

Rural Affairs

This month we have two main items to bring to your attention: YRSN and Bird Flu

One of the bodies that I meet with as Rural Officer is the Yorkshire Rural Support Network (YRSN)

The network was formed in 1994 by a group of organizations who felt there was a need to come together to help combat rural distress:

Their aims are to:

- Reduce the stigma associated with stress
- Reduce the level of rural distress
- Reduce the number of suicides
- Encourage a positive attitude to the changes in both health and business

By encouraging partnerships between different organizations and opening lines of communication, they hope to mobilize an effective force to protect and nurture all our rural communities.

The Network together with Farm Crisis Network (FCN) has just appointed Sarah Hough as a new Co-ordinator for our area and she has very kindly written a few words introducing herself, the Network and its work.

Sarah writes:

I am the West Yorkshire Rural Support Co-ordinator for the Yorkshire Rural Support Network (YRSN) and Farm Crisis Network (FCN). This is a new part time post running two days a week and is aimed at reducing the levels of distress in the rural areas of West Yorkshire, and, through Farm Crisis Network, providing practical support to farming people during times of anxiety and stress.

There has been an increase of calls especially with the introduction and delay of the Single Farm Payment.

The YRSN has more than 100 members drawn from the statutory and voluntary sectors and signposts those suffering from stress towards the help available. It also encourages partnerships and communications between different organisations.

My aim is to help reduce stress by making people aware that there is help, advice and support available for farming and related industries.

I am a farmer's daughter and wife, based on the family farm at Pontefract. I have worked on various farms doing a variety of jobs including looking after livestock and tractor driving. I have three young boys and have spent the latter few years supporting my family.

If any one would like to find out more about the work of YRSN or FCN, or feels that there is a situation these organizations could help with Sarah can be contacted at:

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From Revd Hugh Baker Rural Officer (rural affairs)