

Report from Lancashire Young Farmers- LCC Grants

- 2006/07 Year- £29648.14 received from Lancashire County Council
- 2007/08 Year- £15000.00 received from Lancashire County Council

The grant money received from Lancashire County Council has been used to pay the salaries of the two members of staff, employed by the Federation and to provide specific training opportunities for our members.

The staff employed by the Federation are a vital part in supporting the democratic structure of the Federation and ensuring the aims and objectives of the organisation are carried out for the benefit of our 700+ members, located around Lancashire aged between 10 and 26 years.

The money received from Lancashire County Council has ensured that we are able to provide a valuable service to young people from all backgrounds with an interest in the Countryside, many of whom must deal with living in rural isolation. We provide social, sporting, educational and fun opportunities so that our members can grow to full maturity as individuals and members of their own communities.

Part of our income comes from annual subscriptions and with the grateful support of Lancashire County Council in the past we have been able to ensure that families involved with Lancashire Young Farmers have been offered this valuable service for a very reasonable rate. With costs increasing in every aspect of family life, keeping costs to a minimum was a very important part of Young Farmers- this unfortunately has all had to change.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held with the members, membership fees had to change to cover the loss of grant support from Lancashire County Council. Our members felt that such a large increase would seriously damage our membership, leaving families unable to pay such high fees, especially for larger families with many children attending Young Farmers. To try and bridge the lost income fees have increased from £10 per head to £25 with extra levies put on our Clubs. This is only the amount that comes to Lancashire Young Farmers, with insurance and other costs; our current membership fees would need to be nearly £50.00 per member, per year and even this will not cover the lost grant, leaving us financially unable to carry on unless we reduce services to young people.

Our members are very reluctant to reduce any of the services they currently received from Young Farmers but we are left with very little options. All of our training programmes have been put on hold whilst we focus on reducing running costs through reduced services but ultimately a reduction in staff levels might be the only solution. This would have a dramatic effect on what we currently provide and our members will suffer from reduced services and support.

We understand that changing circumstances in youth services results in changes in the way groups are supported but taking all grant support from larger organisations means that young people will suffer rather than benefit from being able to access money directly on a local level. County based groups who support vast numbers of young people are a vital part in an overall service that caters for all young people in Lancashire. Lancashire Young Farmers is a very unique service that offers important support & activities for rurally isolated young people in Lancashire and without the support of the County Council it is the very young people we support who will pay the price for these changes.