

Cyrenians Farm Autumn Newsletter 2010

Hello folks, that's another three months gone and time for an update...



When I left work at the start of September to take a couple of weeks off the weather was still warm and wet, the bees were still buzzing about, the swallows had just fledged from the old hen coup and there were flowers everywhere. We were still enjoying the last of the summer crops and salads were on menus all over town. I've come back to the farm now and the seasons have clearly changed. There is a nip in the air, crops are being planted for next season, the apples are nearly all picked (the farm favourites this year are Ellison Orange and Golden Pippin), the pumpkins have been lifted and the jam and chutney making season is well under way. We're stocking up on our popular lip balm and getting things moving for the festive season with plans for hampers and gifts. Watch our website (www.cyreniansfarm.org.uk/shop) for details of offers, deliveries and gifts for the winter.

The change of season also saw a full shift in the Future Jobs team at the farm; out went Jack, Liam, Daniel and Malky who all successfully completed placements with us and in came Amy, Steven, Daniel H and Jamie. The new team has now settled and is getting down to the nitty-gritty with the regular autumn jobs of raspberry maintenance, weeding, digging, mulching and repairing. As ever, we are getting some regular help from young people who stay at the [Cyrenians Communities](#) and who manage to find time in their schedules to help with the chickens, sale of produce and team challenges. Our young residents are often involved in activities outside the farm with organisations such as Venture Scotland and Fairbridge but most find time to help us out where they can. Helping us on the farm gives our residents an opportunity to learn a little about life in the work place, horticulture and the environment.



Team Challenges:

At this time of year Team Challenges from our Corporate partners usually become sparse as folk coorie down in their offices, batten down the hatches and prepare for frosts, blizzards and strong winds. This year, however, we'll be seeing teams from the Scottish Parliament, B SkyB and a couple of others as a few brave souls adhere to the old adage that 'there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing'.



One example of a completed team challenge is the excellent work done by a team from Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) who helped us to build a brand new chicken arc on the farm. The arc will be used to expand our chicken flock and train our young team to use professional apparatus.

Historically chickens have been kept in sheds on the farm but new plans have the sheds a space for older birds. The young heavy laying birds will be kept in these arcs where egg collection is easier and cleaner. For those who don't know - imagine a chicken arc as a giant Ikea flat pack with around 1000 separate parts, mismatched instructions and no pre drilled holes. Then imagine a team of twenty or so people building said flat pack.

The good team work and coordination from the PwC guys meant that this complicated and difficult task was completed within two days (except a little tweaking) and was ready for the new chickens well ahead of schedule. We have just received delivery of the birds for this arc, 50 'Hyline Browns' from John Retson. The birds are settling in well and should soon start to lay - boosting our egg production over the winter months. This clearly has a massive value to the farm and shows that involvement from large businesses and other organisations can make a huge difference to us.

There is a page on our website (<http://www.cyreniansfarm.org.uk/team/>) dedicated to Team Challenges and shows exactly how you and your team can come and help out. We are currently looking to book teams for the 2011 season and I will soon have a list of exciting new tasks for you to get involved in.

Volunteers:

I couldn't write this newsletter without acknowledging the hard work and commitment of one of our Volunteers – Liam Malarky.



Liam joined the team in June and has worked hard, 5 days a week in our kitchen preparing meals for the farm team, making jam and chutney and catering for team challenges. I met him through a shared interest in 'bushcraft' (also known as playing in the woods) and after a few bimbles and brews on the beach Liam offered to help me look after our wee stall at the Gardening Scotland event at Ingleston. The week after, Liam joined us on a more permanent basis via the A4E scheme. Liam had a vested interest in Cyrenians as a close relative of his had a lot of help via our Homelessness Prevention Service ([HPS](#)) and while he had been offered other opportunities he chose to come and work at the farm partly because of the family connection. Liam will soon be taking time on Fridays to provide cooking classes to the residents of the farm community.

In these times where budget cuts are being made and Government are trying to promote the idea of 'Big Society' Liam's generosity and response to the Cyrenians work shows clearly how folk can all help each other as the recession continues. To me, it is an example of how 'mucking in' is already happening at ground level without the need for clever branding from politicians. We have many other volunteers that help on the farm enterprise and every hour they commit to us is valued and appreciated. We don't have space here to thank them all individually but we will introduce others to you with each newsletter in the future.

If you would like to volunteer at the farm please call us on 0131 333 5202. We have a massive range of activities that you can contribute to from simply helping with admin in the office, through jam making to sowing and planting crops.

If you spend a whole day at the farm we can even ask Liam to cook you some lunch!

Sales and other news:

We still have some older birds that are ready to retire. We are keen to ensure that they enjoy a prolonged and happy life so for a small sum of £5 each we are selling them on. They currently produce about four eggs per week each which is not enough to be commercially valuable to us but will provide the best eggs you can get for your Sunday breakfast. If you would like a few birds or if you know someone who would then contact the farm staff on 0131 333 5202 or email rob@cyrenians.org.uk

We are also looking for '**Farm Champions**'. A farm champion is someone in a busy office who has 30 minutes a week to help us organise sales. The idea is that we let you know every week what we have for sale throughout the seasons, by sending you an email. You then circulate the email through your office, take orders from your friends and colleagues and collect the cash. We will deliver the goods to you to distribute to the people who placed orders and you pass their payments on to us. We think this is the simplest way to get the best food from the farm to you as fresh as possible. It means that at least one day a week you can leave work with some wonderful ingredients for supper without having to negotiate a busy supermarket. If you are interested in this simple approach give us a call at the farm on 0131 333 5202 and we'll let you know when we are passing your office and when we could deliver. We have had great success with this in several offices in town including HBOS and Anderson Strathearn. It'd be wise to contact us soon for this; we are going to have a busy year this year so you want to get your name on the list before the rush.

If you don't have the time to be a Champion you can still find our produce at retailers such as [Real Foods](#), [Earthy](#) and [Grow Wild](#) we will also be attending [Balerno Farmers Market](#).

Christmas gifts this year will include hampers, lip balms, preserves and 'Grow your own salad' kits. These will be available via the website and at the Farmers Market as winter approaches.



Warm regards from Rob and the farm team.

www.cyreniansfarm.org.uk


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Christmas Gifts 2010.



Cyrenians Chocolate hand made by the Chocolate Tree: £2.50

This chocolate is hand made in East Lothian and comes in four flavours, Dark chocolate with orange, Black forest on white chocolate, Fruit and nut on Milk chocolate and Cranberry on Dark chocolate.



Cyrenians Lip Balm: £3.00

This is hand made by us from beeswax produced in our own hives. It is flavoured with peppermint and is ideal for winter chapped lips. Each pot comes in an organza gift bag.

Cyrenians Farm Grow your own winter salad Kit: £6.50

Easy to grow leaves such as mustard, claytonia and mizuna packed with coir pots and compost for a simple grow your own salad kit. These leaves will grow well on a warm windowsill in the colder months.



Cyrenians Farm Raspberry Jam: £2.75

Our raspberry jam is in demand – no wonder as it is simply made from 60% fruit and 40% sugar.

Cyrenians Farm Christmas Chutney: £3.50

Lots of lovely produce from the farm and various spices and nice things go into this delicious chutney. It's best served with left over turkey for Christmas supper.

Cyrenians Farm preserve gift pack: £15.00

This consists of A bar from the chocolate tree, a jar of raspberry jam, a jar of chutney and a jar of one of our speciality apple jellies in a small hessian gift bag.



Cyrenians Farm Christmas Hamper: £45

The Christmas hampers we are bringing you this year have items from our own produce range as well as a few things you won't be able to buy on the super market shelves. They combine all of the single gift elements and the extras are very special this year:

A grow your own winter salad kit, Cyrenians Farm luxurious raspberry jam, Cyrenians Farm Christmas Chutney, Cyrenians Farm Lip Balm, Zapatista Coffee (from a Mexican social enterprise), 2 bars of

Cyrenians chocolate from the Chocolate Tree, organic cranberry biscuits from Against the Grain, Scottish blueberry juice from 'Bouvrage' and some Scottish Heather Honey. All contained in a Cyrenians Farm hessian shopping bag.

FOR AN EXTRA £1.50 we will add some sprouts grown on the farm to your hamper. The sprouts will be fresh and available for pick up at one of the Cyrenians offices in time for Christmas.

You will be able to pre pay for any of these items via PayPal on our website. (www.cyreniansfarm.org.uk/shop) or pay by cash when you pick the gifts up. Call (0131) 333 52020 or email rob@cyrenians.org.uk to check for availability and to let us know which of the sites you would be able to pick the gifts up from. That could be the farm, Norton Park, Jane St, Bathgate or Falkirk.

ORDER SOON TO AVOID DISSAPOINTMENT. 😊


Cyrenians Farm