

### The land mourns, the cattle groan

The prophet Joel records how the cattle, sheep and other animals suffer and moan because of the condition of the nation ([Joel 1:10-12; 18-20](#)) On 13 April, 18,000 dairy cows burned to death in an horrific barn fire in Texas. Over the last decade at least 6.5 million farmed animals in the USA alone have died by fire, many living in cramped mega-farms. They paid the price for farmers' profits and consumers' low-cost food. The Lord made provision for us to eat all kinds of food. But we are also to take care of God's creatures ([Genesis 1:28](#)) and to live kindly and gently ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)). Jesus said, 'not one sparrow falls to the ground without the Father' ([Matthew 10:29](#)). So, whilst giving thanks for the Lord's provision, we should still grieve and lament this unnecessary suffering and cruelty in the name of profit and convenience ([1 Timothy 6:10](#)). *Pray for greater alertness to, and awareness of, the conditions under which livestock are kept and our food is produced. Pray that government, suppliers and consumers will give high priority to animal welfare in trade agreements and food production practices and for us to understand better our role as stewards of God's creation ([bit.ly/vlhopeforearth](https://bit.ly/vlhopeforearth)).*

### A better way

In recent years the government has formulated and implemented new policies and initiatives to change the way farming is conducted. Many focus on helping and encouraging farmers to restore over-worked land and improve care of the environment. 'Catchment sensitive farming' aims to work with farmers to produce food in a way that protects water, air and soil, reducing flood risk on agricultural land. Meanwhile, a National Farmers Union campaign, with the slogan, "our shops should never be empty of any food that can be produced by farmers and growers in Britain", seeks to promote British food production and security. *Pray for wisdom, especially for Christians in agriculture and horticulture, to seek the Lord for direction and inspiration and to be able to witness to His wisdom, grace and hope to those with whom they work. Pray for opportunities to share both physical bread, and the Bread of Heaven with those around them so all the people will praise Him (Psalm 67).*

### On his way rejoicing

Over the first weekend in May, families and communities will come together to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. As ever, food will be a key feature of many of these gatherings. There are many controversial things about this event and some of the beliefs and practices being espoused and debated. Yet these provide an opportunity to engage in conversation. Time can be taken over a meal to give explanations and answers to questions, something Jesus himself so often did, often in the midst of controversy. When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch reading Isaiah he asked him if he understood. His perfectly reasonable reply was, "how can I understand unless someone guides me?" *Pray for opportunities, grace and wisdom to do as Philip did, who, beginning at the point where the man was starting, "proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus Christ", such that the man was baptised. Pray that many may move from seeking answers to "going on their way rejoicing." ([Acts 8:30-39](#)).*

### Pentecost

The Feast of Firstfruits came on the first day after the Passover Sabbath ([Leviticus 23:9-14](#)). This was the day that Jesus, fulfilling the scriptures, rose from the dead ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)). Seven weeks later, at the Festival of Shavuot (Weeks), God poured out His Holy Spirit on all who would receive. Since that day, the cry of every true believer has been, 'give us our Pentecost', as we long to see lives turned from sin and communities transformed by God's presence and power. Revivals have come and gone, all from humble beginnings and many from rural settings. *Pray for our local villages, for repentance and faith in Christ, for transformed lives, and for healing of the land, that once again there may be revival fires and hope in and from the countryside.*

### Stories of hope

Please join one of our **online meetings** below to hear and share hope-full stories of rural mission and ministry, and help build a resource of ideas.

7.30 - 9 pm, Wednesday 17 May

9 - 10.30 am, Saturday 27 May

Link: <https://web.zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 815 7509 2540

Passcode: 629376

### A 'movement of hope' in rural Britain

10 am - 4 pm, Saturday 1 July, 2023.

Southfields Farm, Coleshill, B46 3EJ.

Building on the above, we invite you to a 'day on the farm' hosted by John & Betty Plumb. Come and be inspired and motivated by 'stories of hope' and share in fellowship, prayer, worship, workshops and a picnic.

**More details and booking at [hcdayonfarm.eventbrite.co.uk](https://hcdayonfarm.eventbrite.co.uk)**