



Stroud Community Agriculture Ltd is registered in England as an Industrial and Provident Society number 29578R

Newsletter 14 Stroud Community Agriculture Winter 2004/5

Stroud Community Agriculture produces organic food locally. It is supported by a community of people who share the financial costs of the farm. They also share the produce that comes from the farm.

For more details on Stroud CA – see back page.

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SEASONS GREETINGS!

Farm News Laurence Dungworth

As winter draws in around us, things really begin to get busy down on the farm. In the last few months I have been busy getting the barn ready for the animals: tidying the haystack for the last time (sorry!), ordering in plenty of straw, getting rid of the last of the muck to make a beautiful muck heap to be used for the vegetables in the spring.

Once this was all done we were ready for the animals. But the summer had been wet and the autumn mild, that there was plenty of grass in the fields. I didn't want this to go to waste, though also on my mind was the maintenance of the sward. Old English for skin, the sward is the covering of the earth – the grass. Leaving stock in the field for too long, especially in wet conditions, causes overgrazing and poaching – damaging the soil structure and altering the type of vegetation growing. This can be seen by the preponderance of docks in a poorly managed horse paddock.

On the other hand, if you don't graze enough, or fertilise too much, the grass gets lank. Certain stronger and less interestingly diverse species tend to dominate. Certain weeds can become established which can easily spread. So you can see, the management of the sward for the benefit of the flora, and thus for the diversity of the fauna, is not as simple as it looks.

Well, now all the cows are inside. Most of the grass has been eaten, and it will be getting too wet for them to stand in the fields. As we eat our lunch in the barn, there is an air of contentment amongst the animals. Fresh straw, fresh hay, chance to relax. Of course, things will be different come the spring; tired of the dry hay and the stinky barn and when they can smell the new grass growing in the fields. But, for now all is well.

Another winter activity is hedge laying. The hedge going down from the barn, behind the polytunnels as far as the road has been neglected for many years. We have started work on it – cutting down dead trees, pulling out all the ivy and even beginning some actual laying. A few people came to join in at the end of November and hopefully some more at the workday in December; but I will be carrying on in January and February. With all this nature conservation going on, I thought it would be useful to explain what's happening.

On Thursday 13th January I will be giving a brief introduction to nature conservation on the farm, hopefully opening up a conservation on the topic. So, bring your ideas, questions and biscuits to 2 Upper Grange, Lovedays Mead, Stroud for 8pm. Who knows, maybe this develops into a regular feature where we can look at a variety of topics.

Another thing to look forward to in January is Dulci (our sow) farrowing (having piglets) towards the end of the month. And on the 6th of January, Three Kings Day, we will be stirring and spraying the Three Kings preparation. All are welcome to come and help, and even take some home to put on your own garden.

MEAT

I am afraid that we have just about run out of meat at the moment. We are due for more pork in the beginning of February and more beef in March and April. If there are particular comments regarding the meat, especially how you would like it cut and packed, please let me know via the comments clipboard in the pack shed. I will see what I am able to do.

News From The Veggie Patch

I am nearing the end of a three week visit to Australia and this is the second time in two years that I have sat down to write an article about the farm from such a far away place. It is so great to be part of team that allows me the luxury of a three week break knowing that the farm is in good hands so thank you Sarah and Laurence. I am looking forward to returning home (despite having to leave the warm sunshine behind) and taking my turn to cover for the others over Christmas.

The last few months have been such a period of growth and change. When I wrote an article for the last newsletter I was asking whether we should set a limit on the number of veg shares. However the situation developed so rapidly that practically before the newsletter had been compiled the core group had had to act and make a decision to limit it to 100. I believe that we have another 20 on the waiting list now. I have been doing some planning for next season, a task made easier by the fact that we are not at the moment in such a period of growth, but a task that has brought home to me that if we wish to produce enough vegetables for ourselves we need more arable land.

Personally I would like to produce more for ourselves and to be able to accommodate for more members as well but for the coming year I will be focusing on growing as much as possible for our current membership from our current vegetable area. I would also like to be able to pay more attention to improving the health and fertility of the soil with green manures and other techniques. (Green manuring is the technique of growing clovers and grasses to provide fertility for the soil microbes and to improve the health of the soil). Some tasks over the winter are to erect another small polytunnel for raising plant seedlings and to sort some machinery to make our work more efficient. I would also like to improve and brighten up the pack shed. We do have electricity now but it is all run from an extension lead and needs to be sorted out properly.

This year has been a very productive year with all that warm rain and it is nice to be able to change down a gear over the winter and reflect on our good fortune and prepare for the next season. Mind you from where I'm sitting right now I'm going to have to change up a gear.

I hope that you all have a happy Christmas and New Year,

Mark.

Value Assessment

I have just carried out a value for money assessment, comparing this weeks "share" with the equivalent organic produce from Waitrose. I had to substitute Broccoli for Calabrese (pretty much the same thing), Red Tomatoes for Green ones and an Iceberg Lettuce for the Salad Pack (bear in mind that a whole organic iceberg lettuce weighs approx 400g compared to the 150g salad pack)...the rest was easy. The result: either Waitrose is very expensive (something we all suspect anyway) or SCA produce is good value for money.

I worked it all out as closely as possible. To buy this weeks "share" at Waitrose - all organic - would cost you £10.40, give or take a few pence. We have 2 shares, so it would cost us £20.80 - a lot more. Of course this is only expressing a purely "monetary" (purchase price) notion of "value". The concept of value is very subjective, and if one takes into consideration other factors, such as the effect of supermarkets - even Waitrose, so beloved of the local green contingent - upon the local community in terms of their effect upon small independent traders (remember, Stroud used to have lots of green grocers, butchers, etc), overall levels of local employment, etc, not to mention the environmental effects of "food miles", etc, etc...then the farm produce is good value for money from an ethical point of view too.

Sorry to bother you with all that...some people have nothing better to do! P.S. I did the same price comparison with non-organic veg from Stroud's remaining green grocer. That, however, made both SCA produce and particularly Waitrose produce look like an expensive luxury...but as we know, food that cheap at the till has hidden costs...

Dave Judd

Interesting, I did a similar exercise a year or so ago, and drew same conclusion. Janet did a comparison with Tesco value veg (which is cheaper than our veg shares). When farmers supply supermarkets, about 30% is rejected as 'gradeouts', often for cosmetic or size or shape reasons. Supermarket gradeouts are not worth much to the farmer and can be ploughed in or fed to animals. There are very few gradeouts at the farm, which contributes to good value. You probably know that already.

Jade Bashford

From our Spanish correspondent

Dear people of Stroud community agriculture!

I have been running the earthshare CSA in the northeast of Scotland for ten years, and feel committed to the community supported agriculture (csa) approach! Every csa in the UK is facing the dilemma of either ignoring the southern aspect of food [by send folk to the supermarkets] or buying it in from somewhere! We have been thinking to apply the "csa approach" to this southern aspect of food with offering "fruit and holidayshare" this option we have now made

available to three csa schemes in the UK [Stroud, Cumbria and Scotland] The simple idea is to deliver produce once a year to you in the UK, with the option of [in the csa spirit] reconnecting with the way your food is grown by spending your holiday on the farm where your food came from here in Spain! Have a look at www.lajimena.de for more info and some pictures!

Now what will you expect in that box to come? It will be 5 liters of finest olive oil and olives in brine and oranges, lemons, mandarines, almonds and dried figs the quantity will be about 10 kg plus the olive oil! The price will be £49 for the lot or just the oil for £31.50 Why is the oil so good? Well, firstly we are using organic methods, and secondly we are making sure to press the olives freshly after harvesting, and making sure to get our own oil back from the mill, this is an important detail as the quality of the olives can only be maintained if swiftly processed [this does too often get neglected in the large scale production] you will be able to taste the difference!

Please ask John Meletiou about olives and the oil as John knows a lot about the process and good olive oil. I believe it is most important to know where your food comes from !!!!

When is the box coming? It will be most likely in early Feb 06 [to be confirmed]

John wants to coordinate this years fruitshare again, thank you John! so please talk to him about it Tel: 01453 833985 or john.meletiou@btclick.com

yours , Mathis Rosenbusch Hasta pronto

Health & Safety The core group is concerned that, as we are enjoying more and more people visiting the farm, we need to take care that nobody gets hurt. Please make sure that you take care around farm dangers and wash your hands before eating. Parents please make sure your children are OK.

Education Group

A group has formed to try to cultivate the educational potential of the farm, for ourselves, our children and possibly other children.

We have met twice to get to know one another and plan farm studies and future activities. It is not a very big group and we would welcome new members. Our next meeting is at Hawkwood on Tuesday, 18th January 2005 at 7.30pm. Please contact Simon Charter for the details (Stroud 755614).

Farm Studies

4th Saturday in the month 10am – 12.30pm

It is very difficult to find a title for these educational sessions without engendering dreary connotations of school :
“Exploring the qualities of what is around us on the farm”?
“Getting to know the individual character of our farm”?
“Developing an appreciation of our farm”?

May be these phrases give a better idea of the intention behind the farm studies? There have been two sessions looking at the landscape, which have been interesting and enjoyable in spite of unfavorable weather conditions. I also feel they have given a sense for the potential development of the landscape in the future although they were just a brief look at the main areas.

Here are the plans for our future studies.

January 22nd

The Farm Animals, what do they say to us?

February 26th

Looking at the soil, how it varies around the farm, its structure, composition and qualities.

March 26th Revisiting the landscape

April 23rd A brief look at the trees and shrubs.

May 28th Wild flowers.

June 25th Grasses.

The Bursary - Good News

The reduced rate vegetable shares for people on a low income have all been taken up. They are calculated on a % of the overall membership, so as the membership has grown, so has the number of households receiving a share at a reduced rate. One of the principles of the farm, which we must keep working towards, is that 'low income shall not exclude anyone'. We have asked members (in confidence) about their households when they have joined and over 80% are elderly/supporting children/not easily able to access produce of similar quality/long term sick. We have not made a charge for any of the events during the year.

We'd welcome any practical help to further reduce barriers for households on a low income, whilst keeping the farm finances viable.

Jade

How To Get Children To Eat Spinach!

We have been making spinach biscuits with toddlers. They stir up flour, oats, butter, egg, grated cheese, milk, sesame seeds, salt, and lots of pureed spinach. They roll it out and cut it into shapes with play dough cutters. They are baked into biscuits and make a good portable snack. They freeze well.

Jade

Farmers Are Facing A 58% Cut In Their Income This Year....

...and can expect future earnings to fluctuate drastically, accountants predicted yesterday. Net income from food production is expected to fall from £81 per acre last year to £34 per acre due largely to this year's poor harvest and low milk prices, according to analysis by Deloitte and Touche. (Also covered in The Daily Telegraph, The Independent - 15 October)

Our 23 acres does pretty well!!

Greg

Hazel Has Had A Heifer

Hazel had a heifer (female) calf on Saturday 4th December.

With this being St. Barbara's day, Laurence decided to name the calf Barbara. Both are doing well and you are welcome to come and see them in the barn

EGGS

I hope that everyone is happy with the egg-ordering scheme. It is possible to order more eggs if there are more people who want them. Just to remind you all: if you have reserved eggs, please take them from the box marked reserved - some people are taking them from the other box. Please also write it down in the folder so that we can keep a record of it. People can either pay by cheque or you can alter your standing order, but please also write this in the folder. Mark

EVENTS:

Stroud Community Agriculture welcomes anyone who is interested to join in the following events:

Education Group - Farm Studies 4th Saturday in the month 10am - 12.30pm

See Page 3 for the main article

January 22nd The Farm Animals, what do they say to us

February 26th Looking at the soil, how it varies around the farm, its structure, composition and qualities.

March 26th Revisiting the landscape

April 23rd A brief look at the trees and shrubs.

May 28th Wild flowers.

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Toddlers toddle Friday 21 January - Meet 10.30 in the barn

Anyone who enjoys the company of little people or wants to help out also welcome. We will have a slow walk round the farm, collect bits and bobs, feed the animals, and settle down for a farm yard story in the barn. Please bring wellies, warm clothes and water proofs, and slings if you use one, because buggies won't manage the terrain. Non-members welcome. Tel: Jade 887 233

Farm Days: 3rd Saturdays of Every Month.

15th January, 19th February, 19th March, 16th April, and so on" Working (and playing!) on the farm at Hawkwood, Painswick Old Road, Stroud from 9.30 am to 1 pm. Bring & share picnic at 1 pm.

New enquiries administrator

Carole and Michael Vaughan live in Gloucester and joined the farm in September. They have attended several activities so far and have brought their grandson, Adam, with them to anything involving children.

In fact Adam was one of the main reasons for joining – giving him wholesome produce as well as an opportunity for him to learn how things grow and how the land should be cared for, especially good to be sharing this experience with other children.

Carole is hoping to take a more active role in helping with the admin duties of the farm and, as she is available during the day, has agreed to be a point of contact for new enquiries.

Annual Party/General Meeting - Saturday 5th March - Hawkwood

Please attend the AGM on Saturday 5th March. We are planning a party, children and non-members welcome (for more details call Bernard 01453 757436). There will be an inspiring piece from Tablehurst Farm, a brilliant CSA in Sussex. Dull business will be kept brief, but we will present the accounts, and agree on a core group for the coming year. See later article for more details

2.30pm farm walk from the barn - **3.30pm** AGM in Studio 2 - **5.30pm** Presentation from Tablehurst community supported farm - **6.30pm** bring and share supper followed by party

Would you like to be on the core group?

Please consider putting yourself or another member forward to become part of the core group. For each nomination we need 2 members to support the nomination (other than the person being nominated).

The core group takes day to day responsibility for Stroud Community Agriculture, ensuring we follow the principles as well as we can, and following the direction set by members. For example, we sort out insurance, look after the finances, agree how to set about new projects, look at upcoming opportunities and problems, decide which land to use, etc. We have a businesslike meeting lasting all evening once a month, and most of us do a few hours of voluntary work in between. We (mostly!) find it engaging and good work.

Most of the current core group have been closely involved since the beginning. The group has been steady and stable. But now is a good time for new blood, and we expect some of the existing group to be replaced at the AGM on Saturday 5th March. If you are interested in this role and would like to find out more, you're welcome to come and see what the meetings are like, or to talk to existing core group people to help you decide. The members will decide at the AGM who will be on the core group, hopefully by consensus, or otherwise by vote.

Tuesday Collections

Tuesday is the day when we do all the picking and packing. On a good day we are ready by late afternoon but on the more difficult days we can still be getting things ready at 5 or 6 o'clock. When people turn up before this time to collect their veg it makes our job all the more difficult so I would like to ask you to not come before 6 if at all possible.

I have also been thinking around the idea of having two different collection periods each week, say a Tuesday evening to Thursday collection time and a Friday evening to Monday collection time. This would be particularly relevant in the summer as we have to pick some crops two or three times a week and therefore you would get fresher produce.

However it would mean that you would have less flexibility as to your collection times. I would welcome any feed back to this idea.

Mark.

Other things going on at Hawkwood

Hawkwood College brochure is now out, and you can request a copy by email at info@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk. See also the college web-site at www.hawkwoodcollege.co.uk. Members might be interested in the course Greg Pillely is holding "Local Food - Taking Control" on 10th September, Marko Pogacnik's course "The Miracle of the Regenerating Earth", 25-30 June, and Jade Bashford's course "Live Your Dreams" on 16th July. Of course, there are many more that should be tempting as well! Work on the Pond and Wetland system continues, located at the bottom of the valley. This is going to provide an ecological wastewater treatment system, fitting in with the ethos of ecological and educational work on the land. Anyone interested in further information can contact Richard (richard@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk) or Katie (katie@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk) at the college, and you are welcome at anytime to have a walk around the college grounds.

Planning for the future of our project

With over 20 people on the waiting list for a vegetable share we needed to do some planning. This article (on three pages) summarises the planning process so far and gives details of what we have committed to do. It also highlights what needs doing by other volunteers; either individually or as part of a work group.

We started by having a 'conversation café' linked to our harvest supper on 1st October. Fifty people there came up with over 150 ideas for the future of our project. If you would like to see the full list ask **Nick (01453 840037)**.

The core group then went through the list of ideas and selected suggestions that we felt could be used as a starting point for a more formal planning meeting on Thursday 14th October. We tried to focus on the ideas and suggestions that would affect the long-term direction of the project. We set aside the very general ideas, and the most detailed ideas in the hope that these can be picked up by anyone with the enthusiasm to make them happen – regardless of the long-term direction of the project. These are some of the ideas that are just waiting for someone to volunteer to do them.....!

Empower group members, take advantage of what they can offer, skills bank - Tea and coffee in the packing shed, blackboard for people to offer events/projects & advertise offers e.g. 'shall I arrange the bonfire night?' etc. - More emails, email reminder of work days - Letters page in newsletter - Walled garden at Stroud Museum for more land - Is there a group of people around Nailsworth who could form a new C.S.A? - Do any members have large gardens we could grow veg in? - Seasonal celebrations of the land - Guest speakers/gardeners question time/ talks/panel for general questions - Food integrity group - More camping events

(also in winter?) - Badger watch, barn dance, farm rides, maze - Chutney/jam making sessions, compost

making day, corn dollies - Another pig processing day - Seed collecting days - Woodcraft folk visits - The farm as a family, hang out space - Children's garden club - Recipe exchange especially for glut produce - We could learn some songs at the beginning of work days and have a go at singing while we work (optional of course!) - Help with honey-harvesting, honey soap making then a communal starlit bath with all the soap - Sweetcorn and

apple festival, 'Sweetcorn and Scrumpy' pick the sweetcorn & cook in their leaves over the fire, maybe we could

continue it with an activity like flour trail instead of fox hunt - Talks for lay people on a global scale, putting the ideology into global context, grounding it - More use of gift box, exchanging home grown produce - Could we provide space for people to meet in the evenings - Evening events, music, cook a meal using surpluses and invite the wider community

Publicise seasonal food - Social hot tub under the stars - Art work on the farm, e.g. sculpture - Making donations, fund for small capital items - Different size tools, ladies, children - Raised beds, easier access - Record volunteer hours -

Why not go up to Hawkwood twice a week, once for your share, once for P.Y.O. a few days later, that way your veg is fresher and there are more visits to the farm - How can we work with the wider community, encourage more

community supported agriculture projects, link with schools, run days focused on farm events, advertise & invite the wider

community - Find out what common interests members have - Share information on who uses cars to pick up veg, facilitate sharing arrangements, encourage people to pick up for each other, produce a map showing a cluster of members

If anyone would like to look into or set up any of these projects, please let the core group know.

Sixteen people came to the planning meeting on 14th October. We used a very structured process to decide which ideas we wanted to include in the plan and by when we wanted them to happen.

These are the ideas that the meeting decided not to include in the plan: Deliver vegetables, Don't undertake any major changes this year, Help a sister farm start up. We will not proactively do this, although we will be happy to respond to requests for support. Appoint a fundraising officer. We would rather have a volunteer. Buy in lots of produce

The table on the next page shows the ideas that the planning group decided should happen and when.

The bits in **bold** need volunteers to help make them happen. It was also decided to keep the number of veg shares at 100 for one growing season unless we take on more land.

Eleven of the ideas in the table were still undecided at the end of the planning meeting. Some people wanted to include them in the plan, some didn't. The core group has since made recommendations about them and included some of them in the table. If anyone feels strongly that they need further discussion by the wider membership, please let us know. The ones the core group decided to leave out of the planning process are

- 1) Buy in lamb – we don't want a commercial arrangement for this but see "relationships with other producers" in the table.
- 2) Set up wholefood co-op – we decided that this was beyond main remit of the farm but if any members have a practical plan, it could work. None of the present core group wants to set up a wholefood co-op. There is one already in Stroud.
- 3) Get involved with politics, and education about land reform - we decided that we are not a campaign group. Our job is leading by example and we are happy to be used as an example
- 4) Set up 'meat share' scheme, paying up front – we decided not to change the current meat system, which seems to work fine.

Planning For The Future Of Our Project

Summary of the planning process so far

What?	By when?	Who?	Action
Maintain the social side	June 05	Work group	Anyone willing to be part of a group to coordinate socials?
Produce more, buy in less	June 05	Farmers	The veg growing area will increase by 50% in Spring 05. The polytunnels will be planted earlier in 2005 than they were in 2004. We hope to be able to produce enough veg for 100 people by Summer 05
Investigate Land Trusts	June 05	Greg	Greg is working on this. Contact him for more details or if you want to help.
Long-term financial planning	June 05	Core group	This table and our existing business plan will evolve into a 5-year plan that will include budgets and cashflow forecasts.
Nature conservation	June 05	Laurence and us all	See article in this newsletter. Come to the meeting.
Set up voluntary work groups	June 05	Us all	See bold items in this table. Janet Smithson has been researching members' interests so knows who might help with what.
Involve people and manage volunteers	June 05	Core group	We will coordinate the work groups as they set up. Suggestions to the core group welcome.
Relationships with other producers	June 05	Farmers	We have already linked up with Jan Diamond for eggs, Wick Court for cheese and Hawkwood for apples. We are open to other suitable links.
Develop our co-op rules	June 05	Greg and Bernard	Greg and Bernard are working on this. Contact them for more details or if you want to help.
Run a new education project	June 05	Simon	See article in this newsletter. Come to the meeting.
Provide a building that could be a meeting space, lock-up for tools, café?	June 05	Core group plus anyone else	We might be able to get grant funding for this. Contact the core group if you would like to help with the planning.
Activities for children	December 2006	Work group	Anyone willing to be part of a group to coordinate this?
Lease more land for veg near Hawkwood	December 2006	Core group	We want to increase the proportion of the veg share that is grown at Hawkwood. We also want to reduce the waiting list. We will look at options to lease as well as buying with a land trust.
Composting project	December 2006	Work group	Anyone willing to be part of a group to look at possibilities for this?
Egg production	December 2006	Farmers	There are plans afoot....! Contact the farmers if you would like to help.

Woodland management	December 2006	Core group	We will liase with Hawkwood about this
Long-term agreement with Hawkwood	December 2006	Core group	Depending on our growth plans we will liase with Hawkwood about this.
Grow flowers	December 2006	Work group	The core group decided not to include flowers as part of the vegetable shares, but we would like more flowers as a landscape effect. Anyone willing to be part of a group to look at possibilities for this?
Fruit growing	December 2009	Jade Work group	We need to decide what to grow and where to grow it. This will need a work group. Contact Jade if you are interested.
Community cafe	December 2009	Core group plus anyone else	See notes above re. building that could be a meeting space, lock-up for tools, café?
Dairy herd	December 2009	Farmers	Depending on finding the right resources
Produce lamb	December 2009	Farmers	

Community Celebration and AGM - Saturday 5th March – everyone welcome – children's events planned

Our annual celebration will have three parts. At 2.30pm there will be a guided walk over the farm starting from the barn. At 3.30pm we will start the meeting in Studio 2 with a review the farm and its activity. There will be reports from the Core Group, the various parts of the farm and the community events of the last year. After a financial report, we will then move on to consider next year's budget, look at development plans and elect Core Group members.

Core group elections

Please consider putting yourself or another member forward to become part of the core group (see details on page 4). For each nomination we need 2 members to support the nomination (other than the person being nominated).

At 5.30pm there will be a presentation from **Tablehurst & Plawhatch** community supported agriculture project. This has a co-operative structure too but differs in that its land is held in a trust and co-op members purchase their produce through the farm shop. It is a very successful enterprise that has regularly won commendations in the Organic Food Awards. The presentation will be followed by time for questions and a discussion.

At 6.30pm we will have a bring and share supper together leading into a bring and share social evening. We hope to have music, singing and perhaps a story. To make it a rich and varied evening, everyone is encouraged to bring a contribution. It might be music, poetry or even a skit. There may even be folks out there (heaven forbid) who want to poke fun at the core group! Whatever your inclination, an artistic or funny contribution is eagerly awaited.

Children

The many children who form part of our community farm have also been included in this event. A special programme is being prepared to run parallel with the meeting and presentations. It will include outdoor activities starting in the barn at 3.30pm and story telling inside later. The evening celebration will be for everyone together.

Full programme details will be pinned up in the vegetable shed nearer the time. Everything will all take place at Hawkwood.

If you would like to contribute something to the evening, have other suggestions for the event or would like more information please contact:

Bernard Jarman Tel. 01453 757436 or email:bernardnkarin@phonecoop.coop

Janet Smithson – My year on the farm.

As I write I am approaching the end of my year's contract with Stroud Community Agriculture.

My first day in January 2004 started wielding a large knife amongst the leeks. Later, I helped Mark put together 40 salad bags and I got a feel for how much work goes into putting everything together. I have watched the new piglets and calves growing and enjoyed Laurence's party trick –Laurence and Dulcie the singing pig.

Mark, Laurence and Sarah have made a huge contribution to the enjoyment of my work. They have helped in lots of ways, spared time when they were busy and rescued me from challenging agricultural questions. They have been fun to be with, thank you.

Over the year a lot of people visited the farm. There were two big events at Hawkwood College, The Hawkwood open day, when hundreds of people visited the farm, and the Festival of Mind Body and Spirit. We had a stand at the Festival, and successfully recruited so many new members, that we had to start a waiting list for vegetable shares. Thank you to Katie Lloyd and Richard Brinton at Hawkwood College, who have given me generous support throughout the year.

In January last year we had 43 members and we now have 110, and a waiting list for vegetable shares. This is exciting because we have achieved our increase in membership we may now move on to different projects with some momentum.

My position as part time Membership Development worker has been funded by a grant for the SEED lottery fund. This funding has helped the farm grow but has now come to an end.

Over the year I have made many friends and met many interesting people. I have enjoyed the diversity of my work and will miss it. The community events such as the Harvest Supper were well-attended and great fun.

I have had terrific support from Jade and the rest of the Core group and look forward to seeing Stroud Community Agriculture move from strength to strength.

I personally have nothing specific lined up- I am open to ideas and interested in new projects. I will continue to be involved in the farm as a volunteer. Over the next six months I plan to gain sailing experience and qualify as a Dinghy Instructor, which is something I have wanted to do for a long time.

What is Stroud Community Agriculture?

We have about 100 members who share the costs of running a 23-acre organic farm at Wick Street, near Stroud. Two farmers and an apprentice work with us. The farmers are paid a fair wage and the farm works for the principles above, not for profit. Members can work on the farm if they wish, but this is not compulsory. They can also use the land for celebrations and social events, and we often come together for work days, bonfires, picnics, meetings etc. We are a co-op and the members decide collectively how to run the farm. A 'core group' of members undertake most of the organising. Members share the produce and receive a weekly box of vegetables. This is a quote from a new member "[I just received my first bag of vegetables and they are great and bursting with health](#)". We have some pigs and cattle for meat and hope to expand towards a 100-acre farm for eggs, milk, bread, fruit, and other produce. Members agree to support the principles below, and pay different contributions according their means and how much food they would like.

Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members.

We work to the following principles:

- To** support organic and biodynamic agriculture.
- To** pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk and ensure that the farmers have a decent livelihood.
- To** be fully inclusive. Low income shall not exclude anyone.
- To** encourage practical involvement on all levels.
- To** be transparent in all our affairs.
- To** make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible.
- To** strive towards social justice.
- To** offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.
- To** network with others to promote CSA to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).
- To** encourage CSA members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations
- To** develop a non-exclusive sense of community around the farm.

Stroud Community Agriculture contacts:

General Enquiries & Information

Janet Smithson - Tel: 0845 4580814 **Email:** info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Stroud Community Agriculture core group

Bernard Jarman: 01453 757436 bernardnkarin@phonecoop.coop

Jade Bashford - 01453 885233 - jadebashford@hotmail.com

Greg Pilley - 01453 885233 - gpilley@soilassociation.org

Simon Charter - 01453 755614

Laurence Dungworth - 01453 753768 - 0779 901 5499

laurencedungworth@yahoo.co.uk

Mark Harrison - 01453 753866 – mark@plumtucker.co.uk

Nick Weir 01453 840037 - nick.weir@freeuk.com

The National Lottery and the Social, Economic & Environmental Development Programme

In December 2003 Stroud Community Agriculture received a £20,200 National Lottery grant from the £15.3 million Social, Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) Programme, for its Growing Home project. The SEED Programme, managed by the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) and 11 consortium partners, distributes National Lottery money on behalf of the New Opportunities Fund, under its Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities funding programme.

The SEED Programme aims to stimulate local economic development and support community enterprise, promoting sustainability and helping disadvantaged communities improve the quality of their environment. For more information visit RSNC's website: www.rsnc.org/seed