The Network has had another very active year. It’s quite incredible how many good things happen as a result of a bit of collaboration and some hardworking and committed people with a ‘can do’ attitude. We really can make a difference to the rural and farming people we support.

Idyllic images of our beautiful county were beamed around the globe recently thanks to the Tour de France painting a rosy picture of life in the Yorkshire countryside.

However the fact that the hard work of our member organisations continues apace demonstrates that there is no shortage of need for support services among our rural communities.

Whilst our main focus relates to people involved in agriculture and horticulture, clearly the impact of reductions in community services affects all the rural population. As we are all too aware cutbacks in health services, public transport and other local services are having a catastrophic effect on all ages living and working in the countryside. Isolation seems to have become quite a ‘hot topic’ and the Network identified this as a major issue and a key area to work on last year.

Helping to raise the profile of loneliness in the media is just one of the ways we have supported our members together with arranging events to encourage young people into land-based industries and bringing women working in farming together for mutual support. We have also been invited to contribute to discussions relating to future funded support showing recognition that we represent a significant number of organisations supporting the rural economy.

We look forward to another year of working together to have a positive impact where needed.

Calendar of Network Meetings for 2014

Our Network Meetings are held at the Regional Agricultural Centre, by kind permission of The Yorkshire Agricultural Society and give members a valuable opportunity to meet up and share information as well as hearing from organisations who link with the work of our own members. Excellent connections are always made at each meeting.

**Tuesday 25th February 2014**
Majors Keith & Alwyn Hockley of the Malton Salvation Army with a presentation about their work throughout Ryedale, together with a focus the foodbank operation in Malton. Food donations were made at the Meeting.

**Tuesday 20th May 2014**
Jane Farquarson, Age UK Knaresborough – Working in Rural and Farming Communities and the implications of ageing populations.

**Tuesday – Thursday 8th to 10th July**
Several Network members were in action at The Great Yorkshire Show.

**Monday 15th September 2014**
Pauline Broadwith and Rebecca Sirell, Red Cross Community Connect Service in The North York Moors and Dales.

**End of November 2014 - tba**
Ladies living on farms networking events

Following the very successful initial events in March and November 2013, we held a further event this year in March and there’s another in the diary for 6th November 2014 at The Downe Arms, Wykeham, near Scarborough.

Our speakers have included John Edlington, a motivational presenter, Julie Dodsworth, a print artist from Boroughbridge who exhibited her Autumn designs in conjunction with Barbour for the first time at the Great Yorkshire Show in July. Our March 2014 presenters were the ladies from Umpie Yorkshire handbags who described the development of their business near Northallerton.

In November we very much look forward to hearing from Jill Smith of Binnington Blooms, Staits near Scarborough (Jill is part of the flowers from the farm Yorkshire group). The gatherings have allowed like-minded women to meet together, enjoy some refreshments and lunch uninterrupted and have the benefit of a speaker/speakers with a story to tell. We are very grateful to McCain Foods, RFASCundalls, Pearsons & Ward Solicitors, Tenant Farmers Association and Moore Stephens for the sponsorship we have secured to put these events on.

Women in Farming – Stepping Stones to Success event

Tuesday 30th September 2014 at Pavilions of Harrogate, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate.

Following a survey in Farmers Weekly, sponsored by Barclays Bank to establish the current role of women in farming, The Network is teaming up with RABI and Barclays to run an event to celebrate the role of women in farming in the bank’s Yorkshire and Co. Durham patch.

The event will be held on Tuesday 30th September at Pavilions of Harrogate from 11am to 2.30pm with speakers including:

**Martin Redfearn** – National Agricultural Policy Manager, Barclays Bank. Martin will outline the results of the survey in his presentation.

**Tamara Hall** – MD of Molescroft Grange Farm, Beverley and Nuffield Scholar.

**Jane Thornber** – General Manager of Fodder food shop and café, Harrogate.

**Lesley Buxton** – Director of Yorvale Ice cream, York.

**Carol Peacock** – Parlour made cheeses, Co. Durham.

**Janet Oldroyd Hulme** – Rhubarb grower, Carlton, West Yorkshire.

GET MENTORING IN FARMING

Get Mentoring in Farming was developed to help those working in the farming and agriculture sector across the country to mentor each other.

The aim was to train 300 Mentors UK wide and the training could be carried out online or in groups at various venues around the country.

We noticed that there was a geographical ‘gap’ in Yorkshire and felt that some face to face training would be preferable than relying on suitable Mentors to seek out and complete the course online. We have basically taken a National scheme and personalised it to fit our particular requirements.

Since Growing Routes ended in 2012, the established group of Mentors had been disbanded and their expertise ‘lost’ to us. With some guidance from the Growing Routes Mentor Manager, we selected a group of suitable people to approach with a view to holding a training day here at The Regional Agricultural Centre in Harrogate.

Our free training day took place on 17th June and gave the group a chance to meet each other and refresh their Mentoring skills under the instruction of Amanda Dudman.

We are very happy to report that we have a very useful resource of about 10 – 15 Mentors, a variety of men and women with expertise and experience in establishing and developing rural and farming businesses.

We have initially invited the members of the Future Farmers of Yorkshire Group to take up the offer of some Mentoring help if they require it and one young man has already come forward to request some help in developing his organic meat business and a possible diversification project.

The Mentoring help is free of charge and details of the time commitments are brokered between the Mentor and the client. Because we know both Mentors and clients, we are well placed to advise on suitable matches.

Initial requests should be directed to The Network Coordinator, Kate Dale at kated@yas.co.uk
In 2014 the farming sector has been optimistic with a good lambing time in generally favourable conditions, followed by an early start to harvest.

Calls to the helpline excepting in the South West has eased during this period. However a combination of falling beef prices and corn trade as well as uncertainty in the dairy sector has created a nervousness recently which is reflected in an upturn in families calling for support.

Relationship difficulties, family disputes and sheer loneliness are a major concern as well as financial challenges and health issues which can affect anyone and which are exacerbated in farming situations. The media has highlighted the importance of tackling mental health problems which we know are behind many issues we encounter in farm situations.

Supporting people whilst they struggle to cope with all their commitments and responsibilities is one of our strengths and which is carried out in conjunction with professional, medical, and family help.

A number of events have been held during the year, which reflect the generosity and fellowship of the farming community and which embraces people of all ages with a common purpose and beliefs.

Dedication to the land, producing food and nurturing future generations is thankfully becoming a modern phenomenon as well as a long tradition in rural areas.

This brings more interest, opportunities and innovation but also highlights the on-going challenges in housing for the retired as well as the young.

Our volunteers are witness to many situations which are caused to a large degree by these issues and which in turn creates tension and uncertainty. The Network is as always an important lynch pin in making our service workable whether in terms of accessing help for individuals or promoting events, new initiatives and fundraising plans. Through a National partnership with YFC on mental health, farmer’s lunches and various other projects we are reaching more people than ever before and continuing to work with other organisations to find solutions to problems as well as walking alongside.

Our new gazebo has proved successful in providing a recognisable banner and point of contact for information, refreshments and support at various shows during the summer. We have been fortunate in engaging new volunteers to help us man these events, reach out to those who need support. We fully recognise FCN would not exist without a dedicated team of knowledgeable farming and farming related people some of whom have been with us over 10 years.

Thank you to the Network for another successful year and particularly to Kate who provides so much support for our organisation and so many others.
Yorkshire Food, Farming and Rural Network

This Network, hosted by The Yorkshire Agricultural Society, is one of the local groups representing different areas of England, asked to identify and feedback local issues and concerns straight to the heart of Government, through links with DEFRA.

Over the last 12 months, Chair, Charles Mills and Vice-Chair, Suzanne Stirke, together with members of the Executive Committee have focused on: Water – holding a Water Summit at FERA, Sand Hutton in February 2014. Presentations from this event can be accessed at www.yas.co.uk/charitable-activities/yorkshire-food-farming-rural-network and videos of the presentations can be accessed via www.youtube.com/user/GreatYorkshireShow.

The outcomes and recommendations from the day were presented at a subsequent meeting with Defra Minister, Dan Rogerson MP. Another strand of work has been to keep abreast of developments with the LEADER groups and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS) throughout the Yorkshire region.

Future Farmers of Yorkshire

This group have had a very active year and membership has increased to 450, due, in part, to increased visibility on Twitter and Facebook. Their programme is established by their own Management Team and highlights have already included:

- An evening meeting with the Head of Agriculture at Sainsburys, Sue Lockhart and two Yorkshire businesses who trade successfully with the supermarkets.
- An evening visit to Sir Ken Morrisons’s beef farm, guided by Future Farmer’s member Richard Pennock, currently on a Nuffield Scholarship to investigate different beef systems in Australia, South America and Canada.
- A Breakfast Meeting on the NFU stand at The Great Yorkshire Show with speakers including Nuffield Scholars, Tamara Hall, arable farmer and Kate Morgan, pig farmer. Over 100 Future Farmers were also addressed by The High Commissioner of New Zealand to the UK, Sir Lockwood Smith before enjoying the Great Yorkshire Show.

Forthcoming Meetings include:

- A daytime visit to The British Wool Marketing Board HQ in Bradford and a visit to the wool auction.
- A Winter evening Meeting – Monday 24th November, on the topical subject of succession planning.

www.yas.co.uk/charitable-activities/future-farmers-of-yorkshire

Project Manager – Liz Hudson on elizabethh@yas.co.uk or 07702 598108

Country Land & Business Association

The CLA has launched its own manifesto - Unlock the Countryside’s Potential – in the run-up to the next general election in May 2015.

CLA members own or manage around half the country’s rural land and run over 250 types of business - putting the Association in a unique position to advise MPs on how to unlock the social, economic and environmental benefits that rural areas can offer.

CLA North Regional Director Dorothy Fairburn said: “Our manifesto is a ‘must read’ document for all candidates in the region - both urban and rural - because it will help them ensure the rural north is not disadvantaged by predominantly urban-based legislation.”

You can download the document by visiting their website.

w: www.cla.org.uk  |  t: 07148 907070  |  e: info.north@cla.org.uk
We are fortunate enough to have two key personnel as members of The Yorkshire Rural Support Network in Pauline Broadwith and Rebecca Sirell.

Land Rover UK and the British Red Cross are launching a new five-year partnership to deliver services to around 1,000 people (18 & over) facing crisis in remote areas of the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors. Through funding from Land Rover UK, the charity is able to launch a new Yorkshire Dales and Moors Community Connect service.

Starting in June 2014, volunteers will provide emotional and practical support to vulnerable, lonely and isolated people from the agricultural and farming community. It will focus on helping those who are alone or socially isolated, and who would benefit from short term support and help in reconnecting with their communities.

Rachel Souter, British Red Cross senior service manager in Yorkshire, said: “We’ve worked closely with the farming community, especially the Farming Community Network and Yorkshire Agricultural Society, to find out what problems people face in these particular parts of Yorkshire - and how we could support those in crisis. Our volunteers will help these people to access services that are already established in the community, such as social groups, fitness classes, community transport, and local community groups which they can accompany them to.”

“Through companionship and conversation, we will also help to build people’s confidence, reduce social isolation and loneliness which helps to improve overall health and wellbeing. This can involve home visits, telephone support, help with shopping and preparing light refreshments, as well as organising the delivery of prepared meals, assistance with paper work and signposting to benefit help as well as other Red Cross services like mobility aids, transport support, and hand, arm and shoulder massage.”

“We can also teach people some basic first aid skills, which can be life-saving in rural locations. GPs, health professionals and other members of the community can refer people to this service, and people can also get in touch themselves if they, or someone they know, could benefit from our support.”

Research shows that nearly onequarter of older people live in rural areas. Also, with the ageing population expected to rise in rural Britain in the future, issues such as disease and disability in rural communities are also set to grow. As a result, health and social care services such as the Red Cross’ work are essential.

Through funding from Land Rover UK, the charity is able to launch a new initiative helping vulnerable older people access services, which can often be difficult to reach due to restricted access to transport, especially during periods of severe weather.

The essential programme in Yorkshire is part of a new national partnership, which will see Land Rover UK provide £2 million worth of support to 11 Red Cross projects in rural locations. The company continues its long-term vehicle loan scheme to the British Red Cross during times of severe weather, enabling emergency response workers to access hard-to-reach communities at times of crisis.

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**Key Issues Raised**

Problems raised included poor provision of basic services such as transport, childcare - affecting access to both variety of and better paid work, career progression, facilities for young people (e.g. further education), and services available only in market towns.

The housing market is a local concern as it is at odds with local demand, where communities wish to retain young people and attract in young families. This landscape attracts an estimated 9.4 million visitors and has dense pockets of second and holiday homes in the protected areas of the National Park and Nidderdale and the Forest of Bowland AONBs.

There is a real desire from the larger employers to encourage young people into business, retain young people living and working here and see creation of an infrastructure fit for entrepreneurship in the 21st Century. The rich Dales culture, landscape and heritage is nationally unique and the workshops identified it could be better linked to business and tourism opportunities and that this in turn would improve basic services through to the increased demand, such as flexible transport, for the resident communities. Improving access to broadband and mobile coverage is seen as a vital growth opportunity.

With Agriculture as a significant employer (accounting for 15% of the workforce in wards of Addleborough and Kirkby Malzeard for example), sustainability and low profitability are linked to the farming generation. In some cases diversification into tourism and cultural activity offers improved profitability. These messages also highlighted a desire for improved networking in business (across all sectors and size) to exchange information, ease the sharing of new technology, build supply chains in tourism, local food and forestry products, and to link earlier with prospective young employees through the schools, and apprenticeships for example.

The consultations highlighted the diversity of niche rural businesses over the area and the vitality of market towns such as Richmond, Hawes, Masham and Settle. Support for developing tourism packages, promoting local food / produce, linking suppliers with buyers to help niche businesses grow are just some areas identified as further local opportunities.

T: 01524 251002
E: rima.berry@ydmt.org

Participatory consultation workshops were held in Harrogate Borough, Richmondshire and Craven Districts and close to Hambleton District.

These were well supported with communities keen to discuss opportunities to improve the sustainability of local services, upland livestock farming and the support that micro and small rural business needs.

This was supported by an online survey and focus sessions or one-to-ones with key business sectors and employers, the Dales Tourism Network, farmers and forestry organisations.
Addington Fund

The Addington Fund is now in its 13th year which is a relatively short time in the farming charity world.

During 2014 the main focus for our grant work has been on the Somerset Levels, but the wet weather of 2013 was still causing a few problems for farmers in Yorkshire, although the number of farmers seeking hardship grants was lower than last year, Addington still made payments of over £4000.

The Fund still owns 5 properties in the county but two of these are currently on the market for sale. The farming families they were originally bought for, have had a change in circumstances and no longer require the houses, so they have gone back onto the market, and the proceeds will be held for further families requiring housing in the future. We are using Yorkshire estate agents and Yorkshire tradesmen to sell and maintain these properties.

The generosity of Yorkshire folk has shone through this year and Addington has had a number of heart-warming offers of help from people with an interest in farming.

One call was from a lady who had a property suitable for an over 55 couple. They were looking to rent it to a suitable farming couple looking for a home and the rent they were looking for was minimal. Another call was from a lady who, having seen the plight of the farmers on the Somerset Levels, phoned us to offer a week’s hospitality and friendship to a farming couple from the Levels who just ‘needed to get away from it all for a while’.

We are privileged to be used as a channel for such support and it shows what a fantastic community the farming world is. In January we were the favoured charity for a Farmhouse Breakfast, held at the home of Chris and Christine Ryder from Blubberhouses, and with support from Barclays Agriculture raised a magnificent sum of £6500. This money has been ring fenced for use in Yorkshire only. The Ryder’s are great supporters of the Fund and we are indebted to them and their friends for the hard work they put into the breakfast.

We continue to retain close links with other farming charities such as the Farming Community Network and Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and have contact with their respective co-ordinators and welfare officers in Yorkshire. They are our ‘feet on the ground’ and we appreciate the help and support they continue to give us.

T: 01926 620135

Farming Ladder

The Network’s Steering Group have been committed to taking the Farming Ladder Event out to the Colleges within the Yorkshire area.

Following discussions with the Colleges to identify their needs we were very pleased to facilitate the following ‘tailor made’ events:

Monday 17th February

A visit with students and staff from Craven College to Chris Wildman’s farm in Kirby Malham and Townend Farmshop and tearoom at neighbouring Airton in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. The Wildman’s farming operation and diversification projects have been rolled into one to create employment for family members and also several local people. Chris generously spent time with the students, showing the each aspect of his business and outlining what he as an employer would be looking for in a would-be employee.

Thursday 6th March 2014

A Farm Diary session for students was held at Askham Bryan College with speakers from The Future Farmers of Yorkshire Group, Stephen Kilby who is an entrepreneur and Director of Wharfe Valley Rapeseed Oils/stoves/Glo briquettes (and since that date, bathrooms!) – a very successful addition to a family farming operation near Wetherby. The other speaker was Tom Coulthurst an ex student at Askham Bryan who had an enforced ‘change of plan’ when his family ceased farming and is now the Senior Trader at Wholecrop Marketing Ltd, near Driffield.

Tuesday 25th March 2014

A Tutorial Day for students was held at Wigfield Farm (part of Barnsley College) and included presenters Chloe Palmer (Future Farmer of Yorkshire, Nuffield Scholar and Farming & Conservation Consultant, based in South Yorkshire), Michael Klemperer (Estate Manager at Wentworth Castle, Stainborough), Neil Fraser (Senior Vet at Churchfield Vets, Barnsley, treating small, farm, wildlife, zoo and exotic animals) and David Hamer (Farmer, Animal Health Officer and supporter of The Young Farmers Club movement regionally and nationally).
In response to the ever-changing financial and policy environment in which we and the communities we serve operate, Rural Action Yorkshire has published a draft Rural Strategy for Yorkshire which we hope reflects the current state of affairs in our area and which can be used to guide funding and policy decisions by a wide range of partners in the coming years. The draft has been put out to consultation and its progress can be monitored, together with the details of all RAY’s other work, at www.ruralyorkshire.org.uk

T: 0845 3130270

Perennial is the UK’s only charity dedicated to helping people who work in horticulture when times get tough. They provide free, confidential advice, support and financial assistance to people of all ages working in, or retired from horticulture. We are fortunate to have an excellent local contact in Network member, Helen Waddington, who is the Casework Manager for Perennial UK wide. For details of individual case studies and the full extent of Perennial’s amazing work:

www.perennial.org.uk
AdviceLine: 0800 210 0547

Perennial is celebrating 175 years of helping horticulturalists
The Aims of the Network are promoting the wellbeing of those who live in farming and rural communities, through our network members by:

- Supporting members in the delivery of services
- Bringing network members together to exchange resources, contacts and information
- Encouraging a positive attitude to periods of change to reduce the level of distress

For further information and enquiries, please get in touch with our Coordinator, Kate Dale, using the contact details below:

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