

## **Tablehurst Farm Ltd**

### **Annual Report: Education, Training and Research Activities 2014-15**

#### **Overview**

The Directors of Tablehurst Farm are pleased to report on the education, training and research activities that have taken place on and in the name of the farm for the financial year 2014-15. As in recent years, this has taken a number of forms, from routine farm study to hosting visits by school children, college students and interest group. Of particular note is the continuing commitment to train new entrants to agriculture and horticulture, to support staff study and development, and to play a full role in school and community-based education. In addition, this year we have added a number of high profile workshops and seminars that have been open to the public, as well as to those on the farm. These workshops have addressed land management issues of particular relevance to St Anthony's Trust and the Biodynamic Land Trust, including pioneering ways of managing soils and reducing weed burden, and a day on sheep health care. In all cases there have been both theory and practice elements, the latter using Tablehurst as a 'living classroom'. At over £67,000 of value, this commitment amounts to approximately 5% of turnover, or 2 full time equivalent staff (similar to 2014), and is well in excess of the annual rents paid to St Anthony's Trust and the Biodynamic Land Trust.

Tablehurst Farm continues to be at the leading edge of education and training in biodynamic community farming, as befits its status as one of the largest and oldest farms of its type in the UK. Through its apprenticeship, internship and staff development programmes it prepares significant numbers of people for fulfilling careers in farming, gardening, care work and butchery, whether at Tablehurst or elsewhere. It also continues to train all of its permanent staff in social care, to ensure that it offers a vibrant and meaningful life to three people with disabilities who live on the farm.

In addition, Tablehurst maintains a commitment to research and development, whether in terms of the study that the farmers and gardeners routinely undertake, or in terms of collaborations with universities and colleges. Following a number of projects with urban farms and gardens, Tablehurst has this year chosen to work with East Sussex and Kent County Councils, and the local governments of Ostende (Belgium) and Middleburg (The Netherlands) on developing a greater understanding of the value of community supported agriculture, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings. The farm has also begun what is intended to be a long-term project with Michael Hall School, to bring BD food more fully into the life and consciousness of the school, while also encouraging the farmers and gardeners to become more involved in the life of the school.

#### **Future work: Farm Associates**

In addition to its commitment to support the water and land management research, Tablehurst has made active steps to establish ways of funding farming that do not require land as a capital asset. While being a requirement of its recent loan from St Anthony's Trust, Tablehurst has long had a desire to harness the power of its community in new ways, to support the future development of the farm as a model of biodynamic community farming unencumbered by capital debt. The farm launched its Farm Associate scheme at the 2015 AGM and is actively working with a small group of co-op members to develop a new funding model, initially concentrating on the provision of a new hay and straw barn. In principle, the funding model will be one in which individual investors take the risk in place of land. This may simply be through loans to the farm business or it may, in common with the European Slow Money movement, involve the investors owning the asset (the barn) until the farm business has bought it from them. With planning permission for the barn now granted, we expect to move forward with this scheme in 2016, in time for the harvest. Once in place we intend to run workshops and seminars on the Associate model, with a view to helping other farms and businesses adopt new models of capital finance.

<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost to the farm</b>
Training – farm and garden	Last year's second year BD apprentices completed their training, with 2 starting their second year in Sept 15 (one farmer and one gardener). All have been registered on the formal Biodynamic Association scheme. This is a 2-yr structured programme of practical activities, courses and assignments leading to a formal qualification. Students work full time on the farm and garden in the summer, and have study time in the winter, covering attendance at courses and private study. In addition to the formal programme, Tablehurst hosts summer placement students from Warmonderhof and Plumpton Colleges. This year we have had 5 such students.	4 BD apprentices over the year: wages, accommodation, food (assume half total cost to reflect benefit to the farm) = £35,000 pa Training costs = £8,000pa
Training – care home	Sebastian Siemieniec has been trained to level 5 in care home management. This was an intensive on-line training and examination programme supported by Peter Brown. Sebastian also conducted training sessions in care management for farm staff, SMT and Directors	Tuition fee = £2500 Pay to Peter Brown to provide training and cover = £7500
Training - butchery	Dan Colman will complete his apprenticeship by the end of 2015. Eddie Saunders joined in September 2015 as the new butcher apprentice, on a 2 year training contract.	Tuition fees = £2500 + mentor & training time from qualified butchers
Staff development	All members of staff are expected to undertake training appropriate to their role. This is typically machinery handling on the farm and in the garden, food safety in the shop, café and kitchen, and care provision for all concerned with the residents (all staff have formal care training). David Junghans also undertook a leadership training programme through the Open University.	General training = £7,500; in addition, a one-day sheep handling course was arranged on the farm, for all farm staff (£1000)
Staff study	All permanent members of staff are encouraged to undertake private study, or to join facilitated study groups. Most members of the farm and garden staff take up these opportunities, usually for around 30 weeks a year (outside the summer work schedule)	Say 8 staff, 4 hrs per week for 30 weeks per year @ £8/hr = £900 pa
Staff library	The farm is developing a library of books and study materials to support all members of staff. This is currently held in the farm office, but will move to a designated quiet space in 2015	Budget is £1000 pa
Education visits to the farm	The farm encourages local schools, colleges and interest groups to visit the farm for a guided tour. Numbers of visits vary annually, but regular attendees include the village schools, Plumpton College and the University of Brighton. Other visitors include farmer and visiting research groups, as well as business groups seeking a mix of physical work, reflection and inspiration. This year, the farm hosted approx. 10 school and college visits and three business retreat/workdays. The farm also runs a programme of farm and garden walks, and the very popular lambing events.  A new venture, the Farm Kids Club, started this year, organised by the apprentices and Heart of Teaching students. This is a regular (one Saturday a month) activity programme for 8-14 yr olds. It attracts 30 children per session and has also recently included an activity for parents – also supported by the farm	c. 100 hrs @ £8/hr = £800 pa  The kids' club is cost neutral to the farm. However, there are uncoded inputs of rooms and machinery, while the farmers have run the farm walks and parent activities.
Workshops	Weed management workshop (H. Heilmann) - 40 participants Soil management (F Wenz) – 30 participants Preps week (farm staff) – 30 participants for the opening lecture, 4 of whom stayed for the entire week, as did key Plaw Hatch staff. Geometry classes (D Docherty) – 15 participants per week Fermenting workshop (H Brown) – well attended Sunhive workshops (R Hanney) – a 3-day workshop in October; sold out Farm staff attendance at BD conference	The aim is to make this programme cost neutral to the farm, by inviting paying guests. Some of the activities also provide additional income for staff or guests. Budget = £1000 to catalyse events and cover the cost of the preps week
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£67,700 pa</b>