

Rural Matters



Issue 38 Winter 2017

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Visit the webpage and read our profiles to find out more about each member of the McCartneys team.

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British Farming Awards



I recently attended the British Farming Awards, together with several colleagues. The event was held at the National Conference Centre, Birmingham and it could quite possibly be the only time that I will ever walk down the red carpet!! The reason we were all there is because McCartneys had been nominated for two awards in the Farmers Guardian Mart's the Heart Awards. Firstly New auctioneer of the year, this being Shae Price who sells sheep and cattle in Brecon Market and Worcester Market was put forward for the prize of 'Auction Café of the Year'. It was a fantastic achievement for all concerned to be nominated in these 2 categories and although we didn't win but were runners up we thank the contenders for their efforts and we are proud that they made the shortlist.



It was a very glitzy occasion and we all enjoyed a splendid meal and after dinner entertainment from Rory Bremner. The whole evening was very slickly orchestrated with professional lighting rigs and huge video screens. However what I came away with is actually a good deal of optimism about the future. It was chiefly a young person's event and excepting the auctioneering awards there were 13 categories covering traditional roles such as Sheep Innovator of the Year to specialisms such as Digital Innovator of the Year. Farming attracts young people who have a 'glass half full' attitude and who have not just a work ethic but who have imagination combined with the nous to develop their businesses and be at the cutting edge. So despite all the BREXIT blues, there are and there always have been a large number of young people who want to take our vibrant farming industry forward and set the pace. We should be thankful for this.



Mr Glyn Owens FRICS FAVA FLAA
Based at Knighton Office

Basic Payment Scheme Update

The euro exchange rate for calculating BPS 2017 payments has been set. The rate, an average of the European Central Bank exchange rates set in September, will be €1 = 0.89470, an increase of 4.98% from last year's rate.

The aim is for the majority of 2017 payments to be made on 1 December 2017.

Greening

The European Commission (EC) has published updated greening rules which will come into effect from 1st January 2018. The application of Plant Protection Products (PPP) on nitrogen-fixing crops and fallow land has been banned. Therefore, if you apply PPP on a potential EFA you are advised to consider EFA options (listed in the relevant guidance booklet) to meet the 5% EFA threshold to comply with your Greening obligations.

The key changes include:

A. England

The main changes are as follows (detailed guidance will follow):

- A complete ban on the use of Plant Protection Products (PPPs) on Ecological Focus Area (EFA) Fallow Land, EFA Catch and Cover Crops, and EFA Nitrogen-fixing Crops is introduced. The ban applies from the time of sowing the crop, even if this is before 1 January 2018, to harvesting. The ban also applies to seed dressings.
- As part of crop diversification, you can declare an area as 'mixed crops' that contains small areas of different crops grown next to each other. Individually these would otherwise be too small to claim (these are areas less than 0.01ha) but can be claimed as one 'mixed crop' area.
- The EFA option for hedges is extended in definition to include trees in a line. The EFA value will remain the same - each meter of length equals 10 square meters of area for EFA (as long as if you claim this option you have management responsibility for both sides of the hedge and/or line of trees)
- The EFA buffer strips option is extended in definition to include field margins as well as buffer strips. In addition to buffer strips adjacent or parallel with a water course, you can also claim field margins towards your

EFA. The minimum width of 1 meter remains. The EFA value of field margins will be the same as EFA buffer strips - every meter in length equals 9 square meters of area for EFA.

- EFA catch crops must be maintained for a minimum of 8 weeks starting on 20 August 2018 and must be retained until at least 14 October 2018. The period for EFA cover crops remains at 1 October to 15 January of the following year.
- If you claim EFA nitrogen-fixing crops, in addition to pure stands of a nitrogen-fixing crop you will be allowed to use :
 - mixtures of different nitrogen-fixing crop species; or
 - mixtures of nitrogen fixing crops and other crops, as long as over 50% is nitrogen-fixing crops.

If you sow your 2018 EFA nitrogen-fixing crops in autumn 2017, this more flexible rule applies.

B. Wales

- The ban of PPP's applies from sowing to harvest; so therefore includes any Nitrogen Fixing Crops sown in 2017.
- Where you declare fallow or Nitrogen Fixing Crops and use PPP on other parts of your holding, you may need to provide Rural Payments Wales (RPW) with evidence to show PPP has not been applied to the EFA's. The 2018 Single Application Rules Booklet will provide further information.
- In addition, the EC has instructed member states to change the way farm businesses carry out agricultural activities on fallow land, even when the fallow period has closed. As a result, what grows during the fallow period cannot be utilised by the farm business. Therefore:
 - No grazing may take place for the rest of the calendar year.
 - Cut and leave cuttings on the ground to rot and not remove, burn or use them.
- From 2018, trees in line will be available as an EFA. Trees in line are defined as trees with a crown diameter of 4 metres and the canopies being no more than 5 metres apart.

For more information and guidance on these changes, please contact your local Rural Professional office.



Gareth Wall MRICS FFAV FLAA MBIAC MNAVA
Based at Kington Office

McCartneys Embark on a "Wheely" Big Fundraising Challenge



McCartneys have raised over £3,000 for the mental health charity Mind, our chosen charity of the year, by completing a cycle and walking challenge along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal on the 24th September.

Over 40 participants took part in the event by either cycling the full 35 mile length of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, or by walking seven miles.

The cycle route started in Pontymoile, Pontypool and finished at the canal basin in Brecon, with the walkers starting in Talybont-on-Usk and finishing at the same point. At approximately 35 miles in length, the canal runs through the beautiful Brecon Beacons countryside, passing through around 120 bridges and six locks.

McCartneys have chosen to support Mind as its charity this year to ensure that no one has to face mental health issues alone. As a company, we will be continuing to raise money for Mind and will be organising further fundraising events to raise awareness of the help and support available for anyone suffering from mental health.

Rob Fearnley, who organised the event of McCartneys' Hay-on-Wye office, said: "It was a great day and a tremendous achievement to raise over £3,000 for Mind. The day ran smoothly and we were lucky enough to have some nice weather. No-one fell into the canal either, which always helps!"

Val Walker, service director of Brecon and District Mind, said: "It's fantastic that McCartneys, have chosen Mind as their charity this year. We are very grateful to McCartneys for supporting us in this way so that we can continue to offer people the help and support that they need."

We are continuing to collect monies from sponsorship and are still accepting donations. If you would like to help make a difference and show your support to those facing mental health then please feel free to make a donation through one of McCartneys' offices.

If you are suffering from mental health, or know someone who is, and are looking for confidential support and advice, call Mind on 0300 123 3393.



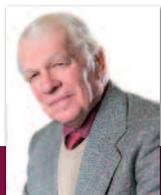
Beth Hanson BSc (Hons)
Based at Kington Office

This is my Chapel



As I look out over the Corvedale I am reminded of a moment many years ago when I was on a farm walk at Ben Cooper's Normeade herd of Friesians. Normeade was at the top of the Friesian world with the bull Normeade Reflection Sovereign being probably the most influential bull of his day. It is not the beautiful cattle I remember, but one comment as we walked through a field of Friesian maiden heifers. There was a hollow in the downs giving a most marvellous panoramic view. The sun had just started to set and Mr Cooper turned to me and said "this is my chapel". I knew in an instance what he meant. Here was a colossus of the dairy industry and a phenomenally successful breeder of cattle to whom his farm was not just a living, not just a business but his spiritual home as a husbander of God's creation.

Much talk has been had on farmers producing environmental goods but the fact is that only a prosperous agriculture can deliver the countryside society has come to expect. At present the debate rages as to what Brexit the nation and in particular farmers want. There is talk of co-operation between all parties and of sustainable agriculture. During the last six months I have had meetings with Natural England ecologists who view grassland through entirely different eyes to the AHDB demonstrations on quick grass and low cost grazing systems. They, in turn, view the world through more complicated eyes than politicians who I believe that as long as it looks green it ticks the boxes. It is an unfortunate truism that much grassland is neither of economic use for production of livestock nor has enough plant diversity to be of ecological value. Thousands of acres across the nation producing little of value economically and yet environmentally contributing little also. Subsidised dereliction is not in the interests of food production or conservation. The land needs farming. The land needs understanding. Conservation and farming can work hand in hand, but farming needs more Ben Coopers and we all need our own chapel, now more than ever.



John Uffold BSc (Hons) MRICS FFAV FLAA MNAVA
Based at Ludow Market Office

LEADER Grant Funding Still Available

LEADER Grant funding remains available across Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire to support investments in farm productivity and farm diversification activities. Grants are available to cover up to 40% of project costs. Examples of eligible projects include the purchase of specialist min till drills and equipment to improve animal welfare such as cattle crushes and handling systems. LEADER also supports farm diversification projects providing grants for constructing or improving buildings and the purchase of equipment.

Please contact Beth Hanson in Kington on 01544 230316 to discuss further.



Beth Hanson BSc (Hons)
Based at Kington Office

60 point rotary milking parlour granted full planning permission

McCartneys LLP Planning and Survey department have obtained full planning approval for the erection of a 240' by 85' building to house a 60 point rotary platform milking parlour. The building also serves several other purposes, including housing a large cow yard, together with a training and exit race. A staff room, office and toilet facilities are provided, together with a secure storage area on the ground floor, with a viewing area on the first floor to enable our clients to show the system to public at pre-arranged engagements.

The scheme has also altered the external layout and movement within the farmstead; with a new farm entrance and access lane provided to the west of the site, which ensures that articulated lorries can access the site with no difficulties. An attenuation pond has been included to the south of the site to ensure that the surface water can be managed appropriately.

The application was undertaken and submitted to the council by Geraint Jones working from the Kington Office of McCartneys. The Parish and local Council were keen to support the application, which is always positive to see, and thus helping to support the farming community in this area.

If you have any projects which you would like to discuss further, contact Geraint Jones on 01544 230 316 or geraint.jones@mccartneys.co.uk



Geraint Jones MRICS
Based at Kington, Newtown & Welshpool Office

Strong and Stable: UK Rural Land Market? (a viewpoint from Breconshire)

I suspect that 'strong and stable' is not a phrase that will be banded about anytime soon by the political elite. However, 'strong and stable' has traditionally been used to describe the UK rural land market due to its general stability and the widespread perception of it being a relatively safe investment.

The outlook for the rural land market has softened in recent years for both the mixed and commercial sectors according to the latest RICS and Royal Agricultural University (RAU) Rural Land Market Survey. That said, anecdotal evidence suggests conditions remain strongest for higher quality land, while purchasers are more selective when it comes to lower grade farmland.

Demand has been strong during the course of 2017 for bare land, farms, small holdings and other rural property in general.

Across Breconshire strong demand has been evidenced for most types of rural property being sold by auction or private treaty. Average prices exceeded £10,000 per acre on four lots of excellent quality pasture near Brecon in the summer of 2017. A small holding in need of modernisation achieved £300,000 near Crickhowell, whilst excellent prices were achieved for barns and land near Erwood in October 2017. Small holdings and equipped farms in general have also received strong levels of demand.

Interestingly, according to the RICS and RAU Rural Land Market Survey, the majority of purchases across the UK are being made by individual farmers, with just under a quarter of purchasers being 'lifestyle' buyers. Agricultural businesses and institutional investors accounted for a little under 10%.

The sale or purchase of a property asset is one of the biggest decisions a farming business will ever make. The importance of timing and type of land being purchased is of vital consideration. For advice and assistance that you can trust, contact a member of your McCartneys team.



Simon Edwards MRICS IRRV
Based at Brecon & Hay on Wye Office

Autumn farm Sales Report

McCartneys have conducted a number of highly successful farm dispersal sales throughout the autumn months across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Powys. Large crowds were attracted to all sales with purchasers travelling from the length and breadth of the UK. A selection of the sale reports are as follows:

Court House Farm, Eardisland was held in September on behalf of Mr Hugh Lowe which offered a large variety of farm machinery, implements and tools for sale due to retirement and sale of the farm. All items were fiercely contested for, despite the wet start to the sale. Auctioneer Les Thomas conducted the sale with the highlight being a 2012 New Holland T6050 4WD tractor with 1400 hours on the clock and in immaculate condition. Bidding was fast and the tractor ended up leaving for West Wales at £37,700. Other leading items included an 'X' reg. Leyland 272 tractor and loader £2,600 and Lely Polymat 3m combination drill £3,200.

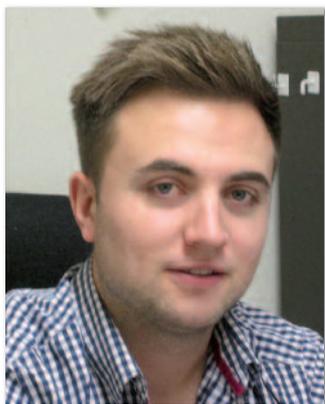
Great Castle Farm, Rhayader - a disposal of live and deadstock was held on behalf of the late Reg Lewis at Great Castle Farm, sale conducted by McCartneys Knighton Office. The sun shone at the sale with notable prices including a Massey Ferguson 390 4WD Tractor at £12,800.00 and a Landrover Defender 90 at £13,950. Round Bales of wrapped haylage sold between £10 and £12 per bale. Hardy Suffolk and Speckled Ewes sold to £101, and Store Lambs to £80 per head.

Ackhill House, Presteigne on behalf of Messrs Bywater - the sale included a large range of modern, classic and vintage farm machinery, together with household furniture and effects. Household furniture sold to an excellent trade with highlights being a mahogany chest of drawers making £270 and an oak corner cupboard selling for £210.

Leading items of the sale include a Massey Ferguson 690 tractor to £4,450 and a Frank Hartop vintage stationary engine to £1,220. The highlight of the day for auctioneer Gareth Wall was a 1940's Caterpillar D2 tracked crawler which made £6,000 and generated a huge amount of national interest.

McCartneys conduct a large amount of on-site dispersal sales for all purposes and have a dedicated specialist team to give pre-sale valuation advice and are able to tailor sales to the client's needs. For further details on items sold at this sale or if you would like to discuss any future dispersal sale of any kind, please contact your local McCartneys office.

James Amphlett Joins McCartneys



James Amphlett has joined McCartneys at Worcester Market where he will be acting as Clive Roads' Assistant, as well as helping out at Ludlow on busy days.

James recently graduated with a degree in Rural Property Management from Harper Adams University. During that time he completed his placement year at Worcester Market, so some of you may be familiar with him from that time.

With a keen interest in auctioneering, James will now go on to study his professional exams with the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA) and the National Association of Valuers and Auctioneers (NAVA).

Coming from an agricultural background at home, James' family breed pedigree Charollais sheep as well as producing cross-bred commercial rams. He has a keen interest in sheep trimming and dressing, and is regularly seen competing across the show circuit.

Contact James Amphlett **01905 769770 / 07972 653077** based at the Worcester Office.

With a long standing heritage in supporting the needs of the countryside economy McCartneys is one of the oldest and largest multi disciplined private practices in the United Kingdom. Offering a wide and comprehensive range of services across the Midlands and throughout Wales, McCartneys has a large dedicated team of professional experts specialising in all aspects of rural property, planning and business advice.

Please contact one of our professional staff for sensible and impartial advice. For any further information about any of the content of this newsletter please contact the editors Gareth Wall and Amelia Illingsworth.

Rural Professional Offices

Bishops Castle

Mr G Wall MRICS FAAV FLAA MBIAC MNAVA
Telephone: 07974 143 336
Email: grw@mccartneys.co.uk

Builth Wells

Mr G Wall MRICS FAAV FLAA MBIAC MNAVA
Mrs A Crofts-Hill BSc (Hons)
Miss B Hanson BSc (Hons)
Telephone: 07974 143 336
Email: grw@mccartneys.co.uk

Brecon

Mr S Edwards BSc (Hons) MRICS
Telephone: 01874 610 990
breconsurvey@mccartneys.co.uk

Brecon Market

Mr C Jones FAAV FLAA
Telephone: 01874 622386
Email: breconmarket@mccartneys.co.uk

Craven Arms

Mr L Thomas FRICS FAAV
Telephone: 01588 672385
Email: cravenarms@mccartneys.co.uk

Hay on Wye

Mr R Williams BSc FRICS IRRV
Mr S Edwards BSc (Hons) MRICS
Telephone: 01497 820778
Email: hay@mccartneys.co.uk

Kington

Mr G Wall MRICS FAAV FLAA MBIAC MNAVA
Mr R Gwilliam FRICS FAAV FLAA
Mrs A Crofts-Hill BSc (Hons)
Miss B Hanson BSc (Hons)
Telephone: 01544 230316
Email: kington@mccartneys.co.uk

Knighton

Mr G Owens FRICS FAAV FLAA
Mrs J Layton Mills BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV FLAA
Miss K Morris BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV
Telephone: 01547 528621
Email: grw@mccartneys.co.uk

Llandrindod Wells

Mr S Edwards MRICS
Telephone: 01547 823 300
Email: llandrindod@mccartneys.co.uk

Ludlow Market

Mr J Uffold BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV FLAA MNAVA
Mr M Thomas ALAA MNAVA
Telephone: 01584 872251
Email: jo@mccartneys.co.uk

Newtown

Mr W Jones BSc (Hons) Dip Surv FRICS MCI Arb MEWI MAE
Telephone: 01686 623123
Email: newtown@mccartneys.co.uk

Tenbury Wells

Mr P Blackman Howard
Telephone: 01584 811999
Email: phillip@mccartneys.co.uk

Welshpool

Miss K Morris BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV
Telephone: 01938531000
Email: welshpool@mccartneys.co.uk

Worcester Market

Mr C Roads FLAA
Mr N Baxter BSc (Hons)
Mr J Amphlett
Telephone: 01905 769770
Email: worcester@mccartneys.co.uk