





Two Wensleydale soon-to-be-Nude Ewes, waiting for their turn under the clippers. Photo by Erika Pratt

processing. Wensleydales are the softest sheep in Britain, so our Nude Ewe 'Wes' will be truly luxurious stuff! It will be joining our Hebridean yarn 'Heb' in the Nude Ewe product line. We're hoping to have Shetland and Beulah Speckled Face yarn available soon as well. Fingers crossed!

The Nude Ewe will be out and about this summer. Come visit us at the Clapham Country Fair on July 5, and at Woodworks! on Sept 6 and 7! We'll also be at the 2008 LBAP Conference Exchange Fair at St John's College, Cambridge on July 15, hoping to mingle with some like-minded folk.

Keep up on all the Nude Ewe news at [www.bedslife.org.uk/nude-ewe!](http://www.bedslife.org.uk/nude-ewe!)

### Greensand Ridge LEADER bid successful!

Huge congratulations to the Bedfordshire Rural Affairs Forum (BRAAF) and the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) on their successful bid for LEADER funding for the Greensand Ridge project area!

The application, led by local people to promote the communities, businesses and enterprises in the Greensand Ridge area, has won £3 million of funding from the East of England Development Agency through the Rural Development Programme for England.

The Greensand Ridge Local Action Group was one of 6 groups in the East of England to be successful in its application for funding. The group has been given the go-ahead to develop in full a six year investment programme to increase the economic opportunities in the area and help land based businesses, rural businesses and communities.

The Group's projects will include 'green' tourism and leisure activities, helping farmers and foresters to diversify into new markets, growing the market for locally sourced food and drink products, and supporting small business growth and community enterprise.

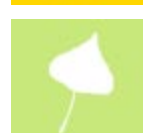
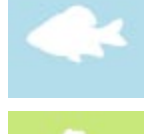
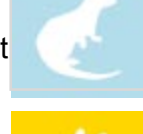
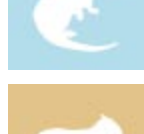
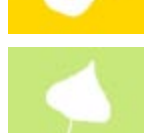
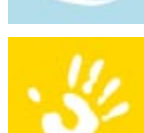
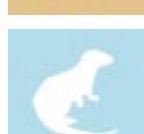
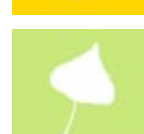
### Comings and goings

We're happy to report that Anita Stone will be with us for a while yet as the Forestry Commission representative on the Bedfordshire Woodland Forum. Glad to have you still with us, Anita!

We also wish FWAG Advisor Becky Ward lots of luck as she pursues a PhD! Alas, it has meant that she has had to leave FWAG. Becky has returned to her old job at Processors and Growers Research Organisation, where she will be doing the field trials for her degree. Best of luck; we look forward to seeing 'Dr Ward' in the next few years!

### Nature nuggets

Natural England has announced the launch of a new **Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund**. Five million pounds has been secured for the next





three years to fund projects run by Voluntary Conservation Organisations. The fund will support projects that can demonstrate how they will benefit BAP priority species and habitats in England at a landscape scale. **The application deadline is July 18**; Full details can be found at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk).

**Congratulations to the Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC)**, whose work on habitat opportunity mapping was featured in the April 2008 issue of the National Soil Resources Institute e-zine. Using NATMAPsoilscapes - one of the institute's newest products - the BRMC has helped us map out priority areas for habitat restoration and creation. Well done, guys - it's great to see such innovative work get the notice it deserves!

Thanks to a grant from SITA Trust, we're embarking on a **survey of potential important arable plant areas** of Bedfordshire. The project is led by FWAG in partnership with the Wildlife Trust, and will last until the end of the year.

Defra has announced the publication of the list of 'habitats and species of principal importance in England'. Fifty-six habitats and 941 species are included in the **Section 41 list of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)**. The list is related to the NERC 'biodiversity duty' and can be found on [www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk](http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk).

There are only 6 weeks to go to enter **Plantlife's first ever photo competition**, 'Wild Plants of the UK Through the Seasons'! Winning photos will feature in next year's 20th anniversary calendar and one lucky overall winner will receive a digital camera as the grand prize. Visit the Plantlife website for rules and more information: [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk).

The **BedsLife website is now averaging roughly 10,000 hits per month**. We've had hits from all sorts of exotic places as far away as Australia and Sudan. Not bad - it just goes to show, we may be small but we're mighty!

### Upcoming events

July 8: 'Ecosystem approach', 'ecosystem services', 'ecosystem thinking': are these just a bunch of buzzwords? Or do they represent clearly defined and practical concepts that can help us achieve a more genuinely sustainable future? **The Ecosystem Approach: What Does it Mean in Practice?** is a one-day conference that will answer these questions. Registration fee and other details can be found at [www.dialoguematters.co.uk](http://www.dialoguematters.co.uk).

July 9: The British Association for Nature Conservationists (BANC) is hosting **Wild Ideas: Challenging Nature Conservation** at Coin Street Centre, London. BANC has a 30-year reputation for being on the cutting edge. Join them at this conference to be inspired and challenged, and to hear about new thinking and new ideas in nature conservation. Find out more by visiting [www.dialoguematters.co.uk](http://www.dialoguematters.co.uk).

July 15-17: The **2008 LBAP Seminar** is taking place at St John's College, Cambridge. Local and regional BAP coordinators, together with those interested in the work of biodiversity partnerships and the implementation of Habitat and Species Action Plans, are invited to attend. As ever there will be networking, round-table discussions, workshops and field trips. The programme and booking information are available at [www.keystone-group.co.uk/lbap/index.html](http://www.keystone-group.co.uk/lbap/index.html).

July 18: The British Ecological Society Agricultural Ecology Interest Group 2008 conference is taking place in Cambridge. **Changes in land use: does**





**this relate to CAP reform and what are the agro-ecology repercussions?** will address some of the big questions about rural land management today. The booking form and details are available on the [National Institute of Agricultural Botany](http://www.niabotany.org) website.

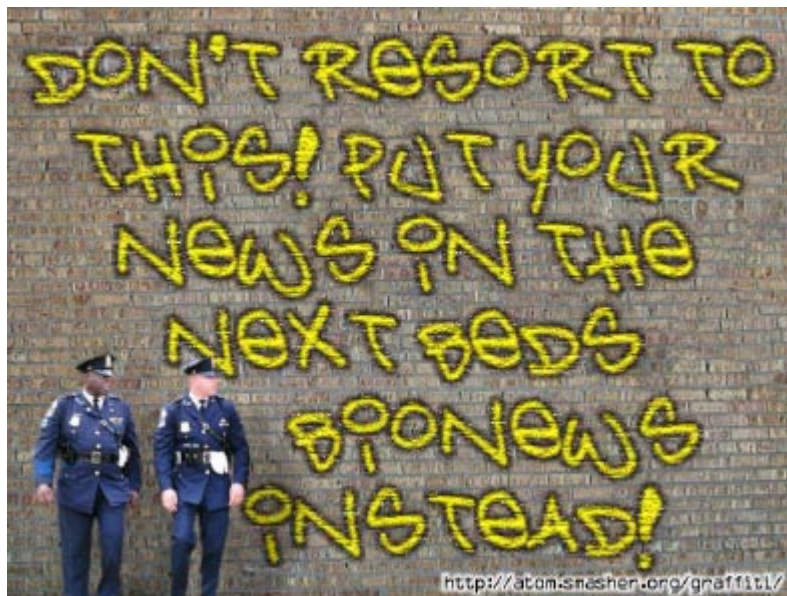
Sept 6-7: The Forest of Marston Vale is hosting **Woodworks!**, their annual festival of wood, woodlands and wood products. If you're interested in trees, woodland crafts and stories, Bedfordshire's countryside and woodlands, then Woodworks! is for you! For full details visit [www.marstonvale.org/woodworks](http://www.marstonvale.org/woodworks).

Sept 8-10: **Orchards and Groves: Their History, Ecology, Culture and Archaeology** is a 3-day conference taking place at Sheffield Hallam University. This is a relatively poorly-documented area and the event will address topics fundamental to conservation of these wonderful and iconic landscape features. Pre-booking is essential; for details visit the [conference website](#).

Sept 8-12: The Society for Ecological Restoration is hosting the **6<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Ecological Restoration** in Ghent. The aim of the conference is to present the state of the art in ecological restoration and to bring together scientists, policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders. To learn more about the programme and registration, visit [http://ser2008.be/general\\_information.htm](http://ser2008.be/general_information.htm).

Sept 17-18: The 2008 **World Green Roof Congress** is taking place in London. This is the first event of its kind to showcase green roofs in the UK. The event will feature the latest research, policy initiatives and practical case studies. Complete details are available on the event website: [www.worldgreenroofcongress.com](http://www.worldgreenroofcongress.com).

Oct 5-14: The **IUCN World Conservation Congress** is the world's largest and most diverse environmental congress, and will welcome to Barcelona more than 8,000 delegates from around the globe. Themes include 'a new climate for change', 'healthy environments – healthy people' and 'safeguarding the diversity of life'. Check out the website for more information: [www.iucn.org/congress](http://www.iucn.org/congress).



BedsLife - Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership  
 County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Room 550  
 Bedford MK42 9AP  
 (01234) 228063  
[www.bedslife.org.uk](http://www.bedslife.org.uk)

