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First aid qualifications are causing some confusion so this is a quick round up of the various courses. All farms should have at least 2 staff that hold an HSE approved first aid qualification. This can be either the 3 day First Aid at Work or the one day Emergency First Aid course. As farm staff generally work away from base it is advisable that they all attend a half day first aid course to equip them with the basics to deal with a crisis until more qualified help arrives. All first aid certificates should be renewed every three years. Those holding an HSE qualification are advised by HSE to attend a half day refresher each year but this is not mandatory.

A Nutrient Management Plan course is planned for January; several of you who attended this last winter did not get round to doing the assessment and have requested another course. A different tutor, Andrew Watson, will run the course to give you an alternative perspective. A fair sized group will be required for this so please let me know as soon as possible if you would be interested if you have not already done so.

Other management training which will carry BASIS points includes a half day on Weed Identification for managers with Prime Agriculture and an Agronomy Update with John Purslow. Building on last year's successful irrigation efficiency day we have a day specifically for potato growers with Dr Mark Stalham. Irrigation efficiency is generally much lower than the efficiency of water use by the plant, because water is applied when it is not needed and little attention is paid to environmental or plant measurements that determine the water balance and quality requirements of a specific crop. Topics covered on the training course will include assessing irrigation requirements, soil type selection, common scab and other quality issues related to irrigation and water application methods.

The annual NRoSO update which awards 10 BASIS/ NRoSO cpd points for a half day course is Water, Widgets and Wotnots. Areas covered include operator safety and PPE; water protection with case studies of pollution incidents; improvements in sprayer technology; and a topical update. We also plan a Sprayer Operator Update covering basic agronomy: What to look for in a crop to identify potential spray requirements; Weed, pest and disease identification; Chemicals, their makeup, how they work and how to optimise their use.

Last winter we covered Basic Electrics and PAT testing and both will be on offer again. In addition there is a course on Motor and Starter Connections for those who are carrying out machine maintenance which includes some electrical tasks such as motor disconnections and connections as part of a mechanical task. The course includes: Responsibilities under the electricity at work regulations, Electrical hazards, Risk reduction methods and safe methods of work, Isolation procedures, Basic motor principles and Methods of connection, Crimping, Demonstration of motor connections and Practice of motor connections by delegates.

New regulations mean that those of you buying and using aluminium phosphides for rabbit and mole gassing will need to do a NPTC test by 2015. There are usually a few teething problems with this sort of thing so while you should be aware of this I would suggest leaving it for this winter until it is fully in place.

A Risk Management day for those already involved with risk management who want to upgrade their knowledge of evolving best – practise has been recommended by one of our members. It is an excellent course which can be used as a basis to form an up to the minute approach to health and safety management for your business. This will run in the winter.

LandSkills East will be part funding courses until the end of March but applications must be in to them in by the end of September. So if you want to add to your staff's practical skills don't miss this opportunity. All the courses already mentioned can be funded, some other examples to consider include welding , ploughing, strimmers, forklift refreshers, B&E training, fire prevention and the use of Gatekeeper. Pesticide application courses are legislative and therefore cannot be funded but if you have anyone on your staff you are considering training do get at least PA1 done over the winter as this course requires a big group. The actual application modules can then be added at a later date on a 1:1 basis if there are no appropriate courses running.

There are a few places still available on the full BASIS course and also on the foundation or farmers BASIS. This is a an introduction over 6 days to agronomy, crop protection, pests, weeds and diseases, soil and crop nutrition. The course is suitable for Farm Managers or leading spray men as a standalone course or a stepping stone to a full Basis program. There are also several courses running in the region aimed at junior managers covering areas such as working efficiently, recruiting staff and motivation skills. For further information on these funded courses please contact me.

There is a new classroom based course for Driver CPC training; Driver health and safety and fuel efficiency which will be available this winter. Emergency first aid and forklift refreshers (any type) also carry CPC points. These courses must be registered so please highlight your requirement for CPC points when booking. Do try and gain 7 CPC points each year to avoid a problem at the end of year 5 by which time you must have accumulated 35 points.

Thanks to those who have already seen me to discuss their winter training needs, the requirement to lodge funding applications in the next few weeks has brought forward the timing on these visits. If anyone else would like me to come out and see them please do get in touch to arrange a meeting at a time to suit you.

Susan



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