

Senior Support Worker's Report For
Millennium Farm Trust
April 08/ March 09.

A busy April preparing land for sowing various crops. Cumulated in Sam's sponsored walk from Bury to Clare which raised £881.00 for the charity funds, many thanks to Sam & all those involved in running this successful event.

We had our usual stall at South Suffolk Show where Daisy the cow was the star attraction helping to instruct young & old alike in the art of hand milking. Our soft fruit venture continues to expand with more raspberries & a large area of strawberries, onions & beetroot again proved successful as do the squash & courgettes.

Rede , being very heavy land is very reliant in hot summers on the provision of water for irrigation (technical name for a watering can)
Many thanks to the volunteer's being prepared to give up leisure time to provide this valuable service.

Our annual battle against the weeds continues, with a one off treatment of round-up, followed by continuous cultivation to prevent weed seedlings from re-colonising the field, the process shows signs of success (watch this space)

Doug provided several sheep training days instructing the group in hoof trimming, worming & fly treatment, all concerned appreciated these special days.

On our weekly trips to Old Hall, we practised our skills at cattle foot trimming, coppicing, fencing & feeding & tending the cattle, sheep & pigs. Spring & Summer activities included planting & harvesting organic vegetables. Sadly in Oct 08 these opportunities were curtailed after our hosts & long time supporters Ian & Sylvia left for pastures new in Wales. We all miss them very much & offer our sincere thanks for all their help & support over many years.

We returned to Old Hall on monthly visits in Sept 09 when Richard & Heather were able to accommodate our attendance.

Mike Jesky joined us in summer 08, his extensive experience in woodwork & workshop management opens up new opportunities for improving our woodworking skills & producing items for sale on our stalls at local events. Donations allowed us to purchase more workshop tools including a pillar drill & jigsaw, thus enabling the team to increase their skill base & the quality & quantity of products made.

During Autumn period, a new vegetable garden came into production, following spraying with round-up & general cultivation. We grew garlic for the first time which has proved very successful, more daffodil bulbs were planted which helped brighten the spirits after a long winter.

In November the farm workers visited Mr Leslie Cook's Farm in Cambridge. The family keep herds of British White & Hereford Cattle & are well known on the show circuit.

MFT attended Natural Care Farming conference at Beccles. This umbrella organisation & its regional (centres) offers a great opportunity to bring Care Farming to the attention of the government, & Health Care Authorities.

During the period Dec / March, Mike provided excellent training for the farm and support workers in various aspects of woodworking & workshop activities. Outside we prepared the land for cultivation in Spring, coppicing, clearing veg patches, spreading manure on the field & ploughing.

MFT continues to provide excellent facilities for enabling people with learning difficulties to excel in Rural, Agricultural & Country Pursuits.

Philip Mellor
Senior Support Worker.