



DEVON WOMEN'S FOOD AND FARMING UNION

Linking Producer and Consumer

The Women's Food and Farming Union is a voluntary organisation with the following Aims and Objectives:

- To promote British Farm Produce and provide a link between Producers and Consumers
- Encourage farmers and growers to adopt the best production and marketing practises
- Lobby against unfair competition
- Encourage skills in purchasing, storage and preparation of food
- Educate and inform the general public on farming and countryside issues

As well as working for British agriculture and liaising with consumers, WFU provides a forum for discussion, an opportunity for members to exchange ideas and experiences, educate and support each other and have fun.

History

WFU was founded in Kent in 1979 by a group of farming women, wives of apple growers, who were concerned by the threat to their livelihood from imported Golden Delicious. When they discovered that the French Government was paying an illegal subsidy to their growers, WFU members lobbied the British Government to get it removed, then mounted a campaign to promote English Apples, which saved the home grown apple industry. Since then WFU has become a nationwide organisation with members from all sectors of British agriculture and horticulture. Members work voluntarily to lobby Government, have representation at national and local level, on advisory panels and industry forum, work to influence decisions, and to get a fair deal for producers and consumers. WFU funding comes from members, friends, fund raising, and sponsorship for specific projects.

Since the early days WFU has engaged with non-farming organisations and consumers to promote British food and farming, to disseminate information, especially about contentious issues, to create a better understanding about farming and the countryside, and between farmers and their customers. Members have mounted campaigns, run cookery courses, food promotions and tasting, awareness days when consumers are invited to visit working farms. Some members invite schools to visit their farms to give children an opportunity to learn more about farming and the countryside, and through a "Farming in the Classroom" initiative, they take information into schools. This is just a snapshot and we are very happy to provide any other information or go to www.wfu.org.co.uk

Recent campaigns:

- **Chinese Lanterns** – have drawn attention to the risks to animals, crops and property, and campaigned to get them banned. This has been taken up by other farming organisations and featured on Countryfile and the One Show.
- raising money for a **Memorial to the women of the Women's Land Army** in recognition of their work during World War II. A bronze statue of a Land Girl, surrounded by a garden, will be erected in the National Arboretum.
- **Farmers on Film – Feeding the Olympic Dream** – Staffordshire member, Sarah Gayton, is working hard at the highest level to get quality British farm produce on the menu and labelled with QR codes at the Olympics in 2012. **QR codes** enable consumers to access details about the provenance of what they are eating via their smart phones. This would be a great PR opportunity to promote British food, rural tourism and wonderful countryside to those visiting London for the 2012 Games.

DEVON WFU was founded in 1986. The Branch has had representation on the National Central Executive Council and many National Officers since then and has been instrumental in promoting many national campaigns – not least a campaign to prevent licensing of the milk boosting hormone, Bovine Somatotrophin (BST)

Other Devon achievements:

- **WFU Medical Contact Card** for farmers and their doctors, which raises awareness of potential health hazards from zoonosis that exhibit symptoms similar to everyday illness, such as flu, gastric upset or skin complaints. It has been distributed nationally to farmers, doctors, vets, and colleges.
- **"Through the Farm Gate"** video made as a learning resource for primary schools, and more recently a DVD, **"Beyond the Farm Gate"**, which has been distributed to all Devon Schools.
- **TB Trilogy** - information on bovine TB and badgers for three different levels of ability, understanding and interest. The objective being to explain to non farming people the complex issues associated with this contentious subject.

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