



# January and February Newsletter 2021

## Good news and Challenges

Like all organisations and individuals, Susan's Farm has had its fair share of challenges, but also several items of good news.

All the Care Farmers who completed their City and Guilds L1 Certificates and Diplomas in Land-based Studies through Newton Rigg have passed... we now want a time when we can have a safe celebration. Will it be weeks or months ahead? One thing for certain is that uncertainty lies ahead. We are also certain that lambing will start on 15th March. How lucky we all are at the farm to have the agricultural year to keep our feet on the ground. So far, we have two vet/pre vets students coming to gain lambing experience and help us at this busy time.

The farm was challenged by the very high COVID 19 rates in Carlisle in the second week of January so with a heavy heart we ceased all provision for our Care Farmers and teenagers. We very much hope that by the end of January they will all be back on the farm.

Some more good news is that Susan's Farm has the opportunity to rent the 22-acre field that lies between the water meadows and the Near Boot pub on Houghton Road. This will make a huge difference to the farming enterprise as we will no longer have stock at Aglionby, saving time and fuel; it was very hard physical work feeding the stock at Aglionby during the winter.

The new field was the original 'sport's field' for the soldiers training on Hadrian's Camp across Houghton Road. This is an exciting development for the farm as not only is it next door to the land already farmed, but it also has 350m of Hadrian's Wall running along its southern side. This will give an added dimension and scope to our educational visits when we are able to start them again. We are extremely fortunate that Professor David Breeze, an archaeologist specialising in the Roman Wall in Cumbria, is advising us, and we look forward to welcoming him to visit the site when we are able. Designing Longhorn-proof signage will be a challenge. Any ideas welcome!

## Plant trees and hedges and help Save the Planet

'The Sport's Field' has already been divided into 5 small fields. The plan is that next winter we will plant hedges along all the new fence lines, in total 750m, and then double fence them. We would like to include some damson and apple trees in these hedges. If you would like to sponsor a tree or a length of hedging do please contact Susan at [susan@susansfarm.co.uk](mailto:susan@susansfarm.co.uk).

## Alternative Provision on the farm

In small groups of 2-3, the teenagers returned to the farm in the autumn, but are unfortunately now on 'pause' due to COVID. They have already begun an ASDAN qualification in Animal Care, which is the first ASDAN course Susan's Farm has undertaken since it became a registered ASDAN provider.

Several have also been able to demonstrate their skills at drawing, painting, photography and creating a snowman! Sue Lister, our Alternative Provision education lead, is keeping in touch by whatever modern method of communication suits them.



Photo of Bill in the snow taken by Nicola who comes to the farm on a Thursday

### The Way forward

Following the external review of all the farm's educational provision last August, Jane Sullivan has been working with us for the last few weeks to implement all the recommendations accepted in the report by our Trustees. This will ensure that we are compliant as a small charity, with the correct policies and procedures in place, and that the staff team has undertaken whatever training is necessary for them to fulfil their role on the farm. We are delighted that the Trustees have decided to appoint Jane as part-time General Manager until April, and in principle on a continuing basis.

### Thank You

The farm is enormously grateful to all those who have volunteered to feed the stock both at Houghton and Wallacefield; these people have allowed Martin to have a few well-deserved days off.

Also, a big thank you so Stanwix Rural Parish Council who have grant aided the purchase of a bench in the water meadows and a picnic bench in Tarraby Wood. The bench is in a perfect position for bird watching, facing south over the ponds. During the lockdowns so many people have walked this footpath we are sure these additions will be greatly appreciated.



## Links with the University of Cumbria

We have now had three postgraduate students, studying for their master's degree in Occupational Therapy, on the farm for placements. All three have been a great success with our beneficiaries and in the 6 to 8 weeks that they are on placement with us have fitted into the staff team exceptionally well. Thank you, Sarah, Katherine and Katie. Here is a quote from Katie written just before she left last December.

"The farm and service you provide for the beneficiaries is second to none and the positive 'can do' attitude gives a great sense of community".

Three more Occupational Therapy students are expected this year; we look forward to welcoming them to Susan's Farm and to them experiencing Care Farming.

We are also delighted that the University of Cumbria, under the direction of Professor Kaz Stuart, has been awarded funding to undertake research into "an exploration of Therapeutic Horticulture and Agriculture as supports for vulnerable young people." The agricultural part of this research will take place on Susan's Farm. It is planned that the research will start in late January. We are looking forward to working with the research team for the next year.

## Muff's Flapjacks

The signature snack at Susan's Farm, is Muff's Flapjacks. Sue Lister has sent the recipe to all our Alternative Provision teenagers to encourage them to make it at home.

Muff was the mother's help to Dr Mary Caroe who gave the recipe to Susan in the summer of 1972. Sadly, Mary died last Palm Sunday of COVID 19. Muff and Mary will live on in the memories of us all.

## Sales from Susan's Farm

One of the advantages of being in Lockdown is that Susan is locked in and is therefore at home to serve anybody who would like to purchase beef, lamb, mutton, honey made by the bees in the orchard, apple juice made by Eva's from apples grown in the orchard and preserves made from fruits of the hedgerows. Do call at the house to see what is available.

Remember, buying our meat supports our charitable work. If you'd like to order some meat please call the farm on 01228 548366, email [orders@susansfarm.co.uk](mailto:orders@susansfarm.co.uk) or use an order form on the website [www.susansfarm.co.uk](http://www.susansfarm.co.uk).

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