

Care Farming in the UK: Good for people, good for farms



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A little about me

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Robin Asquith

How UK Agriculture can benefit from green prescriptions on care farms'.

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Origins of Care Farming in UK

- There have always been care farms and their like operating in the UK – eg. Camphill, City Farms.
- There has been an increasing awareness of these activities happening on more traditional family farms over the last 10 years.
- A trigger for the inception of a very loose “support network” would have been money made available to support farms that had suffered from the Foot and Mouth outbreak of c.2001. Via DEFRA and through other pump priming money farms were encouraged to diversify around this period and care farming grew from here.
- The first big break though in terms of support was a conference in 2005 where a number of organisations, “actors” and researchers came together.
- From then on the support network has grown to become what it is today – still small but much better recognised.

- **Approximately 240 care farms in the UK**
- **At least 25 more in Republic of Ireland**
- **UK care farming**
 - Majority origin from agriculture
 - Have links with health and social care, education, probation services etc.
 - Minority of care farms developed as response to a need (identified by health, education or religious organisations).



- For the majority of care farms (78%) a care farming session lasts a full day.
- Most care farms open for 5 days a week
- The majority of care farms (79%) see up to 50 clients a week
- Most service-users (88%) attend care farms between 1 and 3 times a week
- The average cost per session (unsupported) £49 per session (but may vary depending on individual need)
- Average costs for supported clients (i.e. those who attend with a carer) £50 per session
- The majority of care farms (75%) are not currently running at full capacity



Mission:

- Care Farming UK - **Promoting care farming - Supporting care farmers**
- Care Farming UK is led by care farmers and care farming supporters and has four strategic aims:
 - supporting the quality and provision of services
 - enabling care farming networks to develop across the UK
 - increasing the profile and awareness of care farming
 - developing and communicating the evidence-base for the effectiveness of care farming

www.carefarminguk.org



The screenshot shows the Care Farming UK website. At the top left is the logo with the tagline 'Helping people grow'. To the right is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, FAQ, Jobs, Resources, and Contact. Below the menu is a section titled 'What is Care Farming?' which contains a definition and a list of bullet points: 'Utilise the whole or part of a farm', 'Provide health, social or educational care services for one or a range of vulnerable groups of people', and 'Provide a supervised, structured programme of farming-related activities'. A link 'Click here to find out more...' is provided. To the right of the text is a photograph of two people, a man and a woman, working in a greenhouse. A caption below the photo reads: 'Less able-bodied people can learn new skills and develop new interests in the care farming environment.'

Care farming Code of Practice

- Assurance that care farms which adhere to the code are safe, professional and efficient
- A set of guidelines / minimum standards
- Developed by care farmers and other specialists
- Self-assessment with appraisal by Panel of experts
- Care Farming UK encouraging all care farmers to adopt this Code

Advantages

- Brings professionalism to sector
- Ensures standards

Disadvantages

- Onerous on Farmer
- Self certifying
- Can put some farmers off – farmers resent paper work

The Care Farming Code of Practice



Care Farming Quality Statement

Care Farms provide health, social and educational care services through the use of farming-related activities for the benefit of clients from a wide range of vulnerable groups of people. Working with nature in a farming environment promotes physical and mental health and well-being, and provides excellent therapeutic and educational opportunities.

The provision is delivered in a structured and professional manner, by practitioners who understand the needs and capabilities of both clients and their land-based operation. Working closely with soil, plants and, in some cases, animals provides an elementary but powerful medium for clients. A 'hands-on' approach is essential for a strong mental and emotional response needed for effective learning and therapy.

Quality of provision is assured through a process of self-assessment by practising Care Farms, enabling them to demonstrate that they follow the Care Farming Code of Practice, as detailed below.

Self-assessments are appraised by a Panel of experts, affirming the Care Farm's commitment to following the Code. Any complaints against a Care Farm will be investigated by the Panel, which is appointed by the Board of Care Farming UK. In this way, Quality standards are maintained by Care Farms and their stakeholders themselves, without imposition from external agencies. NB Each Care Farm is fully and individually responsible for the way it carries out its business: Care Farming UK can only serve to enable and facilitate, and not accept any liability.

As the range of Care Farms is very diverse, some elements of the Code of Practice may not be relevant, in which case evidence needs to be provided why certain elements are not applicable to his/her situation.

The Code of Practice is a clear set of guidelines, intended to meet the requirements of commissioners, clients and other authorities to ascertain that Care Farms which adhere

“Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices”

- The staff at the Care Farms use farming, horticultural and forestry activities as a way to engage with the community as well as
- It also uses farming to help develop practical skills that will help someone grow well –
- Individuals are growing well –



- Organic growth
- Farmer led – shows agriculture in a positive light – agriculture can be a great way to engage people socially and culturally
- Ability to form regional network groups – Yorkshire Regional Group - meet twice per year on farms, discuss issues, feed back to CFUK board.
- Regional networks help at grass roots level – help establish services, offer advice – this helps industry become more sustainable – supported from 'bottom up'.
- Regional networks also offer new initiative and ideas coming forward. People share experiences which generates new ideas and working practices
- This is evident in Yorkshire – from meeting and visiting other farms, people have shared working practices and recording methods resulting in a more efficient dynamic farms.

How is CFUK funded? - A mixture of government grants, corporate sponsorship and now charitable funding.

- it has been hard to establish formal structures. Work now on establishing regional support groups. I have established Yorkshire Regional Support group. Now we have Care Farming Scotland and the Irish networks too.
- Regional groups have disadvantages – West Midlands Care Farming - became too formal, had a board of their own, lot of disagreements – eventually folded and no longer exists
- Danger of become too formal – work best as informal information meetings
- No Regional administration – hard for farmers to set up who can't handle paperwork.
- Obstacles and difficulties? Commissioning landscape – direct payments, NHS no communication! Dearth of research, lack of awareness. Answer ultimately is probably some serious support at Government level, probably DEFRA or health department.
- What are the conditions for the sustainability of the initiative? Sustainability is difficult nationally – maybe more doable regionally. Lack of funding and money following individuals . How do we solve this? Lobby Government?

Care Farming UK Conference 2016

The 5th National Care Farming Conference

23rd November 2016 at

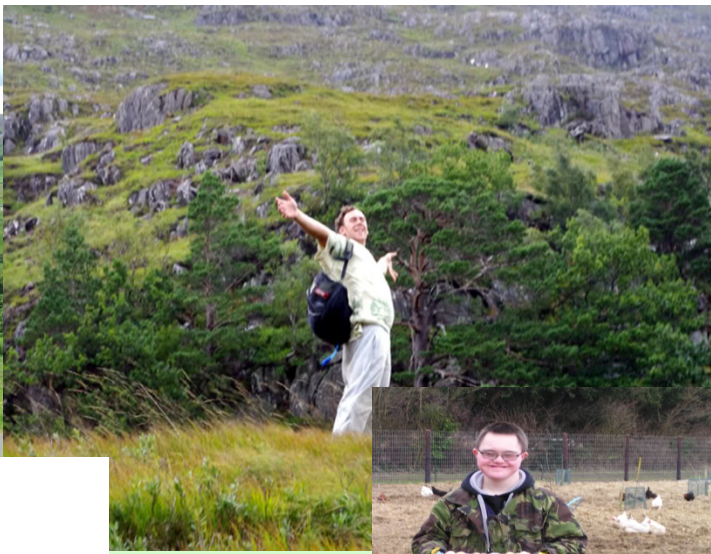
The Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House,

Park Place, St James's Street, London, SW1A

1LR

Theme of conference is "Professionalisation"

All welcome to attend.



For More Info contact:

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