



Welcome to your Farm Cluster Newsletter

Here's what we've been up to in the last month - if you have any questions about the stories in this newsletter or suggestions for future articles, please contact:

[Ross Wingfield](#) or [Christine Meadows](#).

Regenerative agriculture

More farmers and land managers are getting interested in 'Regenerative Agriculture' as a way of farming that benefits the land and the environment. Many farmers, including some in the High Weald, are adopting this new approach that combines innovation with tradition - and it could transform the way we produce food.

So, what is it? At its heart, regenerative agriculture is a farming system that revitalizes the land and enriches the soil. It leads to healthy soils growing high quality, nutrient dense food using less chemical inputs. At the same time, it protects the land from soil erosion, improves water catchments and benefits wildlife and the natural biological processes above and below the ground.



Regenerative agriculture is a dynamic and integrated way of farming. It involves a range of farming practices such as no-till and min-till, agroforestry, cover crops and herbal leys, holistic planned (mob) grazing, and silvopasture. It leads to more productive farms and offers increased yields of food, fibre, and fuel. It has the potential to build resilience to changes in climate and increase income for farmers.

Regenerative agriculture events: We are planning several events on the theme, starting with a mob-grazing event on 8 May, see the Events section.

More on regenerative agriculture - reading and viewing:

[We need regenerative farming, not geoengineering](#), Charles Eisenstein, the Guardian.

[Regenerative agriculture can make farmers stewards of the land again](#), Stephanie Anderson, the Conversation.

[What is Regenerative Agriculture?](#) Regenerative Agriculture Initiative and the Carbon Underground.

[Regeneration of Our Lands: A Producer's Perspective](#), Gabe Brown, TED talk on Youtube.

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A request and an update

For those in Countryside Stewardship agreements: A request from Ross - please could you send him a copy of your Countryside Stewardship agreement map in whichever way is easiest, perhaps a scan or photo. He'd like to see landowners' options across the Cluster to make sure we're giving you the most useful training and guidance.

Deer management update: Our annual deer management event next month will look at deer managers as top predators. It will review best practice in landscape-scale deer management across the Farm Cluster with the Deer Initiative, Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission. And just a reminder that we have new [deer management guidance](#) on the High Weald website.

Free Farm Cluster events

- **8 May, 10.15am-3pm: Mob-grazing and soil health** at the Bear Inn, Burwash with light lunch, presentation from mob grazing practitioner Tom Chapman, and visit to Sam Newington's beef farm near Etchingham. [Book on Eventbrite](#).
- **16 May, 9.30am-1pm: Surveying your meadows: beginner's steps with expert help** at the King's Arms, Rotherfield with refreshments and a walk round the Millenium Green meadows. [Book on Eventbrite](#).

To book for the above events, follow the Eventbrite link or contact Sam on 01424 723011.

Other events

- **26 - 27 June: Groundswell Agriculture No-Till Show & Conference** at Lannock Manor Farm, Hertfordshire. See [website](#) for tickets.

I-Spy this month

Cuckooflower and coralroot: Cuckooflower or lady's-smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) is a common, attractive pale lilac wildflower. It comes into bloom around the time the cuckoo starts to call in April. It favours wet grassland, damp meadows, ditches and watersides. Cuckooflower has a rosette of rounded leaves at its base.

The similar-looking, rare woodland flower, coralroot (*Cardamine bulbifera*, pictured right), appears around the same time, often amongst bluebells and undisturbed road verges around the Farm Cluster area. It is only found naturally in the High Weald and the Chilterns. Unlike cuckooflower, coralroot has brown bulbils in leaf axils on the stem and slightly toothed leaves.



About

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster helps farmers, foresters and other land managers work together to improve farm profitability and benefit soil, water, wildlife and historic features not just on their individual farms, but across the area. It has 58 members covering over 3,500ha. The Cluster is helped by the High Weald AONB Partnership with financial support from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund, the Environment Agency (Giant Hogweed control), and the Woodland Trust (deer management). Visit the Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster page at www.highweald.org