

Land Business Update

Week commencing 4 December 2017

Economy

CLA Rural Business 2030: Redefining farming conference, 28 November

This conference is the culmination of almost a year's research and thought that we are delighted to have contributed to. We have produced a [summary](#) of the conference report and will be holding events in the spring to discuss how businesses can thrive with the change that is facing the sector. One of the main messages from the conference is that excellent people are key to making businesses profitable and efficient, through a combination of technical, environmental and professional business management.

Britain's towns and villages have lost over 1m under 25s and gained over 2m over 65s since 1981

The 'migration' from country to cities has sped up since the millennium, according to the Centre for Towns. Since 1981, large cities have gained 300,000 under 25s and lost 200,000 over 65s. One of the starkest statistics is that in 2011 there were 35 over 65s for every 100 people of working age in villages, compared with 19 in large cities. Centre for Towns found people in rural places feel more peripheral than those in towns, and this demographic change also puts increased pressure on health and social care in rural places.

National living wage will increase by 4.4% from April 2018

The new rates for the national living wage (NLW) and the national minimum wage (NMW) will be:

- NLW - for workers aged 25 and over - will increase to £7.83 (+4.4%), from £7.50.
- NMW - for 21 to 24 year olds - will increase to £7.38 (+4.7%), from £7.05.
- NMW - for 18 to 20 year olds - will increase to £5.90 (+5.4%), from £5.60.
- NMW - for 16 and 17 year olds - will increase to £4.20 (+3.4%), from £4.05.
- NMW - for apprentices - will increase to £3.70 (+5.7%), from £3.50.

Farming

Countryside Stewardship will be 'simplified' from January, including four packages

The packages are for arable, upland, mixed and grassland farms, and will include a number of measures that farmers can do. One of the aims of the packages is to improve the environmental delivery of the scheme – rather than allow applicants to choose what they do, which is often what fits easiest with current farming practices – so it may affect the number of applications to the scheme. Michael Gove has said that there will be a much simpler application process.

European Commission re-authorises glyphosate for five years

Germany's switch from abstaining to supporting the re-authorisation swung the decision, but the change was controversial as the German environment minister had thought the country would continue to abstain and was overruled by the government and agriculture minister.

BPS payments are 7 to 12% higher in 2017, mainly due to weaker Sterling

The value of a Basic Payment Scheme entitlement is £230.97, 7% higher than in 2016; this includes the entitlement value (£161) and greening payment (£77) but has not been reduced by the Financial Discipline Mechanism reduction of 1.38%, which is applied to payments over €2,000. In Severely Disadvantaged Areas, the BPS payment is £228.88, also up 7%, and for moorland is £63.48, up 12%. The RPA has started making payments. All claimants are advised to check their payments carefully as mistakes do happen, particularly on numbers of entitlements and deductions. Please call your local farming team who can check BPS claims for you using their BPS checker.



Agronomy update

As soil temperatures drop below 10 degrees oilseed rape growers can make their herbicide applications of propyzamide or carbetamide for grass weed control. If growers do not have sampling equipment they should keep an eye on the Dow website to monitor soil moisture and temperature information for their area to ensure accurate spray timings. Growers should use this opportunity to apply their second fungicide in order to protect against Phoma and Light Leaf Spot. Remember if using carbetamide in the mix, it cannot be mixed with fungicides containing prothioconazole (e.g., Proline, Prosaro). Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle Larvae numbers remain lower than previous years and in the main yet to invade the stems. Spraying in cereals is drawing to a close with only the latest drilled fields still requiring an insecticide and or herbicide. Be careful of big day / night temperature swings when applying sprays to small cereal crops; winter oats and barley in particular are very soft with little time to recover if damaged by herbicides this time of year. Mildew has been reported in Crusoe and Shabras, although not currently at levels that would require treatment. To discuss agronomy please contact [Jock Willmott](#) or [Jonnie Dennis](#).

Energy

Ineos requests minister's decision on fracking sites

This is the first use of a change in the law in 2015 which allows companies to request intervention for projects of national importance; two councils in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire have not given the energy firm a decision on two shale gas sites within six months.

Planning

Further consultation on changes to Community Infrastructure Levy

The Government is going to issue a consultation on changes to the CIL. Although we don't have the details, it appears that the Government's aim is to give local authorities more scope to adjust CIL to capture more (or less) of the uplift in land values from permissions and other developments. For example, authorities could make higher charges in areas of high land value uplift, for example around railway stations. They could also charge different rates of CIL for different types of development, for example a higher rate for changes of use from agriculture to residential, than for commercial to residential. If implemented, these changes could significantly affect the value of the land used for development or, depending on how the market reacts, simply further inflate property values as the additional cost of the CIL is added to development costs. We will report on the consultation.

House building in England hits 12 month high

Just over 217,000 homes were built or converted in England in the 12 months to April 2017, the highest number since 2007/08. However, the growth was patchy with 37% of local authorities having fewer houses built than during the previous year. Just over 180,000 homes were newly built and 37,000 were changes of use, mainly from offices to homes, which is a vast increase from previous levels. There were 330 agriculture to residential conversions. Contact John McLarty, our head of planning, for more details.

Sporting

Independent group appointed to examine possible licensing of Scotland's sporting estates

The move is in response to a study of satellite-tagged golden eagles which concluded that a third had died "suspiciously" and as organisations such as RSPB Scotland argue that self-regulation of estates has not worked. Scottish gamekeepers say licensing is unnecessary and could be "open to abuse".