

The Listening Ear

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ACA

The Agricultural Chaplains Association

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Richard's Scriblings

We open this month in a slightly different way. May I commend to you a prayer that one of our members, Fr. Clive Fairclough (Chaplain – Frome Market), has written. It is specifically for Frome Market, but, of course, could be adapted for use anywhere.

*Heavenly Father, we pray for those who are working hard
to keep Frome Livestock Market open.*

*We thank you for their determination, at personal risk,
as they try to keep the food supply going to feed our nation.*

*Give them hope and courage as they continue to support
our farming industry, in auctioneering, insurance,
legal advice, and in all the other businesses
who support our farmers and their families.*

Keep them safe. Amen

Markets have really suffered during the 100 plus days or so that lockdown has been in force. Farmers have been bringing livestock into market and leaving them and going home. I know from experience in my own area that this has increased the stress level and led to an increased sense of loneliness and isolation. So, as we pray Clive's prayer, may we remember all who are suffering at this time and try to continue to look after them.

The Association has just begun to forge links with the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA), who are the governing body which regulates auctioneers. They are in regular consultations with Defra to keep markets open and the food chain supplied. A very few markets are closed, but to all those who keep going, together with the farmers that supply them, well done and thank you for feeding the nation!!

Thought for Today

Our reflection this month has been sent to us by another member, Graham Hinds. He wrote it some years ago, and it is very meaningful.

A NEW DAY

Raindrops keep falling on my head!
Through the sun I see the rainbow,
reminding me of God, his love,
his presence, his power,
and his permission.

Permission?

To open the door - it's a safe place.
Behold, it's a new day.

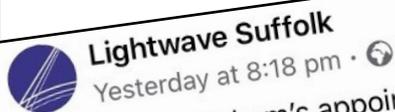


continued...

A song cries out:
“I feel a lightness in my spirit,
within the grace of God I stand.”

Faith rising, energy restoring,
angels, family, friends – past and present
willing me on,
cheering me on.....
Then, in the quietness, I catch fresh vision,
Yes, God, I can hear your voice.
Let’s journey together again.
I know it’s a new day.

Graham Hinds – FCN, Derbyshire



Lightwave Suffolk

Yesterday at 8:18 pm · 🌐

Great to see Graham’s appointment in enews today and wonderful to have him on team supporting farmers and others in these challenging times.

Graham Miles from Suffolk, yet another member of the Association, has sent in an article which was published by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich regarding his new and exciting role as Lightwave Rural Chaplain for Suffolk.

Graham Miles is the new Lightwave Rural Chaplain for Suffolk



He writes *“This role brings together my passions for church, farming and countryside. Lightwave is based at the college in Otley, recently remaned “Suffolk Rural” but then known as the East Suffolk Agricultural Institute, where my farming journey began in 1969-1972. I love reaching out to the farming and countryside communities in Suffolk, visiting farms and countryside communities taking with me God’s love and support to all those I come in contact with in person or by phone. I am here for them, like God is here for me.”*

Graham is available for anyone in the countryside who could do with a listening ear and pastoral support at this time: You can contact him on

07413 683368 or email graham.miles.lightwave@gmail.com.



My usual plea...

We are really blessed to have articles and a prayer from our members, and thank you for those!

If anyone else would love to contribute, please let us know...

The impact of COVID-19 on food behaviours and attitudes

I have included the following article by Sue Pritchard, Director of the RSA Food, Farming & Countryside Commission, written back in April, which should be of interest to all. - Ed.

Just a month ago, in what seems a different world, the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission held two events at St. George's House, Windsor. Together with fifty others from farming, environment, policy, academia and education, we considered how to structure a new framework for our land use and food and farming systems to respond to the climate, nature and public health emergencies, and all in the post Brexit environment.

Weeks later, we're facing a crisis which brings all of this into sharp focus. The ways we get food and eat it, our priorities and our attitudes to government intervening in our lives have changed more in the past month than many experts and policy makers had thought possible in decades.

But which of these changes will stick? Which will we remember? And how much will our experience now be overshadowed by the long-term economic impact of the current crisis?

Last week we commissioned some new research with the Food Foundation and YouGov. It shows that, compared with gradual changes in eating behaviour as consumers respond to the climate, nature and obesity crises, we're now seeing radical lifestyle changes at the drop of a hat. As we are having to spend more time at home, restrict our shopping and stop socialising, we've noticed the air is cleaner, there is more wildlife. How we value food is changing, we're cooking more from scratch and sourcing our food from different places. Three million people have tried a veg box scheme or are buying direct-from-farm both to get what we need and to support the local community.



That we have all had to adapt so fast reflects in part how brittle parts of our food system have become. Farmers and others in food industry are now 'keyworkers', but our supply chains leave little wriggle room and most of our farmers rely on very few routes to market. If those fail, they can't sell their produce, and consumers and producers lose out. The sight of dairy farmers having to throw milk away, whilst some families are struggling to afford enough of the nutritious food they need is, rightly, shocking.

Should we be importing less and growing more food at home, and how should we sell it for a fairer price? Food security at a national level is a strategic priority for government, and the UK has the capability to become the world leader in healthy, sustainable food production. Farmers can be a force for wider economic, public health and environmental benefits. Local supply networks and community groups are making what could be lasting changes with scant infrastructure and resources. What role could they play in the recovery phase and, longer term, in ensuring rural economies thrive? How do we secure more investment for ecological farming systems, producing healthy food while enhancing the environment, and strengthening communities?

Coronavirus brings a new urgency to these questions. Last July, when Michael Gove, then Environment Secretary, launched our first major report, government was at the early stages of setting out its new farm payments system, ELMs, to re-purpose money from the Common Agricultural Policy to fund environmental benefits. "We know that it is in the interests of farmers and landowners to move to a more sustainable model" he said. Now it's likely that ELMs and the Agriculture Bill will be delayed until Parliament sits again and Defra has the capacity to think beyond the crisis. There is a new urgency for a vision for food and farming, backed by a plan from government. The crisis is providing the opportunity to reconsider what and how we value the part that farming and the countryside play in our lives, and in keeping us well. And more than that, to check – and reset – our compass.

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The poll finds a majority (85%) want to see some of the personal or social changes they have experienced continue afterwards, whilst just 9% want everything to go back to how it was before the pandemic.

It also identifies significant changes to our relationship with food, family and the environment:

- Social bonds are stronger, with 40% feeling a stronger sense of local community and 39% more in touch with friends and family.
- 42% say the outbreak has changed how they value food as an essential, and one in ten have shared something like food or shopping with a neighbour for the first time
- More than 19 million of us (38%) say they are cooking more from scratch and 17 million are throwing away less food (33%). 6% (and 9% of Londoners), 3 million people, have tried a veg box scheme or ordered food from a local farm for the very first time
- 51% say they have noticed cleaner air, and 27% more wildlife since the outbreak began
- Although 9% feel fitter and 27% are getting more exercise, more people (36%) say they are getting less exercise than before.

See the data visualization here:

<https://flo.uri.sh/story/262445/embed#slide-0>

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4343 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 9th April 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). Calculations were made by the FFCC using mid-year population estimates. The figures on whether people want things to return (9%) or to change (85%) after the pandemic have been adjusted to include only the respondents (3649) who selected one answer option to this question.

And finally...



A drover from a cattle station in the Australian outback appeared before St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. “Have you done anything of merit in your life”? St. Peter asked. “Well, I can think of one thing”, the drover offered. “On a trip over to Broken Hill, I came across a gang of bikers who were threatening a young sheila. I told them to leave her alone, but they wouldn’t listen. So, I approached the largest and most heavily tattooed biker and smacked him full in the mouth, then kicked his bike over, causing endless damage. I yelled, ‘Now back off, or I’ll kick the living daylights out of the lot of ya!’”

St. Peter was impressed. “When did this happen?” he asked. The drover replied, “Oh, a couple of minutes ago”.

