

LASTWORD

Blissful ignorance, 95% of the time

If I don't think about it, it cannot keep me awake at night – a strategy which I use for any 'big ticket' societal issue. Otherwise it's an overwhelming, highly emotional and anxiety-laden battle with my own thoughts.

It's rather absurd really, isn't it? That we've landed where we are; forced to choose between a bunch of how I perceive it, non-options, during the recent General Election. Knowing that in some instances, it'd be completely wasted and no amount of tactical voting strategy could box our way out of it.

Don't get me started on the global landscape, I might as well start building my personal underground bunker immediately. Remind me, how many cans of tomato soup and rice pudding is a feasible stash to last me, say, 45 years? Best case scenario, of course.

Perhaps I sound a little defeatist, but how do we actually get ourselves out of this chaotic cluster-fudge of a situation? I don't mean in agriculture, I mean in general society. Despite what people may wish to profess, there have been no 'glory days'. Simply different levels of daily challenge for us mere workers.

Regardless, the future of life as we know it depends on someone finding a solution to our spiraling dystopia, and I'm very curious as to where that might come from, given our current political offerings. In the meantime, I'll continue to avoid musing over it too much.

So SFI, or SF-Sigh as I might now call it. I really hope it doesn't become

yet another boulevard of broken dreams and that we can retain some positives from it all. If nothing else, I can't hack writing another reactionary article about it – I've been on a rollercoaster with the topic for the past 18-months or so, and I can't say I'm a huge fan of the Big Dipper.

SFI wasn't perfect by a long stretch, but there was tantalising potential. And I get it, if they'd given adequate warning that the tap was about to be switched off, all Tom, Dick and Harry would have been filling their troughs.

As much as I abhor the exertion of control on my life, sometimes society does require robust parameters in which to operate. As such, it's felt as though government perhaps should have measured at least twice and cut once, on a few aspects of the scheme (hello ALH2, I'm looking at you). Instead, British agriculture has been on the receiving end of a Pritt Stick approach to policy – other child-friendly glues are available.

Did it ever have long-term potential, was that the actual intention? Or was it more, that'll do, chaps. Well, when it comes to food production – which when I last checked was an essential basic need and requirement for human life – it won't do, will it? Agriculture deserves better. As does nature.

We have so many trusted, informed experts in our industry – use them, and I don't mean the handful of vocal folks on social media. In fact, given much pertinent insight features in this magazine, perhaps I ought to send a copy of

CPM to Number 10 for some light bedtime reading? This issue especially!

The husband suggested that SFI closing can mean everyone can get back on board with producing food, however, I don't know a single farmer who doesn't want the best for the wildlife on their farm. Equally, as the primary custodians of our countryside, why shouldn't they be suitably remunerated for boosting up biodiversity?

The system is broken on so many levels. Living in Staffordshire for one, showcases that most farmers who rely upon food production as their primary income, are not making it rain with the readies. Whereas those with a little more cash in their pockets have likely diversified and sought alternative income streams, heck, some even have a full-time non-farming job!

I have no solution, I usually don't have an opinion either – the number one rule of journalism – but I'll raise my head above the parapet in this instance. Feel free to shoot me down. ●

YOUR EDITOR

Janine Adamson began her journalistic career writing obituaries for a local newspaper but fast found her stride within agricultural communications. Now, more than 15 years later, she finds herself at the helm of *CPM*. A proud Staffordshire girl from the Moorlands, Janine takes pride in tackling subjects which although aren't exclusively farming, affect everyone.



WITH JANINE ADAMSON

“I don't usually profess to have an opinion regarding political issues, but the government's recent announcement – well, blog – regarding SFI has caused even me to shift in my seat.

Firstly, political understanding was conventionally never my strength, in fact I think I barely scraped through that particular module during my journalism training. Perhaps that's being harsh, I recall I managed the equivalent of a 'C'.

Back in 2008 when asked who the Chancellor of the Exchequer was during a particularly important conversation, his name persistently evaded my lips, resulting in me proclaiming: “the man with the big bushy eyebrows”, while a bead of sweat appeared on my own furrowed brow. It was in fact, Alistair Darling.

It's not that I have no interest in politics, far from it. It's more the concept that a group of somewhat privileged individuals in Whitehall have the power to sculpt the scope of my future life. It's completely out of my hands – mind blown.

As such, I take the ignorant approach of burying my head deep in the sand; I am an ostrich.