

## FARMING AND PROPERTY BULLETIN 2023 – ISSUE 6

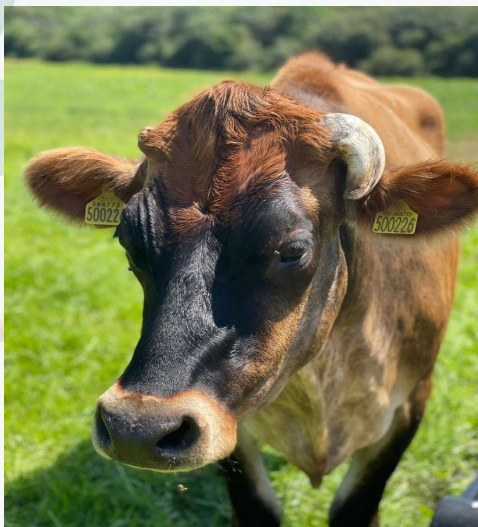
### EPCs for Private Landlords, will the pace be relaxed?

The EPC rating for private rented properties must, at the moment, be at an E rating or above before the property can be let. The current cost cap to achieve the E rating is £3,500 following which an exemption can be applied for. The Government has set a target that all newly rented properties will need to be at a C by 2025 and all properties already within an agreement at a C by 2028. In addition, the spend cap will be increased to £10,000 before an exemption can be applied for. Michael Gove has, this week, called for the Government to 'relax the pace'. Gove recognised that improvements to properties are requiring big capital outlays and putting too much pressure onto private rented Landlords which in some cases is forcing the sale of rented property.



In his recent interview, Gove gave strong hints that the timetable would change and hopefully we will see a positive outcome for the private rented sector.

### Animal Health and Welfare Infrastructure Grants



The RPA have this week started to create some noise regarding the Infrastructure Grants available for animal housing to increase the health and welfare of animals by protecting them from humidity and draughts, allowing social contact between animals and ensuring they are housed in comfortable temperatures.

Information released this week informs us that grants will be available for between £15,000 and £500,000 for large scale infrastructure projects and this will initially be rolled out for calves. However, the grant will be made available 'in time' for adult cattle, pigs and poultry.

The grants will be available for 40% of the costs of the project with a minimum project spend being £37,500 which would provide a 40% grant contribution of £15,000. The remaining costs will need to be funded by the applicant. The land must be owned or have at least 5 years left on a Tenancy Agreement and the application window is said to open 'later this summer'.

### Electric Vehicle Charging for Commercial Landlords

There is a growing, increasing need for electrical charging points for cars and some areas within our vicinity are known to have a shortage of charging points. Commercial Landlords that are in a position to provide WiFi, food and beverage and toilet facilities, can partner with Charging Point Operators to offer a service with zero cost contribution and rental agreements of anywhere between 20 and 25 years. Having a charging facility would not only contribute towards increased footfall on the site but it can also provide a service to Tenants and increase the marketability of the site in the future. Additionally, a good revenue can be produced each year from charging drivers for the service.



## The Power of a Herbal Ley



As we reported in our last bulletin, the 2023 Sustainable Farming Incentive options have been released. With the application window expected to open later in August, we are drafting many applications. One of the options, a Herbal Ley on arable land, including temporary grassland, will pay £382/ha but we should also consider the benefits in soil health with putting land into this option.

There are many Herbal Ley seed mixes on the market, each produced to provide the best mix for your soil condition and the aim of the system. Whether it's for producing silage, hay or for grazing, there is a Herbal Ley that will be suitable. In addition, mixes have been developed that are best for dry or wet soil types ensuring a Herbal Ley can grow almost anywhere.

In addition to environmental payments through SFI, the additional benefits are in effect **free fertiliser**. Legumes are known as the 'engine' of a Herbal Ley and as legumes grow, they provide nitrogen for the soil. Some of the common legumes include a variety of clovers including Alsike, red and white clover. Sainfoin and Alfalfa are also very good providers of nitrogen. In addition to making them very good for grazing ground, Herbal Leys can provide a lot of **minerals** to benefit both animal and in turn, human health. Chicory provides high levels of selenium, copper, cobalt, iron and zinc. Including Yarrow in the mix provides a large amount of copper and manganese. With these nutrients available, supplementary feeding with buckets and powders can be heavily reduced.

With such varying weather, although this might not be a concern at the moment, Herbal Leys can also be very **drought resistant** which, if we have another Indian Summer, we will be very grateful for. Their deep roots mean they can still provide a good yield over grazing ground during hot spells by penetrating the soil further to draw up moisture. Amongst other forage grasses, the likes of Cocksfoot in a mix can provide this resistance.

Three plants found in Herbal Leys, Chicory, Saindoin and Birdsfoot Trefoil provide **anthelmintic** properties as a result of the tannins in their leaves and stems which should be a consideration when anthelmintic resistance is at the forefront.

And, as many of us already know, deep rooting Leys result in more carbon sequestration which improves the soil biology resulting in greater yields and can also help the soil to retain its moisture.

So the question I ask is, why are we still growing conventional, fast growing Leys?

If you'd like any more information on any of the options within SFI or, would like to find out more about Herbal Leys, please contact us at Adkin.