

FARM CRISIS NETWORK

Folk who know Farming talking with Farming Folk

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Agricultural Christian Fellowship



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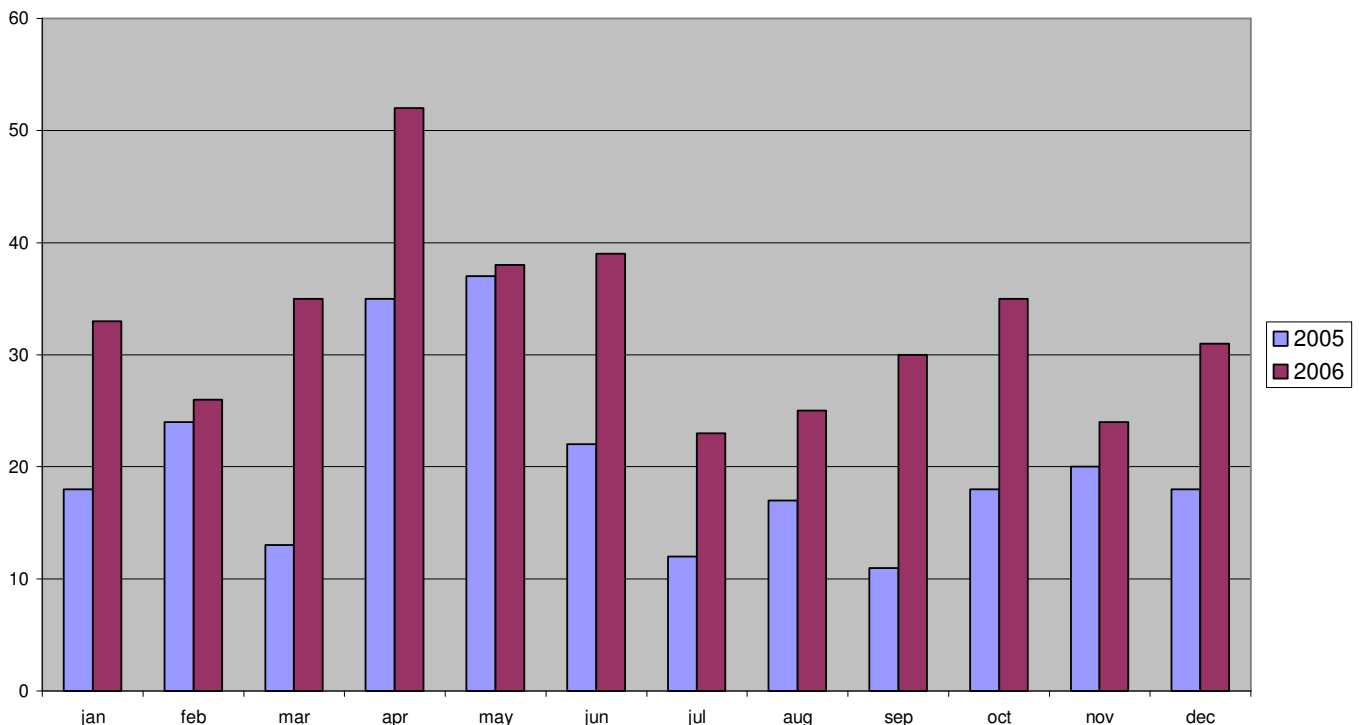
FCN Case-work Evaluation Summary for 2006

2006 proved to be a challenging year for FCN.

Calls for help to FCN's Helpline were 60% higher in 2006 than in the previous year. The graph below shows the rise in calls (please note that only a proportion of those coming to FCN for help come via FCN's helpline - currently somewhere around one third).

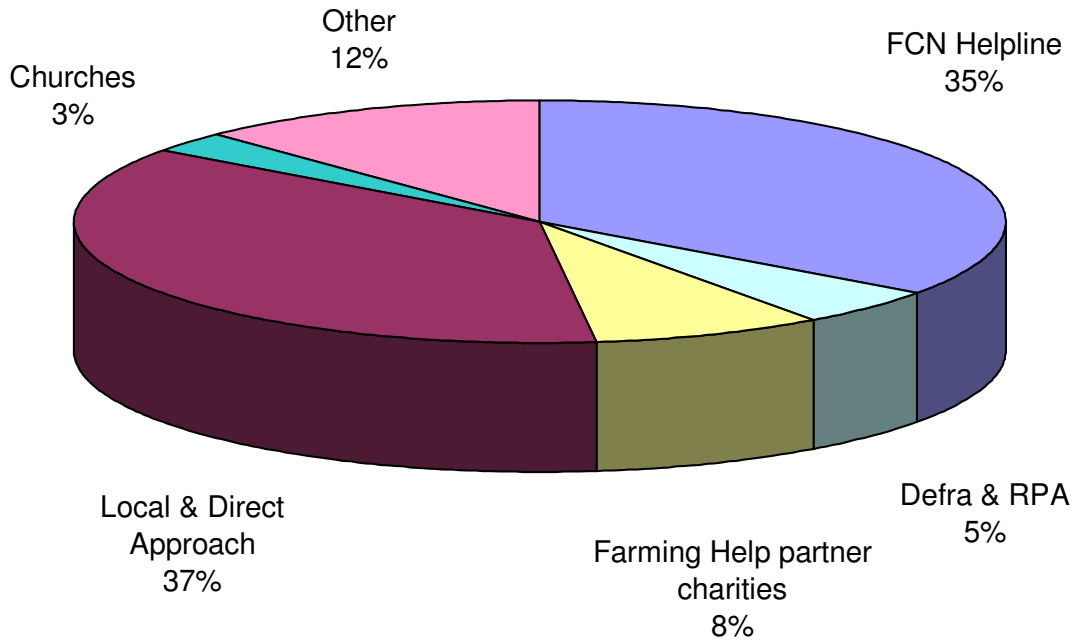
The graph also shows clear peaks in the spring of 2005 & 2006. Before 2005, the spring was a period of low calls to FCN. These new peaks relate directly to the 2005 Single Payment Scheme application process problems, and the subsequent late payment problems in 2006.

Calls for help to FCN's Helpline 2005/2006 comparison



Although it is encouraging that people are coming to FCN for help, it is a real concern that there are an increasing number of people in the farming community facing serious problems and difficulties.

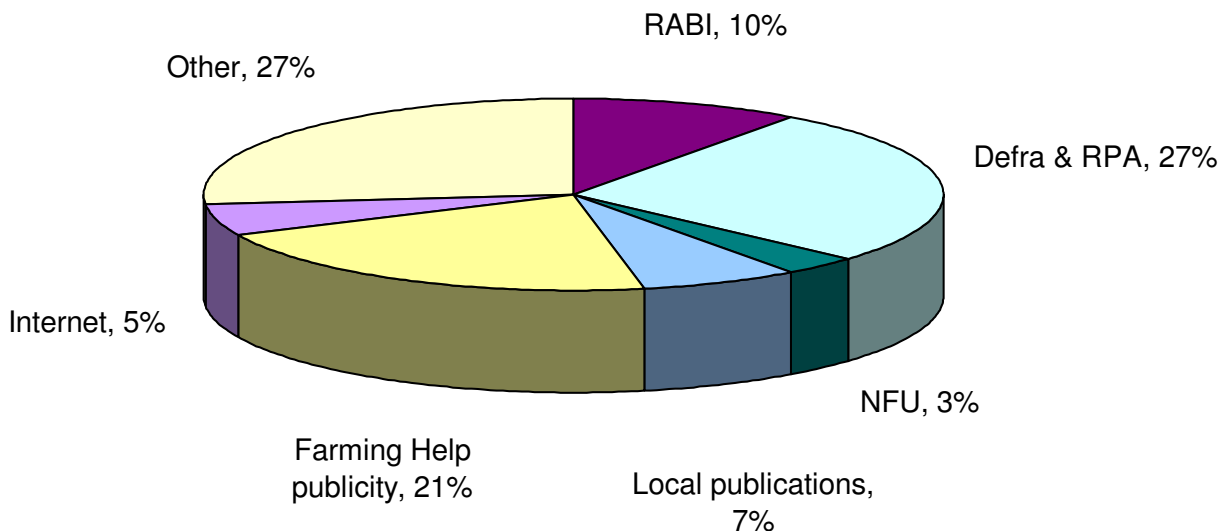
Source of new FCN cases in 2006



The graph above shows the majority of FCN cases come through the FCN Helpline and through 'word of mouth' resulting in direct approaches to FCN volunteers locally. FCN's 'Farming Help' partner charities (RABI & ARC-Addington Fund) are also significant sources of referral to FCN. It is common for FCN to work alongside the other charities in certain cases to ensure the best possible range of support is provided.

Source of FCN Helpline calls 2006 (where known)

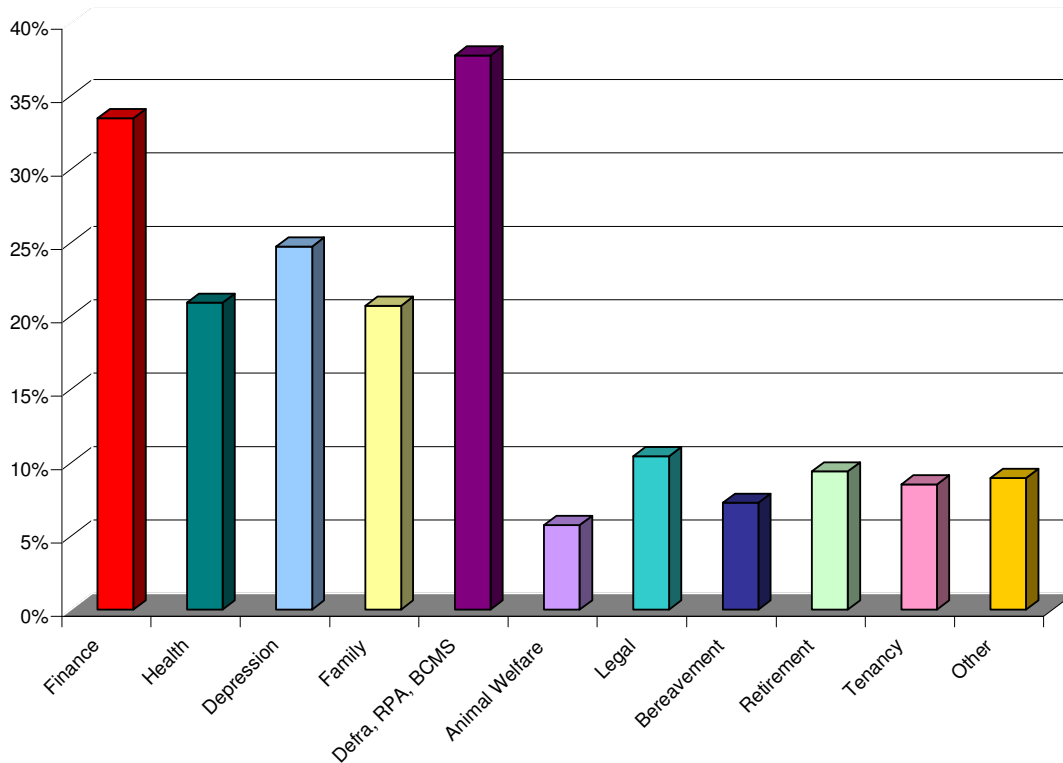
Note that the source is known for only approximately 50% of calls.



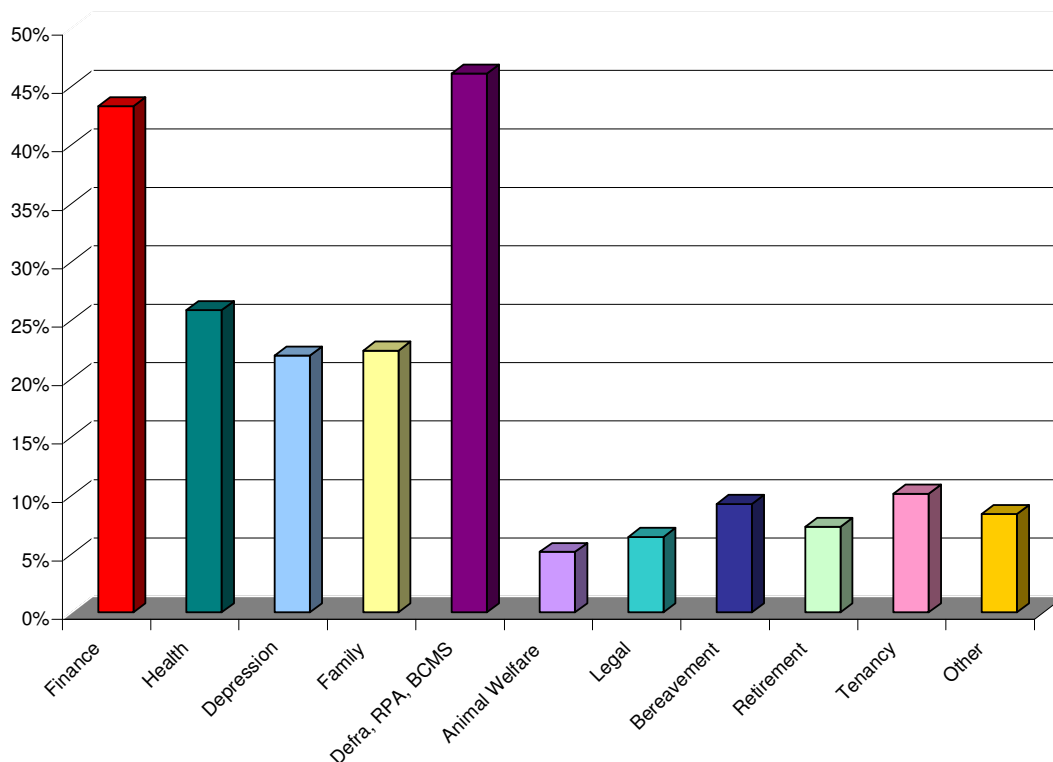
The graph above shows the source of calls to FCN's helpline. 'Farming Help' advertising (including Farmers Guardian and Farmers Weekly) and articles in farming and local publications are clearly important (totalling 28%) and referrals from Defra & the Rural Payments Agency have also been significant in 2006, totalling 27% (primarily due to Single Payment Scheme issues).

The graphs below show the most common problems encountered in new FCN cases in both 2005 and 2006 have involved finance and problems relating to Defra and its associated agencies RPA (Rural Payments Agency) & BCMS (British Cattle Movement Service). A high proportion of these have involved issues surrounding the Single Payment Scheme. Depression, health and family problems also feature highly. *Note that many cases involve more than one problem.*

Problems presented in new FCN cases 2005



Problems presented in new FCN cases 2006



It is interesting to note that the most significant rises have been in the incidence of financial problems and the incidence of problems relating to Defra, RPA & BCMS. Again, the Single Payment Scheme problems are likely to account for these rises.

Conclusions

FCN has continued to provide a critical service to the farming community in 2006. FCN's national helpline is busier now than it has been since the Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic of 2001. FCN volunteers are continuing to provide pastoral and practical support to farming people and families across the UK. In 2006 FCN provided this service to over 1,000 'cases' involving almost 3,000 people.

It is clear that the changes resulting from reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in the new Single Payment Scheme are having a significant effect on FCN's workload and, by deduction, a negative impact on farming people and families in the UK.

FCN expects its demanding level of workload to continue through 2007 with the many challenges facing farming people and families. There are also challenges to come with new regulations and inspection regimes, as well as the constant downward pressure on farmgate prices. The aging farming population presents a number of social as well as economic problems with health, retirement and succession issues.

FCN is committed to continuing to provide its service to the farming community for as long as it is needed. FCN is working closely with its Farming Help partner charities RABI & ARC-Addington to ensure the best possible range of help and support is available.

*Farm Crisis Network
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