

New Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS)

The new Defra funded Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS) was launched on 21st October. The new service will provide advice to farmers in England, to help them consider their business options now that the Single Payment Scheme has come into effect.

In the South West, Business Link Devon and Cornwall will be managing the service, in order to realise the synergies with the Rural Enterprise Gateway. Over the next 18 months a range of activities will be organised, including meetings, workshops, clinics and one to one farm advice visits. The advice will help farmers to consider their business options for the future, which might include restructuring the farm business, adding value to primary products, diversifying into non-farming activities, cooperation with other farmers or, for some, leaving the industry.

The service will also signpost customers on to other sources of advice and help. To access the service please call Business Link on 0845 6009006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk. Details of the forthcoming FBAS events are available from the Rural Enterprise Gateway events page, visit www.sw-gateway.com.

Biomass Task Force recommendations to Government

The Biomass Task Force has concluded its study and their final report is now available at www.defra.gov.uk/farm/acu/energy/biomass-taskforce/index.htm.

A summary document accompanies this bulletin.

Thank you to Archie Montgomery (Somerset Farmer and SW CoRE Director), who will be chairing a new Alternative Crop Working Group, which will in part assist the RDA in steering its strategy for alternative crop development in the South West of England. The first meeting date is yet to be confirmed.

RSS update

The Regional Assembly is in the process of developing a new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for 2006 – 2026. This will set a regional framework for development.

A first draft of the RSS has been prepared and is being discussed by the Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Group. It was also considered at the full Assembly meeting on 21st October 2005.

There are combined RSS and Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Consultation events taking place on:

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| 24 November | Plymouth |
| 25 November | Poole |
| 30 November | Exeter |
| 02 December | Cheltenham |

For more details about RES/RSS events, or a booking form, please visit the RA's website at www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/consultation_events.shtml

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