

# Rural Report

A monthly newsletter focusing on issues of rural life and farming of relevance to the work of the Church of England in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

Information is drawn from organisations connected with the countryside (in its widest sense) within Suffolk and beyond.

The newsletter will produce brief reports giving factual information on a range of issues. Items may be of general interest or provide opportunity for prayer.

If more details are needed on any of the topics mentioned, please contact Brian Chester at [bc@bcnewslink.com](mailto:bc@bcnewslink.com) or call 01572 757600



## Issue 102: September 2021

■ **East Anglia** could be transformed into a super-sustainable food production powerhouse growing crops like tomatoes, watermelons and pineapples by drawing heat from deep underground. That is the message from a geothermal business seeking farming partners across Norfolk and Suffolk who want to scale up to year-round crop cultivation, modelled on the success of the Netherlands. *East Anglian Daily Times*

■ *“One-third of all food produced each year is squandered or spoiled before it can be consumed. Research also suggests that high-income countries waste as much food as sub-Saharan Africa produces. This food waste ends up in landfills to rot – which releases greenhouse gases. When this is combined with the amount of energy it takes to produce, manufacture, transport and store, it contributes three billion tonnes of carbon dioxide to our planet. To put that in context, if food waste was a country, it would be the third-highest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world”.*

Comment by researchers at Bradford University.

<https://nlaf.uk/Library/content/GetDoc.axd?ctlID=ZWWvNzBIY2QtZWJjNi00YWZiLWEIMTAAtNWExOTFiMjJjOWU1&rID=MjY3MzQ=&pID=MjI5&attchmnt=Fal se&uSesDM=False&rldx=MTQ3MjE=&rCFU=>

■ **Technology** now exists to extract hydrogen from ammonia in slurry and use it to fuel vehicles, according to Ben Williams, AHDB senior knowledge transfer manager. He says that making this a widespread reality would be revolutionary for both farmers and society and help rewrite the story for livestock farming, which is continually under fire for its environmental impact. <https://nlaf.uk/Library/content/Detail.aspx?ctlID=ZWWvNzBIY2QtZWJjNi00YWZiLWEIMTAAtNWExOTFiMjJjOWU1&rID=MjY2ODU=&sID=MQ==&qrs=VHJlZQ==&rrtc=VHJlZQ==>

■ *“You either love him or hate him, but Jeremy Clarkson’s documentary series about trying to get to grips with sheep rearing, tractor driving and running a farm shop at Didly Squat Farm has certainly found an audience. As someone who lives and works on the family farm and experiences the harsh realities in the show, I have found it enjoyable and relatable. Clarkson’s farming efforts were rewarded with a mere £142 in his first year. He did break the bank with a Lamborghini tractor and his crop yield was hit by severe weather, but it gives a sense of how hard it is making money in farming.”* Peter Gittins, University of Huddersfield for the Conversation website. <https://nlaf.uk/Library/pl/GetDoc.axd?ctlID=ZWWvNzBIY2QtZWJjNi00YWZiLWEIMTAAtNWExOTFiMjJjOWU1&rID=MjY3NDY=&pID=MjI5&attchmnt=False&uSesDM=False&rldx=MTQ3MzE=&rCFU=>

■ **Animal welfare** campaigners have welcomed confirmation from Defra that it will go ahead with a ban on the export of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses for slaughter and fattening, as well as shortening domestic journey times and introducing stricter rules on temperature and headroom in lorries. RSPCA chief executive Chris Sherwood said: “We are absolutely thrilled that the live export of animals is finally coming to an end after campaigning on this issue for more than 50 years.”

■ **The NFU** is encouraging farmers to use its ready-made field signs to help keep the public educated about what is growing in the fields.

■ **Farming leaders** have said that updated anti-pollution rules on spreading farmyard manure are ‘extremely frustrating’ and do not recognise the wider value of organic fertilisers. New rules from the Environment Agency limit application, at a set rate, to land with a ‘low risk of leaching and run-off’. Sandy and shallow soils are not included as ‘low risk’. Rob Wise, environment adviser for the National Farmers’ Union in East Anglia, said: “With so many pig, poultry and cattle farms in the region, combined with on-farm anaerobic digester plants producing valuable organic fertilisers, we expected a simpler regime to work to for this autumn and winter.” *East Anglian Daily Times*

This newsletter was initiated under the guidance of the Diocesan Rural Affairs Group set up as a means of identifying current rural issues and considering how the church should respond.