



YFC AGRI Ambition

Our Future Countryside



**Fun, Learning
and Achievement**

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YFC AGRI Ambition

YFC AGRI is responsible for AGRI Futures meetings at NFYFC Council weekends. It also ensures that Our Future Countryside is a consideration not only for YFC members, but for all who want to maintain a vibrant and sustainable future rural economy and community.

Nearly 600 Young Farmers' Clubs (YFCs) are located throughout England and Wales and are dedicated to supporting young people in agriculture and the countryside. Their memberships comprise approximately 21,500 young people aged between 10 and 30 years from a variety of backgrounds, who live or work in rural areas. YFCs' core objectives are to provide opportunities for members to improve their personal skills and gain a sense of achievement through a variety of educational and social activities.

Members of the YFC organisation play an important part in current, and future, social and economic aspects of the rural community. They also play a key role in sustainability of rural environments and have a great interest in maintaining viable conditions in which to live and work. Areas of interest, concern and input are detailed in this document.

Rural Community

Affordable rural housing - an essential component for a sustainable and balanced rural community. YFC AGRI will continue to work with English Rural and Rural England to help safeguard the future of farming by ensuring that the lack of affordable housing does not inhibit people from entering or staying in agricultural or rural industries, or living in a rural environment.

Aims of this joint work are as follows:

- reiterate advice on campaigning for rural housing issues, for example, giving people ideas on how to influence parish councils/ county or district councils and an associated discussion forum on 'what works' for sharing experiences and successes in different areas.
- Highlight to interested YFC members examples of where rural housing has been built in a way that benefits the local community and the key methods used that made it successful. This would be particularly useful for those who may hold land and could be considering releasing land for affordable housing.
- Highlight media case studies to emphasise the need for more affordable housing in rural areas.
- Input to research on rural issues affecting young people in collaboration with appropriate organisations.

The problem encountered by YFC members is a lack of help and advice on the ground. Guidance notes alone will not help solve problems without regional/local extension workers.

Future of county council farms - we continue to maintain that retention of county council farms is a high priority for environmental, educational and economic benefits as well as opportunities for new entrants and young farmers to pursue a farming career. Our responses to recent Defra consultations have alluded to the viable conditions for young farmers and a YFC representative sits on the Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG).

Connectivity - rural communities cannot function adequately either in business or socially if there is not adequate provision of technology for broadband availability and quality in rural areas. There needs to be parity in services between rural and urban environments. Lack of rural availability is a barrier to business set-up, investment and expansion. Poor mobile phone reception can also be a potential Health & Safety issue in regard of lone workers and a threat to mental wellbeing. Again, our responses to various government consultations and media appearances highlight the importance of connectivity in rural areas.

“YFCs are proud supporters of the many valued charities that help support the food and farming industries”

Food and farming education - YFC members appreciate the need for (and their contribution to) promotion of land-based industries. The inclusion of food and farming subjects in the national curriculum and effective careers advice helps to spread positive messages based on facts and research. YFC AGRI is a member of LEAF Education and a Countryside Classroom partner. The NFYFC Future Farming Curve module is a resource for both YFC members and teachers to help highlight the many and varied career opportunities within the food and farming industries. Input and promotion of Open Farm Sunday is also a regular in the YFC calendar, as well as the many regional and county events where YFC members demonstrate their practical skills and share their experience and knowledge with the public.

Charity work - YFCs are proud supporters of the many valued charities that help support the food and farming industries. Innovative fundraising activities are very much part of the YFC programme of events and joint work is often devised for mutual benefit. Just a few examples include: The Farming Community Network (FCN) and the YFC Rural+ campaign and training; Farm Safety Foundation (Yellow Wellies) and the YFC Farm Safety competitions and training, as well as general well-being awareness and promotion. Continued work with RABI and the county agricultural societies ensures that rural problems are shared amongst the whole rural community and solutions investigated.

Food and Farming

Continued input to rural and agricultural

policy - YFC AGRI has provided representatives and input for many industry and government steering/working groups or committees including: Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG); the Agri-Skills Forum Management Group; Defra CAP Reform steering group; Defra Green Food Project steering group; Rural England and currently Defra and industry Brexit and Farming roundtable groups. This work helps to represent the voice for YFC members and shows commitment to the future of the food and farming industries. As a recipient of Defra funding for components of its agricultural programme, YFC AGRI will continue to integrate relevant government policy into its work. YFC AGRI will continue to take an active part in considering policy points relevant for young farmers in emerging policy detail within British agricultural, environmental and rural policy.

Promoting farm safety and wellbeing

- YFCs are proud of their competitions, campaigns and training which reflect the importance of safety and well-being in the workplace. A safe industry is paramount and YFC members strive to highlight the issues and provide advice and training accordingly. As already mentioned on page 5, this includes work with The Farming Community Network (FCN) and the YFC Rural+ campaign and training; The Farm Safety Foundation (Yellow Wellies) and NFYFC's Farm Safety competitions and training, as well as general well-being awareness and promotion.

NFYFC is a member of the Farm Safety

Partnership and a supporter of the national Farm Safety Week. The Federation also has a bespoke farm safety training module and dedicated promotional activities. Former NFYFC Chairman Ed Ford championed farm safety and acts as an official ambassador for the Farm Safety Foundation. NFYFC works closely with HSE to ensure that the farm safety message is adhered to as well as communicated.

Environmental and sustainability awareness

NFYFC research includes: Your Future and Farming Survey 2009 - in association with Lantra - which highlighted YFC members' aspirations for their future in farming. Results of the NFYFC Farming Opportunity Matching Service feasibility studies are available on the NFYFC website and the most recent survey, Considerations for a future British Agricultural Policy resulted in the NFYFC AGRI position paper and response to Defra's Health and Harmony consultation.

AGRI collaborates with conservation organisations including the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) to help promote good environmental practice and to demonstrate how technology can aid both profitable food production and help protect our farmed environment. YFC AGRI recently worked with Defra to deliver eight regional discussion events to help shape the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. The joint-work with government and industry continues with relevant discussion and training events devised and made available for YFC members and next generation farmers and land managers.



Innovating our Future

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Skills and Training - YFC members have particular interest in CPD, skills and training as this is part of the ethos of 'fun, learning and achievement' for the organisation. NFYFC has been an active participant in the AgriSkills Forum Management Group and the recent work of the Agri-Food Workforce Skills and Development Strategy which aims to deliver increased professionalism in the industry. This work is now being championed by the Agri-Food Workforce Skills and Development Strategy and NFYFC is represented on two work streams. NFYFC supports this vision and promotes skills acquisition, personal development and training for YFC members.

Succession resources for YFCs, supported by Defra and industry, have been developed and delivered which include the video, We Really Need to Talk and Ready and Resilient succession training. YFCs also have their own dedicated business development website, www.yfcsmartfarming.org.uk, which gives a range of advice from setting up a YFC business development competition to running and growing your own business.

YFC members welcome recognition of their skills and career progression opportunities as well as encouraging others to consider the food and

farming industries as a career path.

Young farmers' opinions include the following points:

- Realising available support for young farmers
- Recognising the considerable contribution young farmers have made in their efforts to establish continuous professional development, training and business skills and promoting the industry with nominal support
- A robust food security policy to encourage and support existing young farmers and new entrants, which should include support for research and development and good environmental practice
- Embrace agritech to drive efficiency, maximise yields, protect the environment and increase profitability.

Promoting British Farming – YFC members are encouraged to promote British farming through club, county, area and national activities. Whether YFC members produce or consume, work within the industry or support allied industries, there is a healthy co-dependency. YFC members help promote both Back British Farming and Love British Food campaigns. YFC members will aim to become ambassadors for Love British Food, take an active part in using and promoting British food at YFC events and be advocates for the industry at every possible public engagement event or YFC event.



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