



Heathfield News



"A not for profit organisation benefitting the local community"

2008 Heathfield & District Agricultural Show was the biggest and best ever



The Council and Show Committees of the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show spent many anxious weeks in the early months of this year worrying whether Blue Tongue and the promised new vaccine would be ready in time for the Show. Every week updates were being issued by DEFRA about the launch date of the new vaccine and how this would effect the Protection and Surveillance zones put into force around England, Wales and Scotland, but no mention was ever made about the implications this would have on agricultural shows in general and our Show in particular. A whole raft of agricultural events had taken place in 2007 without cattle or sheep Shows and indeed, many events had been completely cancelled because of the spreading disease. The fear was that all agricultural shows in 2008 would fall victim to the same sad fait.

Meanwhile, the 'Show Must Go On!' So, planning continued for the 2008 Show with contingencies being put in place in case we too had to cancel our Sheep and Cattle Show. It was decided to re-introduce the Pig Classes which had been absent from the Show

for at least 15 years. Alternative uses were put in place for the Livestock area to the south of the Showground and slowly an emergency plan emerged. As the weeks went by and Show day approached rumours were rife about new outbreaks of Blue Tongue within the Surveillance Zone which had been declared for our area. The concern was that farmers wouldn't wish to risk bringing their cattle from within the region to the Show if there was a possibility that they might encounter the disease. The



vaccine was released on schedule, no new outbreaks were declared, entries for the Livestock shows came in, and everybody breathed a huge sigh of relief.

The importance of the Cattle, Sheep and now Pig shows on the atmosphere at the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show cannot be under estimated. It is the whole *raison d'être* of this one day event and they ensure this traditional agricultural show maintains its roots in the community in which we live. The Show continues as a 'must do' in

the diaries of country loving people both locally and from far and wide. Events throughout Show day included the grand parade of livestock, the horse show, working steam, Country Ways, the shopping arcades, Jason Smythe and his adrenalin tour with the Shetland Pony Grand National, a Flower Show and many more attractions. In addition, there were 10 sheep, cattle, pig and horse competition rings being used throughout the morning and early afternoon to ensure there was plenty for all the family to see and do.

On the 8th August DEFRA announced, to the relief of all farmers, that the Bluetongue Surveillance Zones were all to be amalgamated within England and the whole country is now within one Protection Zone. This was enabled by the vaccination of all the 'at risk' animals and therefore there is now free movement of livestock again around England. Hopefully this will mean that the 2009 Show will be able to take place without any concerns on this front ever again! *[Editor's note: Wishful thinking I fear!]*



Did you hear about the Pig and the Sunburn?

The 10 day weather forecast prior to the 2008 Heathfield Show was "a warm, dry, but cloudy day". The Organisers of the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show were probably alone in hoping that the sun wouldn't be shining too brightly on Saturday, 24th May, the date for the 2008 Show.

With the return of a Pig competition, after a 15 years absence, the Pig Secretary was worried that if it was too sunny the animals would suffer from sunburn. "This is common in the white non pigmented breeds, some of which can be highly



susceptible to ultra violet radiation. As our pig showing rings are outside the last thing we want is the sun beating down." she reported.

The return of the Pig Show was heralded

as a welcome success and will continue as a feature at the Show for some time to come. There was always, traditionally, a Pig presence at the Show but with the decline of pig farming in our region the class sizes reduced and eventually the whole Section was dropped. It is a sign of our times and the agricultural industry of our area that we are once again able to introduce Pigs to the Heathfield Show and hopefully over the next few years increase the number of classes we run. They always attract a lot of visitor attention and intrigue.

'What the Media are reporting'



Farmers say there is too much emphasis on the environment at the expense of food production, happening at a time when rising food and fuel prices have made British agriculture all the more important.

The Heathfield Show has always attracted thousands of people who have no connection to farming, indeed it couldn't survive financially without them. Enjoying a musical lunch in the warm summer's sunshine makes for an enjoyable day out. But in the marquees and around the show

ground business still goes on, a rare chance to chat with colleagues where isolation is often part of the working day. After the continual disease led blows of last year there is a lot of optimism with a vaccine for Blue Tongue and a new public appreciation of the value of food.

But this optimism does not extend into Government. Targets have been imposed upon Defra by the Government Treasury and there is no emphasis at all on the productive capacity of agriculture and too much worrying about new regulations and how we perform within Europe. How this helps us to be better placed for producing food in a world more uncertain than we have seen for a very long time is a mystery.

After months of rocketing grain prices cereal farmers eye up the displays of expensive new equipment. For livestock the picture is less rosy. Their costs have increased sharply with no commensurate

rise of prices in the shops. And there is near certainty amongst the farmers that the Government will not sanction a cull of badger to prevent the spread of TB.

At the time of writing the world is going through perhaps the worst crisis in the financial markets that has ever been experienced. How this will affect the agricultural industry it is now known, but one thing is certain, everybody's lifestyles will under go significant changes. Some of the changes may be for the better, hopefully it will cement in people's minds the needs to be more locally based, use our cars less, rely on our local resources to sustain our lifestyles perhaps? Whatever happens, preparations for the next Heathfield Show are getting underway and we look forward to welcoming you on the Showground on Saturday 23rd May 2009, all things being equal.

Heathfield Show publicity

The Internet continues to be an important market place for publicising events and the Heathfield Show, too, has welcomed the advent of new technology to better publicise itself and make available more facilities to people wishing to be involved in the Show as exhibitors, guests, members and even volunteers. The hosting of the web site has been taken over by one of our long time volunteers, Andrew Player. He has always been involved in the design and operation of our Internet site but with ongoing problems with our Internet Service Provider he has now kindly taken on the hosting of the site as well.

Over the next few months there will be changes to the information available on the web pages for the Heathfield Show and we are working towards being able to provide web viewers with facilities to be able to purchase advanced tickets on-line at the very least. Already we have the facility to download schedules for the Cattle, Horse, Sheep, Flower Show, and Vintage Tractor schedules. It is hoped that we will also be able to place the Trade Stand entry forms and a more comprehensive list of trade stand holders with their relevant web links as well.

Keep an eye on our web pages as they expand during the coming months on www.heathfieldshow.org.

Show Photography

For the past couple of years we have been fortunate to have the magnificent support of the South East's specialist event show photographer Rick Peters and his Photo-Events team. The team of photographers rove around the Showground on Show day taking photographs and recording for prosperity everything that goes on throughout the day. The photographs are downloaded and are available on the web site for all to see and purchase after the event. Visit the web site www.photoevents.org.uk.



Think Food and Farming



Think Food and Farming is the exciting legacy project building on the successes of the Year of Food and Farming instigated by the Government in 2008. So much was achieved, particularly at a regional level, that it has been decided to continue to promote the activities and links which are helping children to understand more about where our food comes from and to involve them in memorable first hand learning experiences. Many new resources have been produced during the Year and it is hoped that this interest in engaging young people will continue. It is hoped schools will continue to take part in growing and cooking

activities and visits to farms for the opportunity to: find out how food is grown and produced; explore why food, and how we produce it, matters; make informed choices about food and healthy nutrition; discover what happens on a real-life farm; experience what the countryside can offer; learn more about environmental issues linked to food and the countryside.

The Heathfield Show Council has always been committed to these ideals. In 1947 when the Heathfield & District Agricultural Society was first affiliated and the Show Council was established, four key objectives were laid out:

- The encouragement of Agriculture and Horticulture generally
- Improvement in the Breeding and Rearing of Livestock
- To encourage the invention and improvement of Agricultural Implements and Machinery
- To advance education in agricultural and animal husbandry.

The Show Council will be continuing to promote its core objectives whilst working together with Think Food and Farming to offer assistance where possible in promoting these issues.

Heathfield & District Agricultural Show 2009 – The Monster Trucks Return!

The 2009 Show will take place on Saturday 23rd May 2009 at Little Tottingworth Farm, Broad Oak, Heathfield, East Sussex. Plans are well underway for the organisation of the 62nd annual show and as usual improvements are being put in place to ensure that Show day runs more efficiently than the last one.

After every show there is a ‘wash up’ meeting when every area of show day is scrutinised under a microscope to examine where weaknesses can be improved and successful areas of the Show repeated, where unnecessary



expense can be saved, and where safety can be enhanced.

It has been agreed that the main ring attraction for 2007 was such an

overwhelming success with the Show going public that we should re-book the Monster Trucks for the 2009 Show. The Secretary has announced that he has secured this booking and Steve Murty will once more be bringing his ‘toy’ the Armageddon. This monster tank weighs in at 7 tonnes and will destroy anything in its path. So brace yourself for the noise and the excitement at the 2009 Show. Other new events at the Show will be announced as they are organised but one thing is for sure, the 2009 Show will once again be the place to be.

New Look Membership

The Show Council have reviewed the membership for the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show and have decided to rationalise the existing membership categories and to introduce a third category – a family membership.

The benefits of membership include:

- Free admission to the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show if subscription paid prior to the Show;
- Free admission to the Members’ Enclosure with use of the Members’ marquee catering and lawn with a view over the Main Ring and showground;
- Car parking in the Forward Car Park on Show day; (not guaranteed after 10am)

- Reduced exhibitors’ entry fees;
- Right to attend and vote at general Meetings of the Association;
- Right to apply for advance purchase of Members’ guest tickets; apply to Secretary
- Newsletters to keep you informed of events



The three categories are as follows:

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP £18

- 1 Member’s Admission Badge
- 1 Member’s Car Pass

DUAL MEMBERSHIP £30

- 2 Member’s Admission Badges
- 1 Member’s Car Pass

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP £36

- 2 Member’s Admission Badges
- 2 Junior Admission tickets (5–16yr)
- 1 Member’s Car Pass

If you would like to become a member of the Heathfield & District Agricultural Show, or give a gift membership to a friend or relative for Christmas, please fill in the form on the back page of this news letter and return to the Show Secretary.

THE HEATHFIELD & DISTRICT 62ND AGRICULTURAL SHOW

Saturday 23rd May 2009

Little Tootingworth Farm, Broad Oak, Heathfield, East Sussex

Show Secretary, The Moorings, Pages Hill, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 0UU

Tel: 01435 864587 • Fax: 01435 865279

E-mail: secretary@heathfieldshow.org • www.heathfieldshow.org

Chairman's letter - Chairman's Report Autumn 2008

At the time of writing this report, it's now official, we are in an impending recession – the media have finally succeeded in talking us all into it. It therefore gives me great pleasure to assure you there is a far more positive attitude in the preparations for our 2009 Show and due to popular demand The Monster Trucks will be back.

All the committees are in good form continually looking at ways to improve within their various sections.

After a few teething problems the reintroduction of Pig classes was a great success thanks to the Sheep committee, the South of England Show and some local pig experts. To enable this area of the Show to expand and to maintain cost, rather than form a separate section, it will be amalgamated and becomes the Sheep & Pig Committee and plans are well under way for the introduction of further classes. The new fence and extra width of roadway in front of the Cattle building met with approval. And the new permanent fencing, kindly supplied by Littlewoods, helps control the area on Show day. The number of Livestock entries obviously dictates the lay out of the ground in this area so hopefully we will be back to a 'full house' in both the Cattle and Sheep sections next year.

The ever popular Horse Show continues to thrive, so much so that we are in need of some help with stewarding on the day.

If you feel you could assist and become part of the Horse Steward team please phone our Show Secretary, Nigel Wilson on 01435 864587 for more information.



The Ground Committee, with the support of local organisations, and of course the fortuitous good weather (long may it last), helped make a marked improvement to the overall traffic flow and parking. Moving the Members complex back nearer the top hedge was deemed to have improved the general layout by opening up rings 1 and 2.

A great debt of thanks must go to the Wealden Craftworkers on their first year at the Show, with over 30 quality stalls. This area of the Show has been sadly lacking in past years but the Craft Marquee in 2008 was superb. Their 'Made in Sussex' marquee will be back in 2009. The Flower Marquee once again had some amazing exhibits and continues to be a very popular part of the overall Show.

The Country Ways area continues to expand with its country pursuits, old and new, plus some more additions participating in 09. As far as the catering is concerned the 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' policy has been taken and therefore the providers will remain the same as in 2009. The Sponsorship/Membership contributions were an essential part of the Show income, without these and volunteer help, the Show would not exist, so we cannot thank our members enough. Hopefully as a company or an individual you have benefited from your involvement within the Show and we look forward, in anticipation, to your continuing invaluable support now and in the future.

We would be delighted to see any Members at the Horam Inn for our 61ST AGM on 24th November 2008 at 8pm. As you know, Mr Gordon Fowle MBE, having served his 3 year term of office as our President, retires this year. Thank you, Gordon, for being such a great support, not only to myself but overall to the Show. Nima Reid, as our Vice President, has already attended meetings and is looking forward to her new role as President. Can I congratulate everyone on the success of last year, thank you to Tootingworth Farms for the use of their farm. With the dedication, support, time and expertise given by so many we can look forward to another memorable day at Heathfield Show in 2009.

Yours,
Sue Watson

THE 2009 HEATHFIELD & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SHOW

Membership Renewal/Application Form

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss Initial: Surname

Address

..... Postcode

Telephone Mobile E mail

(If you have moved home within the last 12 months, please indicate here:.....)

INDIVIDUAL £18 **DUAL** £30 **FAMILY** £36 I require a receipt (Please tick)

[For office use only (receipt no)]

I/we agree that you may keep these details on the Show database and that I/we can ask at any time to see the details according to the Data Protection Act.

SIGNED: **DATE:**

Heathfield & District Agricultural Show, The Moorings, Pages Hill, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 0UU • Telephone: 01435 864587