

Welcome to the September update from Growing Care Farming

It is now feeling well and truly autumnal with berries on the hedges and leaves changing colour. Lots of care farms are preparing for the colder weather, making sure they've got adequate shelter for participants and also doing maintenance work around fields and gardens.

We have been busy over the summer months both recruiting and also getting our new staff settled into their roles. It's great to have a wider team dedicated to care farming now with Katie Jefferies (Project Officer) and Pearl Cousins (Code of Practice Administrator) based in the GreenHouse in Bristol, with support from Jennie Reed (Communications Officer) and Angie Stratton (Finance). To gain maximum impact for the care farming sector, the Growing care Farming project work involves both 'bottom up' networking and partnership forming in the regional engagement work (led by Deborah Evans, Regional Care Farming Manager), together with 'top down' advocacy and promotion of care farming at a national level (led by Rachel Bragg, Care Farming Development Manager). As well as working hard with the team setting up the project, preparing resources and training, Rachel Bragg has been busy flying the flag for care farming as part of her advocacy role, talking about care farming and social prescribing at the NHS Health Expo in Manchester, attending the National Outdoors for All working group and the Access to Farms Partnership meetings to name a few and she will be attending the Solutions to isolation conference run by Future Roots Care Farm on Friday. Deborah has been focussed on our pilot regional (Yorkshire & Humberside), the recruitment of our first Regional Support Officer and roles of the Care Farming Facilitators we are looking forward to working with - see below for more information on this.

Training and Resources

Website

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that the old Care Farming UK website has now been taken down but new resources are appearing on the Social Farms & Gardens website all the time. A dedicated Growing Care Farming microsite is in development and can be found [here](#). From November this will be populated with case studies, FAQs and training resources and we are looking forward to sharing these with you. The map of care farms having either completed or undertaking the Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

Training Development

Over the summer, in conjunction with our partner [Thrive](#), we have been consulting with experienced care farmers on content for training courses being developed to support both people wishing to start up a care farm and more experienced care farming practitioners wishing to develop their services. This has been fascinating with lots of spirited discussion about good practice and the needs of the sector. The training courses will involve a mix of formats,

including video and Thrive have filmed a significant amount of footage on a range of different care farms all across England, to ensure a good mix of examples. While care farms can look quite different on the surface and cater to many different needs and participants, we have been keen to highlight the commonalities between them - with those attending the care farm being at the heart of everything. The courses will be a mixture of online and face-to-face courses delivered all across the country.

Quality Assurance

Code of Practice & Compliance

Pearl has been doing a fantastic job of sorting out the systems and processes associated with the care farming Code of Practice and ongoing compliance. As many of you are aware, the Code has essentially been run on the goodwill of our amazing assessors, but through GCF we have the opportunity to formalise arrangements and streamline the application process. Information on the Code of Practice can be found [here](#) but please do get in touch with Pearl at codeadmin@farmgarden.org.uk with any queries you may have.

In our next winter bulletin we will be sharing more details on the assessment and compliance process and also opportunities for support the application process through workshops. We will also introduce our assessors in detail to allow you to understand their skills and expertise.

Regional Engagement

Northern Regional Support Officer

We're delighted to introduce Sarah Marrison who is the first of three Regional Support Officers and is based in Stockton-on-Tees. Sarah will be supporting the regional engagement work across Yorkshire & Humberside, the North East and North West. Sarah has been working as a Community Projects Manager for Groundwork in the North East for over 11 years (in total) and has extensive experience of fundraising, project development, delivery and evaluation. Sarah's projects at Groundwork have been diverse including public consultation on landscape works, the development and delivery of education programmes within and outside of school settings, community development, the delivery of a 3 year lottery funded local food growing project and the establishment and support of community allotments and social and therapeutic horticulture sessions with specific user groups. Sarah also spent 2.5 years working as the External Fundraising Officer for the North York Moors National Park Authority.

She is part-time and available between 8am and 4pm on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and can be reached at RSO@farmgarden.org.uk so do drop her a line and say hello!

We will be recruiting other Regional Support Officers from next summer and will keep you updated on this.

Care Farming Facilitators

We have always believed that the people who best understand the local sector are those that have a track record of delivering care farming services in their area, for a range of commissioners, within health, social care and education. As part of the work of Growing Care

Farming, we have decided to work with people who have a comprehensive understanding of care farming, ideally with pre-existing relationships with commissioners on which to build and who will have first-hand knowledge some of the key referral routes into care farming currently being used. We have circulated an Expression of Interest for those care farmers in Yorkshire & Humberside who may be interested in exploring how they can support Growing Care Farming by becoming regional Care Farming Facilitators.

The aim is that Care Farming Facilitators are paid to organise and run appropriate events in their localities to promote care farming and share learning, and then gather feedback, some data and to report on learning in their region. This work will be supported by their Regional Support Officer. We are piloting this over the next 6 months in Yorkshire & Humberside and, if successful, the model will be rolled out to the North West and North East over the next 12 months. We will then move on to the southern half of the country from September 2020 and look forward to sharing our learning with other regions.

Going Live - Yorkshire & Humberside

We are looking forward to launching our training and resources and sharing some of our regional learning at a 'Going Live' Event for Yorkshire & Humberside on 26th November at Askham Bryan College, near York. This event will highlight the work already being undertaken by care farmers across the Yorkshire & Humberside region, introduce the project in more detail, outline resources and training available through the project for care farmers and those interested in starting up and examine what needs to be done to increase the number of care farm places being accessed by individuals with a defined need. More information on this event will be shared soon.

Funded by



Find out more or keep in touch with the Growing Care Farming team -
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