

## NE Organic Discussion Group

# Newsletter



## July 2020

### Leatherjackets

I have been speaking to local organic farmer who had problems this year with leatherjackets. When I looked back, we had included a couple of handouts on leatherjacket control at our third meeting back in August 2017 but I thought it would be worth circulating them again. See the links below and they are also attached.

[Minimising Leatherjacket Damage in Organic Cereals - Minimising Leatherjacket Damage in Organic Cereals - SRUC](#)

<https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/scotland-farming-programmes/field-labs/controlling-leatherjackets/>

### AECS

Those of you who are in the last year of an AECS should have had a letter offering you an extension for a year. You need to reply by the 24<sup>th</sup> July. Please get in touch if you have any questions. As far as we know there will a scheme to apply to next spring for starting in 2022. We do not know the details yet but please let us know if you are interested. As soon as we know more we will let you know.

### RISS

#### Background

Do you have an innovative challenge or business idea on your farm that benefit from collaborating with other farmers and industry experts from academia or the private sector? If **YES** then the **Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)** may be able to help

The Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) is a Scottish Government funded project to encourage a “bottom-up” approach to rural innovation and provide support to farmers, crofters or foresters who require expertise and assistance to help them adopt innovative ideas or practices.

SRUC are project partners in the delivery of RISS and our role is to provide a facilitator and the “**brokerage service**” linking farmers with researchers,

commercial companies and the best expertise available to take your innovative or business idea

off the ground. Innovative ideas can vary from developing and implementing a new technology to establishing a new quality standard.

### **Opportunities for Farmers**

We will form a working group around you and your farm, bringing in members from any useful sector depending on what kind of knowledge or experience you need, be it from the tech, supply chain, business or research sectors. As well as brokering a group and identifying the correct expertise, SRUC can also

- Complete survey work and carry out small feasibility, field labs or demonstration projects
- Identify suitable funding to help support the project
- Identify technologies and areas of best practice from out with Scotland which can be duplicated

### **How does RISS work?**

#### **Step 1: You become part of a group**

- You tell us briefly about your idea: get in touch
- We link you up with the right facilitator and you talk it over in more detail with them
- They bring in the other group members you will need (from any sector)
- The facilitator applies for group approval

#### **Step 2: You work as a group**

- The facilitator enables a period of group working: defining, developing and testing ideas and solutions. The way the group works and the time it will takes depends on what you are trying to do
- The group produces a project plan, with next steps in mind

#### **Step 3: You have everything you need to get going**

- You have a final project plan that can be used to access funding if necessary, or just to get started

The local SCOCAN (organic oilseed rape project) started off as a RISS project so the opportunity is there and worth considering. The current RISS round of applications is nearly closed. More information can be found at

<https://www.innovativefarmers.org/welcometoriss/>

If you have any questions or want to discuss give me a phone or contact any of the RISS contacts.

## **Rural Leadership**

The Scottish Enterprise Rural Leadership Programme, is open for applications. It will be no surprise to you that the format of delivery will be different this year. Covid has impacted on many things and SERLP is no exception. This year it will be delivered as a virtual programme that retains the core elements of previous delivery. It is specifically designed to develop leadership skills to help business people work through this period of change and take advantage of the opportunities that will no doubt emerge. The programme will be of particular benefit to those people who find themselves and their business at a crossroads.

We are looking for 30 applicants from the Scottish Enterprise area and 10 applicants from the HIE area for a 6-month delivery of short online workshops and webinars of mostly 2 hours duration. The programme will run from late October 2020 to early March 2021. This will involve roughly 40 hours of virtual sessions and approximately 20 hours of own time working to be delivered through four regional groups with 10 people in each.

We are seeking business leaders or key employees who have ambitions for the future of their business and recognise the need to change their business model, learn new skills, embrace digital technologies and respond to their customers' needs. We always attract busy people and we expect this year's virtual programme will be more accessible timewise and logistically. We have put in a lot of work, redesigning the programme ensuring that the delivery meets with participants' needs.

If you are interested and would like to know more login to one of the recruitment webinars details and more information are available on the flyer attached or at the link below.

[Leadership programme aimed at rural businesses - Scottish Enterprise](#)

## **Building local food hubs: Practical and community elements of short supply chains**

A Soil Association Scotland event -  
Online discussion on Thursday 30 July, 9–10am.

## Book online

Local food hubs have been vital for both food producers and consumers during the Covid-19 crisis, as usual supply chains struggled. If you'd like to learn more about how local food hubs work, how to get involved or how to organise one, then this event is for you.

Join us in a conversation with Rosie Jack of Bowhouse Fife and Nick Weir of the Open Food Network, about:

- How things have changed in Bowhouse Market's operating model since April
- How Rosie and Nick set up Bowhouse Link with the Open Food Network
- How to link multiple producers to one online shopfront, set up online payments and arrange distribution or pick-ups
- What the back-end admin of the Open Food Network looks like
- Opportunities and challenges throughout the process
- How they think this online space will evolve.

Includes a chance to ask your questions.

FREE to all in Scotland

## **Agritech**

Lastly SRUC currently have a project to gauge industry views on agritech use in beef and sheep systems and to identify where gaps in the knowledge currently exist. Part of this involves a survey which we would like farmers, consultants, vets, researchers and any other SQPs to complete. There is a link to the survey in the press release below and it should not take more than 5 minutes to complete – so have your say and your help is much appreciated.

[https://www.sruc.ac.uk/news/article/2670/views\\_sought\\_on\\_agri-tech](https://www.sruc.ac.uk/news/article/2670/views_sought_on_agri-tech)