April 2022

A few weeks ago I was thinking about writing this article, and after a decent harvest, an exceptional Autumn for farmers to get ahead with the land work. Just enough rain to germinate the seeds and a mild winter. What could have been better?

That was the field work. Then came the problems with livestock. Not enough butchers to keep the abattoirs going, until the government decided to relax the licence for workers to come from Europe. This put the pig industry in the worst position I can remember. Pigs were being culled on the farm. Then in the poultry sector foul pest restriction, all poultry to be kept inside, and at the time of writing these are still in place. Not good news for marketing 'free-range eggs'. We don't know for how much longer these restrictions will be in place. Feed prices offer a huge challenge, with wheat over £200 per tonne, Maize being grown for bio-fuel, so not available for feed. I'm afraid the British public will have to pay more for their food in the future to retain a sustainable food chain.

A reduction in the Farm Support Grants system has caused a few headaches. Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) seem to be setting guidelines for alternative cropping, more green, more trees and more houses being built on first and second class land. How can farming produce more from less and increase production and reduce imports?

This is not a good time with so many prices rising; artificial fertiliser, fuel prices going through the roof, incomes static and the government will want more in taxation to recover after the pandemic. Calls to the farming helpline are making demands on the volunteers. Mental health and finance are most demanding requests, which are not easy to resolve. We must keep talking and praying that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Yes God is good, we often sing this so let's keep singing His praises and remember His promise, for seed time and harvest will not cease.

Blessings to All

*George Frost
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