

February 2017

For immediate release

FARMING IN THE CLASSROOM OFFERED FREE TO KENT SCHOOLS

The Kent County Agricultural Society, Education and Farming Committee are continuing to offer 'Farming in the Classroom' talks and visits in 2017. These talks, traditionally run by the Women's Food and Farming Union will now be supported by the Kent County Agricultural Society.

The Women's Food and Farming Union formerly closed the national organisation after 37 years, in 2016. It was started in 1979 by three farming wives from Kent, in response to a crisis in the country when French apples flooded the market.

Maureen Friday, the WFU President and member for 30 years has also been a member of the Kent County Agricultural Society, helping the Farming and Education Committee and the Why Farming Matters in Kent initiative run at the annual Kent County Show.

She said, "The WFU has formed part of the Farming and Education committee for a number of years and we have been visiting schools as part of the programme. Whilst we are sad that the national organisation closed in May last year, we are delighted to continue this initiative under the Kent County Agricultural Society charitable objectives".

At the Society's recent Annual General Meeting, Tish Neaves, the Chair of the Kent Branch of the Women's Food and Farming Union presented the Society's Farming and Education Committee with a cheque for £3,315.01 to continue to

fund school visits and aid the Society in providing educational opportunities to children and adults throughout the year.

Farming in the Classroom is available to schools in Kent and this year 49 schools have already made contact about possible visits. Volunteers, Maureen Friday and two fellow ex WFU members, Roz Day and Tish Neaves make up the team available to visit schools. All three are committed to providing a wonderful hands-on talk for children to interact and ask questions about where food comes from and how important farming is.

Lucy Hegarty, Kent County Show organiser, said “The Society are very grateful for the donation and the additional funding will mean we can offer even more visits for schools in the future”.

The majority of visits are to schools based in urban areas with only 22% being in a more rural location. This initiative along with the Kent County Agricultural Society’s Living Land event in May and the large education area at the annual Kent County Show in July, form part of the Society’s charitable objectives.

Stuart Gibbons, Farming and Education Committee Chairman said, “We greatly appreciate the contribution, both financially and in terms of volunteering from the former WFU members. The educational visits have proved very popular and provide an excellent resource for schools who want to enhance their curriculum. The Society relies on a large number of volunteers to help run our dedicated school event, The Living Land and also our annual Show. Education is one of the key objectives of the Society and the Committee continues to support farming organisations, give scholarships and help provide much needed financial support to our county’s Young Farmers Clubs”.

****END****

Farming in the Classroom opportunities are full for 2017, schools should contact us in the autumn to book a talk for the 2017/2018 academic year.

Dates for the 2017 Kent County Show are Friday 7, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July.

Images are available on request.

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager.

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