

**Minutes of the
Farm Woodland Forum
Annual General Meeting
18 May 2015
at Organic Research Centre, Elm Farm,
Newbury, Berkshire**



Present Mike Strachan (Chairman), Paul Burgess (Secretary), John Holland (Treasurer), Bill Acworth, Noora Ahmed, William Considine, Mary Crossland, Anil Graves, Payiz Ibrahim, Ian Lane, Gerry Lawson, David Pilbeam, Mark Malins, Jim McAdam, Ian Short, Jo Smith, Terry Thomas, Matt Upson, James Walmsley and Kevin Wells

Apologies: Tim Pagella, Ewan Nugent.

The meeting started at 8.00 p.m, chaired by Mike Strachan.

1) Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM of 13 May 2014 at Schumacher College, Dartington, Devon, which are posted on the Forum's website (www.agroforestry.ac.uk) were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

2) Matters arising on the minutes

14/05. John Holland had made the one-off payment to EURAF on 6 June 2014. A loudhailer system had been purchased for the field visit at the Organic Research Centre.

3) Chairman's report, Mike Strachan

Mike discussed the current state of agroforestry policy across the four nations in the UK.

"In the UK, it would appear that only Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are supporting these measures and despite some very positive reports on the benefits of agroforestry in England, the shutters remain down. Recent discussions that I have had with Dominic Driver – Head of Grants and Regulations has however indicated that the key for the door has not been thrown away and they are keen to monitor the situation both within the UK and across Europe. As a result I have agreed to update him on the outcome of this conference and to provide information that might help to take the key out of the pocket.

In Scotland we are aware of the benefits of woodlands for shelter and that there is currently 21,000+ hectares of woodland being claimed as woodland grazing. While I am sure that this only represents a small proportion of all the woodlands currently open to grazing, there is obviously a significant number of land managers who recognise the benefit of the shelter but have never heard of agroforestry. The woodlands are there, the animals like them, feeding costs are reduced and the farmer is happy. It therefore begs the question – is agroforestry the wrong term for

landowners to understand? Is this something that could or should be considered in England?

In Scotland, we are also working a lot more on a collaborative approach to land management, and utilising the services of the agricultural machinery rings – a trusted body that provide services to farmers. In Scotland farm membership of the NFU is about 35% of registered farmers; membership of machinery rings is about 40%. Through the machinery rings we are able to demonstrate a profit from woodland management, and the machinery rings also provide guaranteed markets for timber, particularly to the biomass sector. How many farms are on mains gas? How many farms have trees? There is a significant untapped resource here, and a huge volume of timber currently not being brought to market. When the UK had a deep mining industry there were numerous small sawmills across the country and many small scale harvesting machines. With the demise of the coal industry, a significant rural industry was also destroyed. We currently have very large Scandinavian style sawmills being supplied with timber felled and extracted by purpose built machinery, and as a result small scale has gone, but we are seeing an increase in interest and also in the skills training being provided”.

Mark Malins noted that the use of trees on farms in England was also being hampered by a lack of engagement by groups representing farmers. It was desirable for members of the Farm Woodland Forum, particularly farmers, to explain to such organisations how trees can be a key component of farm businesses.

Action: all Farm Woodland Forum members

4) Secretary’s report, Paul Burgess

4.1. Website report

David Pilbeam reported that the Farm Woodland Forum website had 1882 users during 2014-15, undertaking 2203 sessions and 5367 page views. The activities during the year included keeping the site up to date with meeting information. He also reported that following new regulations regarding the eligibility for the ‘.ac’ domain, www.agroforestry.ac.uk was now registered with the Farm Woodland Forum. Previously it was with the Macaulay Institute, which in turn became the James Hutton Institute. Thanks were given to the James Hutton Institute, who host the website on one of their servers, and in particular to Andrew Thorburn who looks after this service.

4.2. AGFORWARD: an EU project on agroforestry

Paul explained that the goal of AGFORWARD research project, funded by the EU (2014-17) and co-ordinated by Cranfield University, is to promote agroforestry practices in Europe. The project has four objectives:

1. To understand the context and extent of agroforestry in Europe;
2. To identify, develop and field-test innovations through four participatory networks;
3. To evaluate innovative agroforestry designs and practices at field-, farm- and landscape-scales;
4. To promote the wider adoption of appropriate agroforestry systems in Europe through policy development and dissemination

He provided a brief update on the progress against these four objectives:

1. Context: an initial quantification of European agroforestry using existing data has been completed, and ICRAF has reported on agroforestry practices in parts of North Africa, where the climate is currently similar to that predicted for southern Spain.
2. Experiments and demonstrations: during 2014, the project established 40 stakeholder groups involving about 820 stakeholders across 13 European countries. The groups are arranged in four networks: existing systems of high nature and cultural value such as dehesa, montado and wood pasture (10 groups), grazing or intercropping in olive, fruit, walnut or chestnut systems (9 groups), and the integration of trees into arable (13 groups) and livestock systems (8 groups). Each group has produced a report available on the AGFORWARD website (www.agforward.eu). Analysis is still on-going but it appears that the production, environmental, and societal benefits of agroforestry are generally well recognised. The key negative issues often revolve around management, administration, labour costs, and issues of complexity.
3. Evaluation of agroforestry designs and practices at field- and landscape-scale: this component has not really started to report.
4. Policy development and dissemination: the project has started to evaluate agroforestry-related policies within the 2007-2013 CAP and rural development programmes. The website (www.agforward.eu) includes a web-page for each stakeholder group, a news page, and an interactive on-line European map linked to each group. The project has launched a Facebook page and has circulated four electronic newsletters to 500 people across Europe with an interest in agroforestry. Paul encouraged Farm Woodland Forum members to link to the AGFORWARDs Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AgforwardProject>).

4.3. European Agroforestry Federation and 3rd European Agroforestry Conference

The EURAF membership fee for 2015 remains at 10 Euros for a member of a national institution (such as the Farm Woodland Forum), with the understanding that the minimum contribution from the members of a national institution will be 100 Euros.

The 3rd European Agroforestry Conference is currently planned to take place in Montpellier between Wednesday 25 and Friday 27 May 2016 (with an AGFORWARD meeting taking place on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 May 2016).

During the meeting, it was noted that Mike Strachan and Jo Smith are currently the UK representatives on EURAF, but they noted that they were often unable to attend the Skype meetings. However it was noted that Jo had played significant roles in describing UK policy. It was also noted that Gerry Lawson was now the Vice-Chairman of EURAF.

4.4. JISCMail contact list and activity

As of 15 May 2015, there were 199 contacts on the Farm Woodland Forum JISCMail list, down 3 from last year. Use of the JISCMail service (79 postings) was double that in the previous year. The topics covered included agroforestry policy and visits.

4.5. Interim Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee had a telephone conference meeting on 5 March 2015, primarily to discuss the annual meeting.

4.6. Charity Commission: Annual Return and Trustee Update Form

The 2013-14 Charity Commission Annual Return and Trustee Update form was submitted on 31 July 2014.

5) Treasurer and Member Secretary's report, John Holland

5.1 Accounts

John Holland presented the Forum's accounts from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. The balance on 1 April 2014 was £5136.63. The closing balance for the end of the year was £5190.47. The accounts had yet to be independently checked.

Action: John Holland

Statement of the account from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

		Amount (£)
Opening balance (1 April 2015)		5136.63
Income	FWF Conference fees, FWF and EURAF subscriptions	1683.00
	Sub-total	1683.00
Expenditure	Costs of 2014 Meeting at Dartington	544.00
	Attendance of Chairman at EURAF Conference	500.00
	Transfer of EURAF membership fees	133.40
	One-off payment to EURAF	421.76
	Two bank charges (for EURAF payments)	30.00
	Sub-total	1629.16
Closing balance (31 March 2015)		5190.47

Ian Lane asked if it was possible to Gift Aid subscriptions to the Farm Woodland Forum. John reported that it was not cost-effective with the amounts involved.

5.2 Lynton Incoll Scholarship

It was noted that there were no applications for the Lynton Incoll Scholarship for 2015. In 2016 there would be a Farm Woodland Forum Meeting in Northern Ireland, and there would also be the 3rd European Agroforestry Conference in Montpellier, France from 25 to 27 May 2016. It was agreed that the Farm Woodland Forum would offer £400 towards travel and conference costs for a student to present a presentation or poster at the Conference in Montpellier, and £200 towards travel and conference costs for a different student to make a presentation at the Northern Ireland meeting. The successful students would be expected to write a report for the website.

5.3 Membership

Farm Woodland Forum membership fees for 2014-2015 were received from 32 people (26 ordinary members and 6 student members). Membership fees for EURAF (2014) were received from 14 members during the 2014/15 financial year.

5.4 Membership fees for 2015-2016

In view of the state of the accounts, it was proposed that the annual subscription for an ordinary and student member be maintained at £10 and £1 respectively.

The meeting thanked John for his continuing work as treasurer.

6) Election of the Executive Committee

The Constitution of the Forum states that Executive Committee members must seek election after three years. Gerry Lawson, Jim McAdam, David Pilbeam, Ian Short, Tim Pagella and James Walmsley were last elected in 2012.

At the meeting, Gerry Lawson, Jim McAdam, David Pilbeam, Ian Short, James Walmsley and Terry Thomas offered themselves for election. The election was unanimously agreed by those present.

7) Future meetings

a) 2016 Forum Meeting: Northern Ireland

Jim McAdam confirmed that he is happy to host the 2016 Farm Woodland Forum meeting in Northern Ireland. The date for the meeting would probably be in the week starting 20 June 2016. The meeting would include some of the results from the AGROCOP and AGFORWARD projects, as well as work on ash and ash dieback.

b) 2017 Forum Meeting

John Holland proposed that the 2017 meeting could be held at Crianlarich in Scotland.

8) Any other business

Mike Strachan thanked Jo Smith for organising the 2015 meeting at Elm Farm. The AGM closed at 9.10 pm.

Paul Burgess,
11 June 2015