestry Commission, Madeleine Lewes of Farming Futures, Andrew Lee of the Sustainable Development Commission and Rob Whiteman of IDeA.

Delegates will also have the opportunity to take part in **workshops** on Water & Wildlife; Buildings & Infrastructure; Forestry, Farming & Food; Community Resilience & Health; Energy & Resources; Sustainable Finance; Communications & Technology, and Art & Design.

See

www.greening-campaign.co.uk

for more information.

Schumacher College— Sustainable Learning in the South West

We all have a far greater awareness of ecological issues these days. But with that comes the need for land-owners and food-producers to make sustainability a priority, and take responsibility for delivering effective solutions through their own work and personal environments.

Schumacher College, based on the Dartington Hall Estate in South Devon offers individuals the opportunity to learn about sustainability in ways which they can apply to their own lives and businesses. The college runs an extensive programme of short courses covering all manner of social and environmental issues from sustainable building to art, ecology and economics.

This year, sustainable food and farming is high on the agenda, with a number of courses aimed at challenging convention and encouraging greater creative thinking – both for business and for pleasure - with a series of events geared around food.

Participants will have the chance to hear from practitioners at the cutting-edge of permaculture, community-based food production activities, ethnobotany and sustainable horticulture – covering interests such as low-carbon growing policies, wild food and agroforestry.

The events take place from July until November this year, and run for four or five days.



For more information on the College and the full range of courses it offers, please go to www.schumachercollege.org.uk

A New VISION for the Future

After 5-years of successful work the team at Gloucestershire Food Vision, Adrian Jevans (pic) and Rob Rees MBE, have set up a new Community Interest Company - VISION Culture. This will allow them not only to continue the Gloucestershire Food Vision (GFV) project, but also provide support for other organisations outside the county. Over the last 5 years, GFV can account for over £4.5million of additional food activity in the county.

GFV was the UK's first countywide integrated food policy framework. It brought together not just production but linked it with health, education, procurement and food safety. GFV worked with industry and providers to establish better, more sustainable projects, of which many continue today. As GFV, the role was more about facilitation, rather than delivery of projects.

The transition to a Community Interest Company (CIC) means that delivery of projects is now much easier.



As VISION Culture, the work continues in Gloucestershire, exploring the issues of food security for the county and producing a sector report that will provide stronger evidence on where to support the sector in the future. We are also working with industry, assisting food producers in developing applications for RDPE projects. We are especially keen to make sure that these businesses are producing robust business plans that meet a true market need.

Being no longer restricted to Gloucestershire, the team are already talking to partners across the region and nationally, where their expertise around food policy and strategy, would be beneficial. As a CIC, the business has a social purpose; profits are put back into community projects rather than shareholders. This way the company hopes in the future to be able to match fund some of those really good projects – that struggle due to lack of match funding.

If you would like to contact VISION Culture – then check the website www.visioncic.com or email info@visioncic.com

Focus: Ciaran Gannon

Don't forget to follow us on

facebook

At 'Sustainable Farming & Food—Moving forward'

(case sensitive)

and on

twitter

at simply 'SWSFF'

Photo Credits: Red Admiral, Natural England ©, S4P, Natural England ©, Digging student, Schumacher College ©, Adrian Jevans, Vision CIC ©, Ciaran Gannon, Natural England ©

Ciaran Gannon is the new South West Regional Director for Natural England. Ciaran's family roots are in the far west of Ireland where his parents were born. His father came from a medical family and practiced medicine for 30 years after settling in England in the 1950's, while his mother's family are from farming stock, with farming concerns continuing in Limerick and Tipperary.

Born and raised in southern England, Ciaran studied at Cirencester before embarking on a career in farm management with roles over a 10 year period on a number of large estates in Shropshire, Hampshire and Kent. These covered a mix of lowland and upland conditions, with intensive, extensive and diversified enterprises. Ciaran subsequently gained a MSc in Agricultural Economics at Wye College (London University) and joined ADAS as a farm business adviser in 1990. From 1992, Ciaran was also involved in the consultancy work in Eastern Europe via development programmes funded by the British Government, the EU and the World Bank. In 1996 he completed an MBA in the Food Industry and the Rural Sector from Reading University.

In 2000, Ciaran moved to a Policy Adviser post in London for the Farm Rural and Conservation Agency and continued in this role when the Rural Development Service (RDS) was formed in April 2001 at the height of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. He was actively involved in business recovery activities for culled-out farmers in the North West of England during this period.

Over the next few years Ciaran engaged with the farming community across England in addressing impacts of the Curry report, the Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy and CAP reform.

This led to becoming Head of the RDS Farm Advice Unit, which amongst other functions managed the Defra funded advice programmes for Farm Business Advice, Catchment Sensitive Farming, Conservation and Cross Compliance. The RDS became part of Natural England in October 2006, and since then Ciaran has performed a number of roles including two years as Regional Director in the West Midlands and a one year post in external affairs.

Ciaran says; "My farming background and interest in sustainability in all its forms is at the core of my passion to work with the farming community in the south west of England. I look forward to enabling farmers to develop their businesses while enhancing and supporting the extraordinary natural environment that exists in the region."



Ciaran already has strong South West connections with family across the region from Truro to Bradford-on-Avon. Away from work, Ciaran keeps busy too. He is married and has five daughters, enjoys spending time on his allotment and playing rugby with London Irish Vets, and has interests in France, cooking and fishing.

Red Tractor Week—celebrating a Decade of Dedication to quality food

The Red Tractor logo guarantees that food has been produced to high standards from the farm right through to the supermarket shelf to endure quality, fresh food. This year it celebrates its 10th anniversary and as such saw a 'Red Tractor Week' running from the 14th to the 21st June to celebrate a decade of 'Great Food and Great Farming under the Red Tractor.'

The week was fronted nationally by TV presenter and writer Janet Street Porter who met with industry representatives to mark the celebrations, and supported by an exciting website giving tips on how to join in the celebrations as well as a 'summer eating guide' filled with recipe ideas, activities for children and an outline of the UK's top Outdoor

Eating spots. Supermarkets, restaurants, pubs and schools took part in the celebrations with promotions and giveaways throughout the week.

The Red Tractor is the biggest quality mark in the UK food industry, covering a wider range of products than any other and appearing on more than £10 billion worth of food and drink each year. Every week millions of people buy food and drink bearing the Red Tractor symbol. Every month more farmers and food service companies are recognising the growing consumer appeal of the Red Tractor mark and joining as licensees. Visit www.myredtractor.co.uk for more information or to access the 'Summer Eating Guide'.

