



Network News

Winter 2021 Issue No80

Ideas, Recovery and Growth

The NFAN
Mini Conference

2019

2020

2021

Inside this issue: **Five different Christmas events.**
How to run a safe Lambing event.
Get help to reduce rates.



National
Farm
Attractions
Network



The NFAN Mini Conference



**Wednesday
27th Jan**

Promising an exciting programme, the theme embraces 'New Ideas, Recovery and Growth'.

Be inspired...

- Hear Bernard Donoghue's insight for recovery
- Find out 'What Flew and What Flopped'?
- Attend the NFAN AGM
- Dip your toes into virtual networking
- Attend the Zoom bar

4pm-8pm

**FREE for
NFAN
Members**

Grow your
network, share
ideas and
sharpen your
skills at our
2021 NFAN Mini
Conference.

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Owing to the generosity of sponsors, we are also able to invite NFAN Members free of charge.

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farmattractions.net

SILVER SPONSORS



"Out with the old, in with the new" this quote could not be more pertinent as we happily say goodbye to 2020.

Happy New Year!



Across all 4 nations, we have experienced one of the toughest years the industry has encountered, faced with tough challenges from restrictions to lockdowns and everything in between. We are however continually fascinated to hear about the innovative and creative ways you have adapted in order for your businesses to survive, which we address in more detail on page 5. If we have learned anything from last year, it has highlighted to us the importance of working together as a team; collaborating collectively on bi-weekly zoom calls, helping each other understand the sometimes vague government guidance and fighting for the industry through lobbying.

As we begin the new year, we look forward to the January Conference, although somewhat different from previous years. I am grateful for my colleagues on the NFAN committee who have worked hard to ensure this event will still go ahead, taking place as an online virtual event. Please see more details of the event covered in page 2. We can't wait to see you there!

It is important to address that in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is another threat on the horizon that will impact NFAN members. Business rates have increased dramatically over recent years and we seek to prevent this

unsustainable rise by working together once again. We encourage you to engage with NFAN on your rates to re-establish a fair method of setting rates for our sector.

To end on a positive note, as I'm writing this in December, there is hope for an improved year in 2021 with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccines, which will hopefully allow us to get back to some sort of normality soon.

Finally I would just like to express my thanks for the tireless work of our managing agent this year. Anita and her team at Agility have gone above and beyond the call to ensure that NFAN has been able to support and guide its members throughout the many pitfalls of 2020. Their work and enthusiasm is hugely appreciated.

Tom Robinson
Chairman

And welcome to our new members

Farm Parks

Applejacks Adventure Farm
Kentish Town City Farm
Playworks The Meadow
Hebbs Alpacas
Bradshaw Brothers

Trade Members

Leisure Design Projects Ltd t/a
Enchanted Creations
Cookieeee Monsters Ltd t/a
Chocolate Lodge
Ticket Tailor
K3 Business Technologies

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Member's Round Up

A massive well done to Cannon Hall Fam and West Lodge Farm for reaching the finals of the British Farming Awards in October.



West Lodge Farm Finalist for the 'Diversification Innovator of the Year'

West Lodge Farm were finalists in the Diversification Innovator of the Year' Award and were recognised for their new and innovative ways to entertain and educate their visitors. These initiatives included introducing a Forest School Facility for the nursery and farm park; allowing the children to spend as much time outdoors as possible. Helping their visitors connect with the countryside, Edward and Mo say their motto is 'explore, enjoy, enthuse and enrich'.

Cannon Hall Farm Silver winners 'Family Farming Business of the Year'

Cannon Hall Farm scooped the silver award as the Family Farming Business of the Year. During the COVID-19 pandemic they successfully expanded their business by focusing on their farm shop and deliveries, achieving a 40% increase in turnover year on year. The judges commended Cannon Hall on how all members of the Nicholson family are involved at every level; from 77-year old director Roger Nicholson to three-month-old farm mascot Nellie Hampshire.



Finalists for 'Digital Innovator of the Year'

Cannon Hall Farm were also finalists for 'Digital Innovator of the Year', recognised for their Facebook Live broadcasts that opened the world of farming to a huge audience.



Greg Smith (Buckingham MP) visits Thrift Farm

A big thank you to all the NFAN members who wrote a letter to their MP using the NFAN template.

Thrift Farm wrote to their MP (Greg Smith) in October which resulted in him paying them a visit. In particular, Greg wanted to learn about the impact COVID-19 has had on their farm park, and adult care provision. A great result from Thrift Farm and the sector!



Pumpkins Sell out at October Half Term

After a tough year, it's encouraging to see how many farm attractions sold out for October half term. With all tickets being bought online, it also meant visitors turned up irrelevant of the miserable weather. We'd also like to thank the 120 NFAN members who completed NFAN's Tourism Survey to keep October half term out of lockdown in England.

Whilst delighted to see farm parks could open during half term in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, we do sympathise with Wales whose restrictions meant they had to close.

I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here'

Manorafon Farm Park in Abergelle, Wales hosted ITV's backstage productions for I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here! Jules from Manorafon Park said "this is a boost that couldn't have come at a better time, not only for us but local businesses, Conwy County and the North Wales tourism sector. It's exciting to see what 2021 will bring in the wake of I'm A Celebrity!"

Christmas With a Twist

To keep the magic alive this Christmas, many farm attractions had to innovate and pivot their usual Christmas models. We're proud to share five different models across the farm park sector.

Tulley's Drive In Christmas

Building on their successful drive thru cinema, Tulleys brought the magic of Christmas directly to visitors' cars. In addition to a festive film and family size bucket of popcorn, families drove through the magical tunnel, where they stopped the car to speak to Santa's festive friends. Visitors could also take part in activities directly from their cars including a Make A Bear workshop and letter writing to Santa.



Mead Open Farm's Santa's Rooftop Ramble

Although Mead Open Farm's Christmas event was unable to run for the whole season, they made sure that whilst they were open it was safe and enjoyable. Across the farm, children embarked on an adventure to find festive characters and solve the clues to unlock Santa's Toyshop. They also met the man in red on a rooftop (a safe 2 metre distance away) and attended an Elf Academy Show. With more emphasis on outside, the new Alpine Bar and Fire Pit Area definitely went down a treat.

Illuminations at Cotswold Farm Park

Cotswolds Farm Park added a touch of well needed sparkle to Christmas 2020 with their Enchanted Light Trail. Families wrapped up warm as they walked through the park after dark, admiring beautiful light displays, along with festive food, and cosy crackling fire pits. This event successfully allowed families to enjoy valuable time safely in the fresh outdoors.



Father Christmas Online at The Llama Park'

Father Christmas was brought to families this Christmas by the magic of Zoom technology at The Llama Park. Including a special 10 minute call with Santa himself, it brought festive joy into the comfort of visitors' own homes. And as if by magic, the Christmas gifts arrived promptly by post after the zoom call.



Conifox Adventure Park Christmas Drive-Thru Experience

Scotland's first ever Christmas Drive Thru came to Conifox Adventure Park in Scotland this Winter. From the safety of their own cars, visitors experienced a very special winter wonderland. Passing festive scenes and meeting interactive characters, these included a Toy Workshop, Reindeer Flying School and not forgetting Santa in his Living Room.





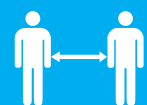
7 Steps to Running a Safe Lambing Live Event



NFAN have created a video that outlines these steps and can be viewed on the NFAN website.

Seeing lambs being born is no doubt one of the most popular visitor activities of the year, however, it also imposes one of the highest risks of passing E. coli to visitors.

As this newsletter goes to print, we are unsure which devolved nations will allow farm parks to open for February lambing. Looking positively ahead to Easter, however, here is a reminder of the basic 'Industry Code of Practice' rules to ensure a safe lambing event:



Social Distancing

An extra complication for lambing live events in 2021, is the need to socially distance your visitors. Depending on the restrictions required for your area, you are likely to need to: limit numbers into the lambing area at any one time, have markers where visitors stand and wipe down the highly touched areas on the hurdles more frequently.

1 It all starts with risk assessments

A Lambing Live risk assessment should identify how visitors are exposed to E. coli, the likelihood of it occurring and what can be done to limit the risk. Even if you are using a risk assessment from previous years it should be reviewed to identify if any changes are needed.

2 Prepare your animal pens in advance

The setup of animal pens should avoid any run off of faeces and animal afterbirths into the public areas. You can easily avoid this run by fixing wood to the floor or using cable ties to hang wood from hurdles. It is recommended to double fence your lambs to stop people reaching over to touch the lambs. The public should not be able to enter the pens.

Thought should also be given to determine how staff will clean out the animal muck from the animal pens. Can you achieve this without needing to move through a public area? Or can you muck out before visitors arrive, whilst ensuring adequate time to clean the area.

3 Disinfect hurdles to avoid contamination

During your event, and between every bottle feed, ensure hurdles that the public can touch are wiped down regularly to avoid contamination. Regular wiping down of high touch areas will also be effective for your COVID-19 social distancing.

4 Nearby Hand Washing

Antibacterial gels are not a substitute for handwashing. If visitors are touching the lambs, you will need visible handwashing facilities as a visitor leaves the lambing area and signage should be very obvious.

Handwashing needs to be with warm water, soap, and paper towels. Liquid soap is recommended over bars. Bins will also need to be provided for used paper towels. NFAN recommends a 'hooded litter bin' which avoids the paper towels blowing around the barn and prevents customers from having to touch the lid.

COVID-19 has made visitors mindful of how important handwashing is, however, you need to be aware that they may feel using antibacterial gels is sufficient.

If you don't have running water on mains leading to an animal barn you can hire or purchase mobile hand washing units. By not having warm hand wash you increase the risk of visitors not washing their hands.

5 Ensure all staff understand the risk

It is critical that staff understand the risk. The NFAN lambing video and Code of Practice videos can be used for staff training and are a great way to educate the team.

6 Educate your visitors

Handing out information sheets is unlikely to be possible due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, you will need to ensure 'hand washing' signage around the lambing area is prominent and highlighted in any video. Obvious signs should also warn pregnant women NOT to enter the lambing shed.

7 Visitors touching baby lambs and lamb bottle feeding

If you decide to bottle feed lambs or let visitors touch baby lambs, avoid new-borns who are less than 48 hours old as these lambs carry the biggest risk.

Join the AAA Scheme



...and save money on your insurance

Did you know NFAN has its own accreditation scheme for the Industry Code of Practice? Over 50 NFAN members have already joined the scheme.

Not only does it give you peace of mind that you've implemented the Industry Code of Practice correctly, but you can also obtain lower insurance with Marsh and Co (as they see your farm as a lower risk). Plus, NFAN is continuing to pay £150 towards your annual inspection for 2021.

Want to find out more?

Visit the AAAS page at www.farmattractions.net and download the Audit Checklist.

Lamb bottle feeding should ideally be done through a hurdle with the lambs on one side and public on the other. If this isn't possible, lambs should be bought into a separate area for feeding/meeting visitors and taken back to their animal pen afterwards. Before the next session, any faeces should be cleaned up and the area should be disinfected to avoid contamination.

Silence is **not** golden

Many farm parks have kept quiet on rates, signalling that we are happy with increases of over 50% since 2010. This trend is unlikely to stop unless we proactively work together.

What is happening?

Rates are set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and for many farm parks a shortcut is being used to calculate them. Rather than doing full calculations, the VOA are applying a straight 6-9% against turnover. If we don't break our silence this will become the norm.

What can you do?

Working collectively, we can unwind the rise in rates and if you act quickly enough, potentially obtain a rate rebate.

NFAN have appointed Mark Wasilewski (an ex city analyst and ex farm park owner) to help identify if this shortcut is being used for your farm, what your rates should be and whether a rebate is due.

The first 2 steps are to identify if a short cut is being used. To help, NFAN have put together a step by step guide to claim your property (found on the rates page of the NFAN website) or you can contact Mark.

The third step is for Mark to redo the calculation to identify what your rates should be and whether any rebates could be due. NFAN has contracted Mark for this work and as a member you obtain this free of charge.

What you do next is up to you. You can either do nothing or if you are interested in obtaining a reduction in your rates and a rebate, submit a challenge.



Contact Mark to help you on rates.

Mark Wasilewski:

E: markwas@zoho.com

T: 01234 771 599

M: 07872 592 94

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Vice-Chair Doug Douglas, Avon Valley

Treasurer Steve Taylor, Marsh & Co

Lyndy Birse, Ark Open Farm

Gwen Evans, Cantref Adventure Farm

James Gammell, Conifox Adventure Park

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Tel: 01179 864929

Tel: 01226 767124

Tel: 02891 820445

Tel: 01874 665223

Tel: 0131 333 2288

Ben Harbottle, Timberplay

Sally Jackson, The Pink Pig

Kate Lord, Cotswold Farm Park

Katie Milbourn, Walby Farm Park

Robert Nicholson, Cannon Hall Farm

Hannah Wafula, Bocketts Farm Park

Tel: 0114 282 3474

Tel: 01724 854082

Tel: 01451 850307

Tel: 01228 573056

Tel: 01226 790427

Tel: 01372 363764

All general enquiries should be directed to the NFAN office - tel: 03333 448987, email info@farmattractions.net.

New NFAN Membership Hub

We have a brand new online system for membership. It will make it easier to book events, add or remove colleagues for NFAN's email updates and even pay membership fees.

The system will also help us identify members who need help from the Committee on the Code of Practice. When you login, you will be asked 15 questions on how you comply. Help with the Code of Practice is a membership benefit, and we want to be sure we help all those in need.

Every member will have an account set up already and if you haven't yet got access, please contact Jodie at the NFAN office on info@farmattractions.net.

HELPLINE

Free advice for NFAN members

As a NFAN member you are entitled to free advice from the following experts. Please limit your free calls to one per annum. The experts can advise you further, subject to their terms of business. You will find them all prepared to offer special rates for NFAN members.

Planning Legislation and Business Rates

Barry Davies, Davies & Co.

(Chartered Surveyors)

Tel: 01536 524808

Email: info@daviesandco.co.uk

www.daviesandco.co.uk

Specialising in planning legislation including change of use, enforcement notices, advertising boards and business rates appeals.

Health & Safety/ Environmental Health Guidance

Ray Hipkin, Health & Safety Practitioner

Tel: 01844 353407

Email: ray@rayhipkin.co.uk

www.rayhipkin.co.uk

Exclusive Insurance Scheme

Steve Taylor, Marsh and Company

Insurance Brokers

Tel: 0116 204 3400

Email: staylor@marshcompany.co.uk

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Catering

Chris Brown, Turpin Smale Catering Consultants

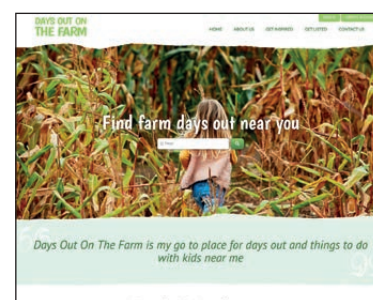
Tel: 020 7620 0011

Email: chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk

www.turpinsmale.co.uk

Advice on all matters catering including help with increasing sales, improving standards and making margins.

'Days Out On The Farm' website climbs rankings



As part of your NFAN Membership you can have a listing on the Days Out On The Farm website.

We're already ranking at number 1 on Google for 'Days Out On The Farm', number 2 for 'Farm Days Out' and are climbing the rankings for all children's farm geographical locations.

Take a look and visit:

www.daysoutonthefarm.co.uk

to register and upload your free listing.