

Land Business Update

Week commencing 21st August 2023

Farming

Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) application deadline extended to 15th September 2023

Following recurrent technical issues with the Rural Payments online service, the deadline for submission was extended. The extension will be an opportunity for late applicants and may also allow for the new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) 2023 scheme to be open at the same time, as we expect it to be launched before the end of the month. As it is possible to apply for both CSS and SFI on the same land parcels (as long as the management options entered in under each scheme are different to avoid double payments), some farmers have been hesitating as to which scheme to apply for. The overlapping application windows may offer opportunities to consider both schemes in more details. For any questions, please contact our Head of Farming, [Jonathan Armitage](#).

Defra publishes additional guidance for the Sustainable Farming Incentive 2023

Full details regarding the new SFI 2023 scheme have now been published and the handbook can be found [here](#). The scheme is expected to be launched within the next couple of weeks. If you would like more information, please get in touch with [Abbie Allen](#).

Round 3 of the Small Research and Development (R&D) Partnership now open

This [competitive scheme](#) is part of the Farming Innovation Programme, funded by Defra and delivered by UKRI, aiming to fund collaborative projects in the UK to develop innovative farming products or services that are already working in practice, and to take them towards commercialisation. The pot of money available under this grant amounts to £9.8 million, and each project's total costs must be between £1 to £3 million. This is the third round of the competition. Examples of projects funded under previous rounds included: a project monitoring the welfare of dairy cows using AI technology and security cameras, and a project using digital crop management approaches for the early detection of glasshouse pests and diseases. Applications close on 25th October 2023.

Wales Agriculture Act in force after receiving Royal Ascent

The Act has given Wales the opportunity to design its own agricultural policy. Key provisions include:

- Confirmation of the launch of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in 2025,
- Introduction of a route to dispute resolution for tenant farmers to avoid unfair restriction from accessing financial assistance,
- Amendments to the Forestry Act 1967, giving Natural Resources Wales power to prevent felling that would contradict other environmental legislation.

Environment

Launch of the UK Business Climate Hub

The [Hub](#) provides net zero advice to small and medium-sized enterprises in the UK, developed by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. It has a section relating to [farming and land use](#), including details on grant funding available to improve the natural environment and increase carbon sequestration. If you would like more information on how to reduce your business' emissions, please contact [Donna Rourke](#), our Head of ESG & Sustainability.

Forestry

A quick guide to woodland funding in England

There are many funding opportunities for tree planting and forestry management in England and to make it easier to navigate them, we have put together a poster detailing the key things you need to know. You can download our poster [here](#) and please contact our Head of Forestry and Natural Capital, [Alex Brearley](#), if you have any questions.



Positive benefits of woodlands and forests should be promoted more, finds survey

A recent survey by Forest Research, questioning over 11,000 people in the UK, has found that although forestry management and tree planting are positively supported, support has been declining compared to previous years. For instance, data from Scotland has found that 81% of people would support spending public money on forestry, which is down from 99% people in 2021. This is an opportunity for the forestry sector to champion to the public the wider benefits of forestry management and the timber economy. Read more on the results of the survey in our blog post [Survey shows the need to promote positive benefits of forestry - Strutt & Parker \(struttandparker.com\)](#).

Energy

UK Biomass Strategy published

The [strategy](#) sets out the role sustainable biomass can play in reaching net zero, what government is doing to enable that objective and where further action is required, including the development of Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS). BECCS is an existing engineered Greenhouse Gas Removal technology, capturing and storing CO₂ from biomass while producing low carbon energy, including electricity, heat, hydrogen and biofuels. This existing technology operates at commercial scale in other parts of the globe but is still to be developed further in the UK. The strategy encompasses short, medium and long term for bioenergy, with a focus on supply to the transport, heat and power sectors to start with. In the long term (to 2050), combining biomass use with BECCS could provide the opportunity to reach net zero in hard-to decarbonise sectors.

In 2022, bioenergy accounted for 8.6% of the total UK energy supply. Therefore, growing this sector sustainably will provide commercial opportunities for UK farmers to increase domestic production of biomass feedstock. This could be through existing forestry management, production of perennial energy crops such as miscanthus and short rotation coppice, as well as short rotation forestry and hemp.

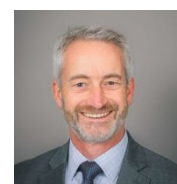
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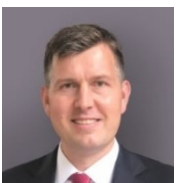
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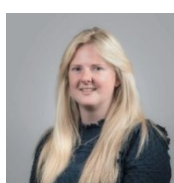
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