



New Agricultural Chaplains

An article from Country Way Magazine

By Jeremy Martineau and Keith Ineson

Cheshire

The Cheshire Show 2005 saw the inauguration of the new Agricultural Chaplaincy for Churches Together in Cheshire. Mr Keith Ineson was commissioned for the new role of Ecumenical Agricultural Chaplain at the regular pre-show service on the Monday evening prior to the start of the show on Tuesday 21 June. Over 250 members of the farming community welcomed Keith after his induction by the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester.

Keith Ineson has been the Salvation Army Agricultural Chaplain for the past five years. When funding could not be continued the sponsoring role was taken over by Churches Together in Cheshire. Revd Donald Marr, Rural Officer for Chester Diocese, has worked very closely with Keith over the past five years and was largely responsible for obtaining funding to secure this creative and much needed post.

Keith Ineson, himself a former beef farmer, said "Over the past five years I have helped over one thousand farmers. The situation has improved for some in the farming community but for many the situation is still dire. With low milk prices, problems with bovine TB and the advent of the Single Payment Scheme, I expect my workload to continue at a very high level." In addition to being the Agricultural chaplain for Churches Together, Keith is the Cheshire Coordinator for Farm Crisis Network (FCN) and has a team of 10 volunteers helping him. Keith has around 30 on going cases, varying from one person to young families and older couples. He works in partnership with a wide range of organisations including RABI, RSIN and the ARC-Addington Fund. The NFU, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Tenant Farmers Association are supportive referring partners, something which Defra has started to do recently.

For further information please see Keith's website www.agchap.co.uk or contact Keith on 01270 522576

Pembrokeshire

Eileen Davies was and is a hands-on farmer in Carmarthenshire. Seen here in Llanybydder cattle market being licensed by the Bishop of St David's in April as the diocesan Rural Life Adviser, she was ordained priest in June in the wonderful cathedral at St David's Pembrokeshire. Eileen is a real godsend for she is so well known and respected, certainly in the farming circles of the region, being a regular attender at the mart. She has the full support of her family in this double-barrelled life she will lead.

The diocese has had a succession of agriculturally connected clergy taking on the challenge of the post of Rural Life Adviser in addition to parochial responsibilities. However, Eileen, not being a stipendiary priest will still maintain her farming as the basis of her ministry. Eileen is one of a small group of Rural Life Advisers serving the Church in Wales' six dioceses.

Eileen is already well tied in to the work of Farm Crisis Network and has already prepared worship material for parishes to use this Harvest Festival time which will raise awareness and support for FCN.

Eileen says, "Being a full-time farmer myself, I realise the huge pressures that are placed on the agricultural industry with the Single Payment Scheme that is being introduced this year as EU legislation. I'll be there in a supporting role showing the Church as a caring organisation and bringing it closer to working people in rural areas."