What is the Farm Project?

- Runs May to October
- In its 20th year
- On the farm, participants engage in a range of activities including sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, sorting potatoes, helping with sheep shearing and cattle herding.
- In previous years the project has won awards for the innovative work achieved, gained much media attention and has undoubtedly been a favourite with Thames Reach service users.
2013 Facts and Figures

- 41 referrals
- 25% female referrals
- 20 visits to the farm
- 126 instances of attendance by service users (plus staff, volunteers and corporate partner visits)
7am to 7pm – A typical farm day ...
A great escape

- Some of our service users haven't left London for 5, 6, 7 years!
- Heading down to the farm is a well needed break from the concrete jungle.
- Research from the University of Essex shows “that there is a proven positive relationship between exposure to nature and to an individual’s health… spending time participating in care farm activities is effective in enhancing mood and improving self esteem. Respondents reported significantly reduced feelings of anger, confusion, depression, fatigue and tension and increased vigour enabling participants to feel more active and energetic”
Positives!

- Great integrating experience
- Clients’ compliance with the ground rules
- We do work that is genuinely needed
- Clients treat it all seriously and work hard
- End of season BBQ cooked by Crispin as a thank you to Thames Reach
The farm helps service users to …

- Build self esteem
- Learn to work as a team
- Take on responsibilities
- Develop communication skills
- Improve social skills
- Follow instructions
- Gain practical skills
- Progress towards other volunteering and/or training opportunities
- Be distracted from alcohol or drug dependencies by providing a ’positive structure to the day’
Motivated by the farm this year, people have progressed to …

- Part time employment
- Courses including Digital Maths, ESOL and Volunteering into Employment.
- Volunteering on Thames Reach’s reception desk
- 1-2-1 literacy support
With thanks to:

- Crispin Tebbutt, Mick Kirby and all the staff at Boathouse Farm
- All staff members that referred service users to the project
- All colleagues and volunteers who participate in the farm rota to run the weekly trips