



Welcome to your Farm Cluster Newsletter

Here's what's coming up - if you have any questions about the stories in this newsletter or suggestions for future articles, please contact [Ross Wingfield](#) or [Christine Meadows](#).

Annual Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster 'Get-Together'

31 January 2019, 8.30 am – 11.00 am

The Bell, Ticehurst

Meet other members for a round-up of 2018 and a look ahead to 2019. Refreshments and breakfast bap on arrival.

The event will include a talk from Colin Hedley, facilitator for three South Downs farmer-led cluster groups: Arun to Adur Cluster, Rother Valley Farmers' Group and South Downs Farmers' Group.



To attend please [register on Eventbrite](#) or call Sam on 01424 723011.

Colin Hedley grew up on a small livestock farm on the Hampshire / West Sussex border where his father was a first-generation farmer. Dairy changed to beef and with a SSSI grazing marsh and species-rich county wildlife site under his care, Colin developed a keen interest in farming with wildlife and the importance of extensively-reared beef.

Previously a Sussex FWAG adviser and the CLA's national conservation adviser, he started his consultancy, CJH Agri-Environment Consultants, in 2005 and works across the South East. He is a keen advocate of the farming community and is highly motivated by the potential of environmental payments, the value of farmer-led cluster groups and new sources of private funding for achieving a more equitable and profitable future for farmers and land managers.

I-Spy this month

Hazel catkins: The long, yellow 'lamb's-tail' catkins are the male flowers. Look closely to see the small, red tufts of the female flowers which develop into nuts. Pollen is carried on the breeze from the catkins to the female flowers, it's also an early source of food for bees. Hazel supports an abundance of wildlife; insects, particularly butterflies and moths, birds, mammals, even mosses, fungi and lichens.



Hazel is a perfect [hedge species](#) that lays well. Coppiced hazel poles still have their uses e.g. shoring up fence lines, and are sought after as topbinders for hedgelaying. [Coppicing](#) considerably extends the life of the tree.

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Dates for your diary

Free Farm Cluster events

- **31 January, 8.30-11am: Annual Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster 'Get-Together'** at the Bell Ticehurst. [Register on Eventbrite](#).
- **13 February, 9.30-2pm: Farm Profitability and Trees on Your Land** with pioneering agroforestry farmer Stephen Briggs. The Bear Inn, Burwash with lunch and a walk on adjoining farmland. [Register on Eventbrite](#).
- **14 February, 10-6pm: Sussex Lund Grants Programme 'drop-in session'** - an opportunity to seek advice, for example with filling in the application form. Pop into the Woodland Enterprise Centre, Flimwell any time during the day.
- **28 February: Introduction to Countryside Stewardship (mid-tier)** at the Bear Inn, Burwash.

To register an interest in these events, follow the Eventbrite link where available, or contact Sam on 01424 723011, or samantha.nicholas@highweald.org

Other events

- **29 January, 10.30-3.30pm: Making the Most of Your Soils** free workshop (now fully booked) from Innovation for Agriculture, Plumpton. [See Eventbrite](#).
- **8-17 February: Big Farmland Bird Count**. To take part see: www.bfbc.org.uk
- **15 February: Opportunities in organic arable**: a Soil Association conversion webinar (online seminar) for farmers. Visit the [registration page](#).

Sussex Lund is now open for applications

This grants programme, set up by local residents Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, offers funding of up to £10,000 to small-scale, practical projects that improve the High Weald's wildlife, scenic beauty and public access.

Who can apply? Farmers and landowners are invited to apply, as well as charities, community groups, town and parish councils, schools and churches.

How to apply: Call Ross or Christine who'll be happy to talk through project ideas, help with project development and flag up what's needed for a strong application. The application form is straightforward, please note that your costs need to be supported by quotes.

There is a Sussex Lund 'drop-in session' on 14 February - see Farm Cluster events above.

When to apply: By the deadline of Monday 8 April 2019. More info at: www.highweald.org/look-after/sussex-lund

Member news

Welcome to three new members; Dan Greatley of Orchard Farm, Neville Chapman of Badgers Mead Farm and Frank Sanderson of Grandturzel Farm.

About

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster helps farmers, foresters and other land managers work together to improve farm profitability and benefit soil, water, wildlife and historic features not just on their individual farms, but across the area. It has 47 members covering over 3,500ha.

The Cluster is helped by the High Weald AONB Partnership with financial support from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund, the Environment Agency (Giant Hogweed control), and the Woodland Trust (deer management). For more information visit the Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster page at www.highweald.org