

Alt & Crossens Farming Newsletter



WELCOME!



Despite the persistent rainy weather this year, let's hold onto hope that April showers will soon give way to sunny skies, marking the arrival of May. In our newsletter this month you can find info on abstraction licenses, irrigation prospects and upcoming events. Read on to find out more about what's on offer this month, and you can also keep up to date with our [Farming Hub](#) online.

WATER RESTORATION GRANTS

Funding is now available for groups of **farmers to improve freshwater habitats**, with a goal of farm clusters to work together and deliver projects at the catchment scale. The new Water Restoration Fund offers grants to support projects which improve the water environment.

There are grants for both development and delivery of projects. The deadline for applications is **7 June 2024**. For more information and to read the Water Restoration Fund Guidance please click [here](#).



LOCAL RESOURCE OPTION (LRO) SCREENING FUNDING

From the 22nd of April 2024, new local resource option screening study funding will be available for farmers who abstract. These studies are run by the Environment Agency for small groups of farmers to look at ways to improve their water resource resilience and ensure a sustainable water supply . This fund is open to groups of farmers (2-10) to apply for a screening study in their area. Applications for funding will close on **16 June 2024**. More information on this will be released on the [Defra website](#) on the 22nd of April, alongside other funding opportunities for agricultural water resource planning activities.

NEW SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE (SFI) MEASURES

There are new measures in force to **limit the amount of land farmers can enter into 6 SFI actions**. Under the changes, new SFI applicants will not be able to put more than 25% of agricultural land into one or more of these 'limited area' SFI actions.

The **changes do not apply to those farmers with existing SFI agreements** and will realign these actions with their original intentions and ensure the scheme continues to support farmers to produce food sustainably alongside protecting the environment. Some management actions which could help with flood management on your land include:

- Buffer strips
- Soil aeration
- Planting hedges

Click [here](#) for more information on the new measures.



NEW RULES AGAINST AVIAN FLU

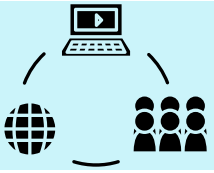
Defra has set out new measures to better protect the poultry sector from future avian influenza outbreaks.

Under these new changes, there will be new requirements for **ALL bird keepers** to officially register their birds. The changes come following the UK's worst ever outbreak of avian influenza. Click [here](#) for more information.

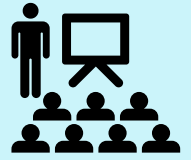
Defra regularly updates their [Farming Blog](#). You can subscribe to the blog to ensure that you receive their latest farming updates. Click [here](#).

FARM WATER USE SURVEY

Mersey Rivers Trust is collecting anonymous information about water use on your farms and businesses. Please spare three minutes to complete ten questions about how you use water now, and your plans for using water in the future. The results will be presented in a map, which will help us to identify where there are common issues. To complete the survey please click [here](#).



TRAINING AND EVENTS



INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT WEBINAR

On the 27th of March, the Farming Advice Service held a webinar on Integrated Pest Management. This webinar discusses how integrated pest management has helped support a farmers mixed farm through difficult conditions whilst offering both business and environmental gains.

Click [here](#) to find out more and watch a recording of the webinar.



WATER ABTRACTOR GROUP (WAG)

In the February workshop it was agreed that another meeting will be held **to discuss the possibility of setting up a Water Abtractor Group for the Alt & Crossens area.**

WAGs allow farmers to come together to defend their right to irrigate, to have direct communication between themselves and the regulator, commit to using water efficiently, and influence future water policy. **If you're interested in joining the meeting and finding out more, please email us [here](#).**



MENTAL HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE

One Ash Training are offering a FREE one hour course on Mental Health in Agriculture for anyone who knows someone, or are themselves, going through a tough time with depression. The course gives an overview of how people become depressed, how our brains interpret depression, how to self-soothe and actions we may take to help elevate the symptoms we face. To book a place please click [here](#).

