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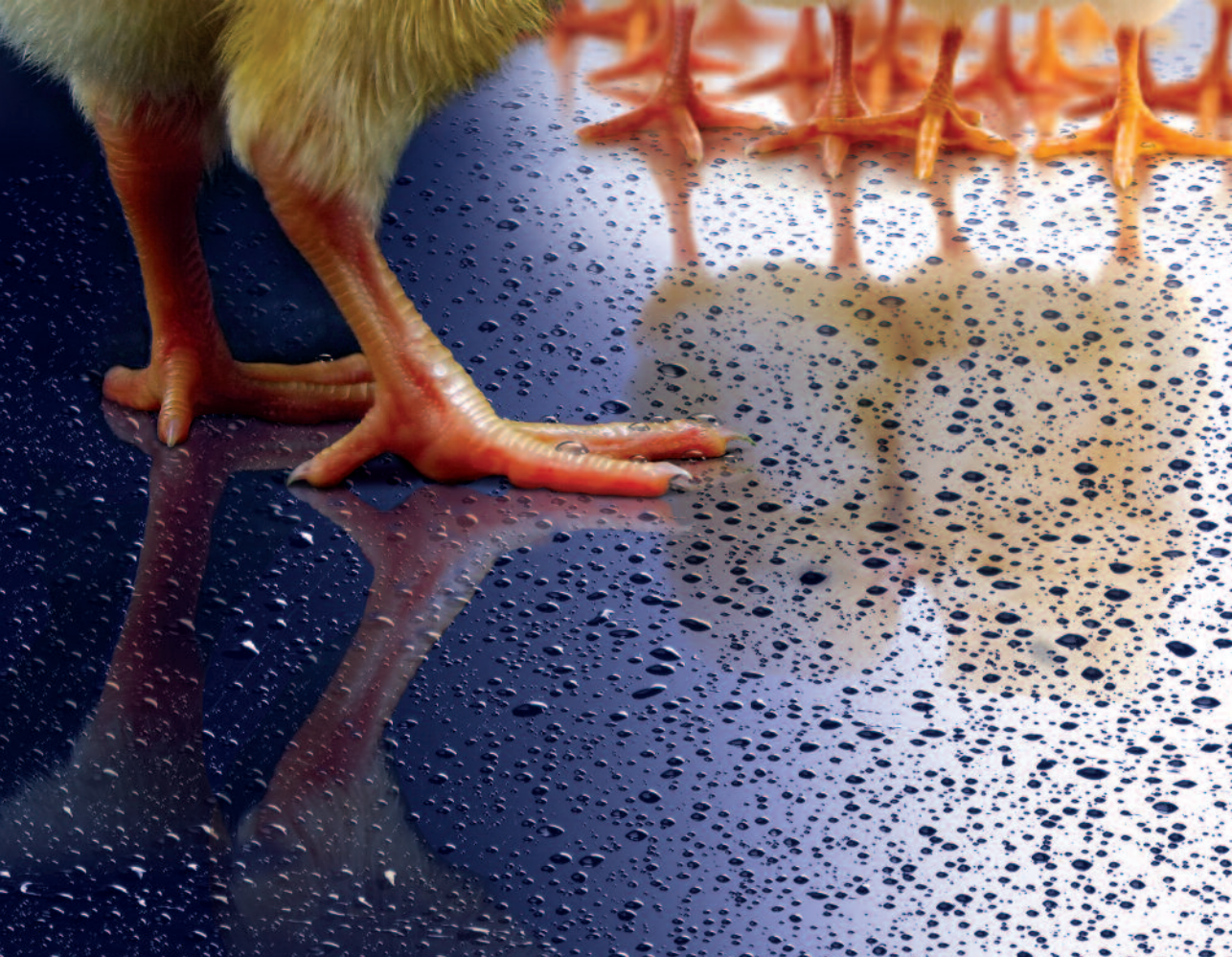


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- Badger cull “will not stop TB in cattle” says new research
- Stop overfishing: MEPs vote for reform
- EU farm reforms as voted by the Committee
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A photograph of a slaughterhouse interior, showing several large animal carcasses hanging from hooks in a row. The meat is pinkish-red, and the bones are visible. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the carcasses.

**Police raid  
slaughterhouse  
on eve of  
EU meeting**



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# Badger cull “will not stop TB in cattle” says new research



**New research conducted by Durham University has claimed a 'widespread badger cull' will have no impact in solving the problem of tuberculosis in cattle.**

It has been claimed that controlling badger numbers would reduce the risk of TB in cattle and a cull is due to begin in the summer after the government announced a temporary ban in October.

Professor Peter Atkins, from Durham University's Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience has investigated the spread of the disease in new research.

"Badgers almost certainly play a part in spreading the disease, but my

conclusion is that their impact over the decades has been far less than suggested" said Atkins.

"Very carefully arranged culling may have a part to play alongside other measures in areas of particular prevalence such as South West England and South Wales, but my research suggests that extending the policy elsewhere may neither be justified nor particularly effective. It certainly won't be a panacea."

After the October ban, the NFU wrote to the Environment Secretary Owen Paterson to request a commencement in the summer.

"The Government is determined to tackle bovine TB by all the means

available to us. Now, in the next few months, we will ensure that the pilot culls can be implemented effectively, in the best possible conditions, with the right resources" Paterson said.

"Having looked at all the evidence over many years, I am utterly convinced that badger control is the right thing to do, and indeed the higher than expected badger numbers only serve to underline the need for urgent action. I remain fully committed to working with the farming industry to ensure that the pilot culls can be delivered effectively, safely and humanely next summer."



But Atkins claimed that 'no one' has yet proved which direction the infection travels between species and that the disease is a 'spillover' from cattle rather than an endemic condition. He also claimed a cull could even 'exacerbate the problem'.

"The Randomised Badger Culling Trial, which ran from 1998-2006 indicated complex, interwoven patterns of infection and concluded badger culling was unlikely to be effective for the future control of bTB."

"When badgers are disturbed, they seem to perceive they are being attacked and move from their original area by a kilometre or more

and join other badger groups, which spreads the disease."

Following 2001's foot and mouth crisis, different parts of the country were restocked with cattle from the southwest, a traditional breeding area and that this has been a factor in the spread of bTB to regions that had previously had low incidence of it.

A likely solution to the problem was said to lie in vaccination, but inoculating cattle for TB is forbidden by EU rules as it would render testing for the disease as ineffective, because all vaccinated cattle would test positive for it.

The search for an adequate TB vaccine for cattle continues, but badgers can be vaccinated now to help prevent the spread of TB as an alternative to culling.

New government-backed research revealed that vaccinating badgers can reduce the level of TB within an infected colony by 54%.

The results, which are from a four year study by the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), conflict the view that culling badgers is the only method to stop the disease.

"This report must be the final nail in the coffin of the plan to cull badgers" said Philip Mansbridge, ►►



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CEO of wildlife charity Care for the Wild.

"Pro-cull supporters claim that the disease can only be stopped if the so-called reservoir of disease within wildlife is reduced – this study shows that vaccination can achieve this."

But farming groups claim that a vaccine to help control TB in the future 'remains many years away'.

Unions such as the NFU have admitted a vaccine should be part of a package of measures to help control the disease but said that measure alone would not be enough to combat it.

"We need a package of measures to tackle TB and yes, cattle vaccine must be one of them. But as Defra's chief vet Nigel Gibbens said cattle vaccine, and the tests and regulations needed to put it in place across Europe, 'may take years'. In the meantime, the spread of TB is doubling every nine years" said NFU President Peter Kendall.

Professor Atkins has concluded that the government should take a more comprehensive approach to controlling TB: "The assumption that badgers are always responsible for this disease in cattle has to be reviewed."

"If our analysis showing the lack of disease persistence in medium and low density badger populations is correct, the improvement of cattle controls including improved testing, tighter movement controls and, eventually, a useable vaccine should be enough to halt the spread. We should continue to investigate, and cooperate with farmers over this problem." ■



**Adrian Reynolds:**  
Managing Partner at Duncan & Toplis

## Kendall upbeat over farming future

**NFU President Peter Kendall described UK agriculture as 'a modern, exciting and high-tech industry' but he acknowledged the sector faced many challenges.**

"There are many challenges facing agriculture as it grapples to improve food security, feed an ever increasing population and deal with changing weather patterns, market volatility caused by the supply and demand of commodities globally, political influences and the activities of speculators" he said.

"There is a need for Common Agricultural Policy reform but volatility in farm incomes needs to be managed, and reform should not be to the detriment of the UK farmer compared to others elsewhere in Europe."

More than 250 delegates attended the two events, which were held at Greetham Valley near Oakham and the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire

They also heard Andy Severn, Head of Tax at Duncan & Toplis, speak about the need for farmers not to ignore inheritance tax.

"There is a very real need for farmers to review their particular circumstances, to get their housekeeping in order with regard to the presentation of their accounts as well as the partnership agreement reflecting what the family operation actually does," Severn said, stressing the importance of seeking appropriate professional advice.

Adrian Reynolds, Managing Partner at Duncan & Toplis, commented: "I was delighted to see so many people from the East Midlands agricultural sector at these events, and I'm sure that they all took away some valuable information and insights."

"I was especially pleased to be able to welcome such a prestigious figure as Peter Kendall to be our keynote speaker." ■



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# Maize 'still the most cost effective feed'

**Maize is still the most economic forage, according to a new analysis of Maize Growers Association (MGA) data carried out by Grainseed Ltd.**

Despite all last year's problems, the costings suggest maize is still the most reliable source of energy for dairy producers, delivering a tonne of drymatter for nearly 20% less than grass silage.

"The MGA estimates maize silage can be produced for around £69/DM tonne compared to £82/DM tonne for grass silage - based on a 7 year ley," says Grainseed technical director Neil Groom.

"The best grass leys can produce a Megajoule of energy for around 75p whereas modern 'Bred for Britain' early maize varieties can consistently produce a Megajoule for just over 60p."

One of the biggest differences is grass's requirement for fertiliser and nutrients which for a typical 300kg N, 80kg P and 280kg dressing per hectare accounts for over £700/ha. And as fertiliser and input prices continue to rise, this difference can only grow, he says.

"If you look at wholecrop, in a good year with an ME at 10.2 Mj/KgDM, each Megajoule of energy will cost around 69p. Whereas this year with MEs of around 9.7 – 9.8 Mj/KgDM, each Megajoule from wholecrop costs more like 73p. That's over 20% more than maize."

Chairman of the MGA and SRUC Crichton Royal research farm manager Hugh McClymont agrees saying maize produced nearly 40% more drymatter per hectare than wholecrop in last year's difficult conditions.

"Maize is still the most consistent performer. Grass silage making in the wet conditions last year was virtually impossible and compaction caused by the heavy forage harvesters and trailers on soft ground and damage to field entrances created a real problem.

"If we had only grass and wholecrop to rely on this winter, we would be in real trouble. Wheat averaged little over 7 tonnes of grain and 5 tonnes of straw per hectare at an average of 65% DM last year, giving around 8 tonnes of DM per hectare.

"The crop of Ardent maize we harvested on 26th September yielded 37.5 tonnes at 29% DM giving around 11 tonnes of DM per hectare – nearly 40% more than the wholecrop. And that's before you even factor the crop's considerably higher energy content." ■

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# Stop overfishing: MEPs vote for reform

**A major reform of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which aims to cut fishing to sustainable stock levels, end dumping at sea, and base long-term planning on sound scientific data, was approved by Parliament on Wednesday.**

Overfishing is widely seen as the worst failure of the current CFP, dating from 2002. The new one is to take effect in 2014.

European Commission figures suggest that 80% of Mediterranean stocks and 47% of Atlantic ones are overfished. The reform voted in

plenary sets out clear and strong measures to tackle this problem.

"We have shown today that the European Parliament is anything but toothless. We have used our power as a co-legislator, for the first time in fisheries policy, to put a stop to overfishing. Fish stocks should recover by 2020, enabling us to take 15 million tonnes more fish, and create 37,000 new jobs", said fisheries reform rapporteur Ulrike Rodust (S&D, DE). Her report was adopted by 502 votes to 137, with 27 abstentions.

## **Stop overfishing by ending discards**

Discards - fish thrown back, usually because they are of an unwanted species or size - account for almost a quarter of total EU catches. Most of the discarded species die. To end this wasteful practice, MEPs voted to oblige fishing vessels to land all catches in accordance with a schedule of specific dates for different fisheries, starting from 2014.

Landed catches of fish that are undersized, for example, would be restricted to uses other than human consumption. Member ►►

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## Horse meat found in Lancashire school meals

Schools in the Lancashire area have had their frozen beef supply suspended after the county council carried out tests which revealed traces of horsemeat in two products.

The council, which is working on a national level with the Food Standards Agency, chose to carry out tests for traces of horsemeat in all the products supplied to schools in the area after labelling concerns were raised.

A pre-prepared cottage pie used in 10% of primary schools in Lancashire and a halal beef burger which was available in four schools in the county tested positive for traces of horsemeat.

All affected schools have been contacted and informed.

Frozen processed beef products make up a small proportion of the school menu as most meals are prepared using beef from local suppliers.

"I hope that parents and children can be reassured by the advice that this isn't a food safety issue, however it is frankly appalling that we have found horsemeat in two products which were supposedly 100 percent beef" said Geoff Driver, leader of the Lancashire County Council.

The county council has undertaken a variety of tests for horse DNA in meat products at its Preston laboratory, reporting the results to the Food Standards Agency.

The affected schools have been made aware of the test results and, as a precaution, the council has also suspended a halal lamb burger, manufactured on the same premises as the beefburger, from its menu. ■

states must ensure that fishing vessels comply with the discard ban.

### Respect maximum sustainable yield

From 2015, EU member states will be prevented from setting quotas that are too high to be sustainable. Fishermen will have to respect the "maximum sustainable yield" (MSY), i.e. catch no more than a given stock can reproduce in a given year. In today's vote, MEPs sought to ensure that stocks recover by 2020 to above MSY levels and sustain them thereafter. Ultimately this should mean more fish, better catches and hence more jobs in the fishing industry.

### Long-term planning to replace yearly quota-haggling

The reform will rely on multi-annual fish stock management plans to

ensure that fishing stays sustainable. Taking a longer term approach should improve market predictability, which in turn should help the industry to invest better and plan ahead. Multi-annual plans will be based on more reliable and accurate scientific data, which EU member states will be obliged to collect and make available.

### Next steps

Parliament will now start negotiations with the Council and the Commission on the reform plans before their second reading. The Irish Presidency of the Council has repeatedly said it hopes to achieve an agreement the end of June. ■

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# Running an agri business 'becoming increasingly complex'

**The operating environment for food and agriculture companies is becoming increasingly complex as new external influences compound rising commodity prices.**

The flaws in the current supply chain structure is leaving the sector ill equipped to respond to this new complexity, according to a report.

It calls for the industry to transform the way supply chains are organized, by adopting longer-term supply agreements and, cooperative relationships with upstream and downstream partners.

The report identifies the dedicated supply chain model as the best next step for food and agriculture companies.

This structure has the potential to revolutionize the industry by making it more productive, innovative, safe and sustainable; all of which will be vital if the sector is to deliver food security to a future global population of 9 billion.

## **Limitations of the current structure**

Traditional pressures on the F&A (food and agriculture) industry (supply and demand dynamics, a

burgeoning population and rising agri commodity prices) are being compounded by a new set of external influences.

The direct use of agri commodities for biofuel production and an increased awareness of the energy intensity of food production, for example, have embroiled F&A companies in an ongoing food vs. fuel debate.

Similarly, speculation in agri commodity markets and the regulatory responses this has triggered from governments worldwide, has added to the ►►



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"Rabobank is developing new financing solutions that support and encourage companies embracing dedicated supply chain thinking"

Gilles Boumeester, Rabobank Global Head Food & Agri Coverag

complexity of the environment in which the sector operates.

These new pressures also serve to exacerbate the flaws in the current supply chain model.

The dominant supply chain model is currently structured in a linear fashion, in which suppliers, processors and retailers form short-term partnerships independent from the influence and interests of other members of the chain.

This model is highly inefficient, restricting F&A companies' ability to respond to changes in supply and demand dynamics, whilst fleeting partnerships limit productivity and restrict innovation. This system also results in wasteful processes that

cause more environmental degradation than is necessary.

#### **Adding value through closer cooperation**

Rabobank believes that switching to a new supply chain model has the potential to transform the F&A industry.

In a dedicated supply chain structure, upstream suppliers and processors enter into long-term partnerships with each other and a downstream chain leader. Crucially, information and insights are shared along the chain's length for the benefit of all members.

Justin Sherrard, Rabobank Global Strategist said "Closer cooperation

of this sort will transform the nature of F&A partnerships from transactional ones that are centered around chasing price, to a system focused on creating value".

The advantages of dedicated supply chains over the current system are manifold. Companies embracing this thinking will benefit in the following ways:

#### **Reduced risk**

Longer term, more stable agreements reduce exposure to price volatility, whilst shared insights will enable players to better react to market risks

#### **Improved productivity**

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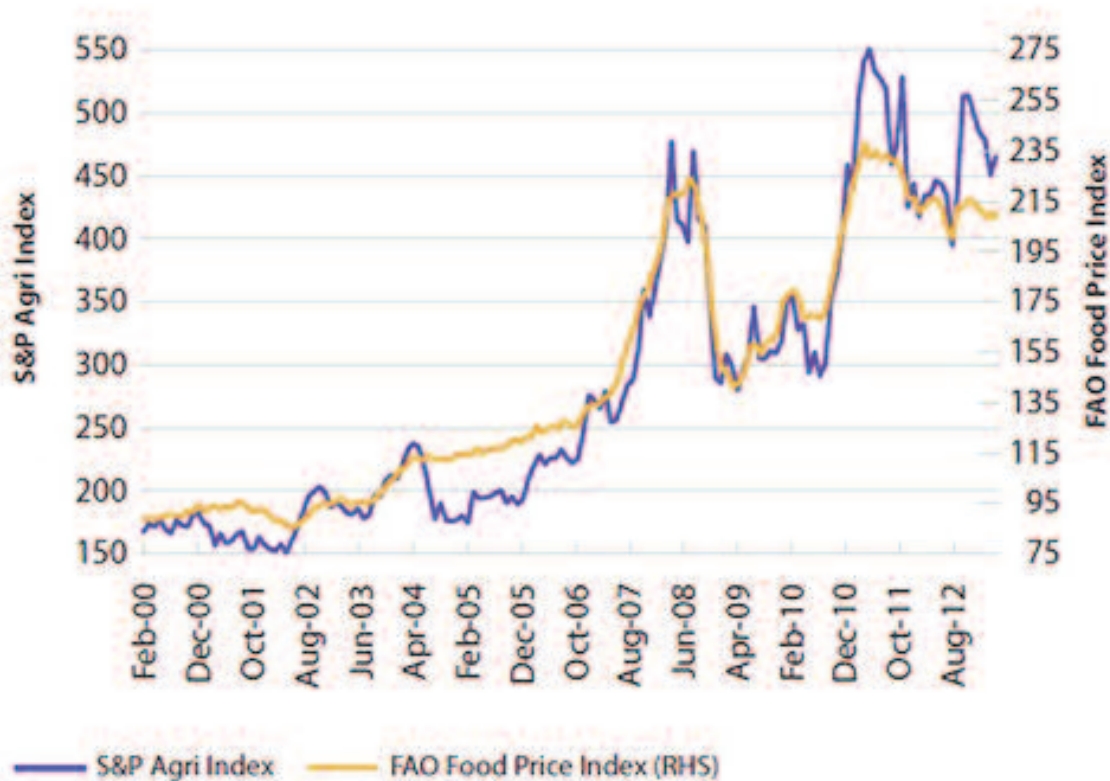


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**Figure 1.1: Agri commodity price spikes of recent years are expected to continue**

requirements improve process efficiency and partners can also work together to find ways to limit or reuse waste

**Access to new markets**

Better insights into downstream needs and opportunities can better inform product innovation and help companies to grow footprints in new markets

**Enhanced brand and reputation**

Companies with ambitious CSR targets can help their partners on other product attributes, such as sustainability

**Improved access to capital**

In addition to better cash flows and stronger credit ratings, members can access new financing models that provide leverage from chain partners

Adopting the dedicated supply chain model positions F&A companies for longer-term growth, as the sector rises to meet the over-arching challenge to feed the world in coming decades.

**Making the change**

The report encourages the industry to abandon its preoccupation with short-term price spikes. Rabobank believes that a model based on chasing price is a narrow approach that will restrict the ability of F&A companies to realize their growth objectives in this more complex and demanding environment.

The report calls for prominent F&A brands to show leadership, through creating initiatives that will lead to closer cooperation between their upstream partners.

The report cites several examples of leading F&A companies that are

already active in this space, such as Mars' decision to release the cocoa genome sequence into the public domain as part of its broader commitment to sustainably sourcing all cocoa purchases by 2020.

Furthermore, sector leaders undertaking such initiatives must become advocates for dedicated supply chains, by sharing their experiences with the wider industry.

Gilles Boumeester, Rabobank Global Head Food & Agri Coverage commented, "F&A financing institutions also have a role to play in creating an environment that is conducive to adopting this new model. To this end Rabobank is developing new financing solutions that support and encourage companies embracing dedicated supply chain thinking". ■



*Gavin Davies (left) in front of the 0.5 MW biogas plant on his 500 cow dairy farm in Wiltshire*

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# Chinese log prices reach new record highs

**Log imports to China were off to a slow start in 2012 but in the second half of the year, shipments picked up with New Zealand and the US gaining the biggest market shares, reports the Wood Resource Quarterly. The Chinese domestic log market also heated up, with log prices reaching record high levels.**

Seattle, USA. Demand for imported softwood logs in China increased in the second half of 2012 after declining during the first six months of the year.

Total imports in the 2H/12 were up nine percent, but the increase was not equally distributed between supplying countries.

Shipments from New Zealand and the US were up 29 percent and 20 percent, respectively, while Russian exports to China fell nine percent in the 2H/12 as compared to the 1H/12, reports in the Wood Resource Quarterly.

Log imports for the full year were down 15 percent from 2011, which was the first year-over-year decline since 2008. From 2008 to 2011, China's imports increased by as much as 70 percent to a record 30 million m3 in 2011.

Despite the decline in 2012, the total import volume was still the second highest on record. And for the month of December, there have never been more logs unloaded in Chinese ports than in the December of 2012.

The most dramatic shift in log supply sources for China over the past few years has been the diminished exports from Russia and the sharp increase in log volumes entering from New Zealand. Just five years ago, China imported as much as 21 million m3 of softwood logs from Russia and only 1.2 million m3 from New Zealand.

In the second half of 2012, the two countries shipped about 4.8 million m3 each.

The average import value of New Zealand Radiata pine in the 4Q/12 was up a few dollars from the previous quarter, reaching the highest level seen since 3Q/11, while the average value for most other species remained unchanged in the last quarter of 2012.

Domestic log prices in China on the other hand, continued their upward trend with Chinese fir log prices being up 13 percent from 4Q/11 to 4Q/12 to reach an all-time high, according to the WRQ. Prices for other commonly used species such as Mongolian pine, larch, poplar and birch were also at record high levels during the 4Q/12. ■

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# Police raid slaughterhouse on eve of EU meeting

**Police and food standards officials have raided premises in West Yorkshire and Wales on the eve of an EU emergency meeting.**

Property has been detained and work suspended at Peter Boddy Licensed Slaughterhouse in West Yorkshire and Farmbox Meats Ltd in Wales.

Environment Secretary Owen Paterson said the situation is 'absolutely shocking'.

"It's totally unacceptable if any business in the UK is defrauding the public by passing off horsemeat as beef" the minister said.

The Agency and the police are looking into the circumstances through which meat products, purporting to be beef for kebabs and burgers, were sold when they were in fact horse.


"West Yorkshire and Dyfed-Powys police entered the premises with the FSA."

"The FSA has suspended operations at both these plants while their investigations continue. The FSA has detained all meat found and seized paperwork, including customer lists from the two companies."

"The FSA are in the process of establishing the customers of the Welsh business so that the necessary action can be taken to recall and recover products sold that may be contaminated."

The FSA has suspended operations at both these plants. Both West Yorkshire and Dyfed-Powys police have entered the premises with the FSA. The FSA has detained all meat found and seized paperwork, including customer lists from the two companies.

"I ordered an audit of all horse producing abattoirs in the UK ►►



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**Mike Sanderson**  
NFU Cumbrian Country Adviser

after this issue first arose last month and I was shocked to uncover what appears to be a blatant misleading of consumers" said Andrew Rhodes, FSA Director of Operations.

"I have suspended both plants immediately while our investigations continue."

Alun Davies, Welsh Government Minister for Agriculture, said:

"Integrity and trust are essential in the food chain. I would be appalled if these allegations are proven. The Welsh Government is working closely with Defra and the FSA to ensure this matter is dealt with swiftly and decisively."

EU ministers held a meeting in Brussels to deal with the fallout from the horsemeat scandal as investigations in France and the UK continued.

Keith Taylor MEP called for a change in EU law to allow consumers to see where their meat comes from.

"The Horsemeat scandal exposes major questions over EU rules on

food safety and quality, transparency and food labelling, and as regards cross-border fraud and crime" he said.

"Concerns about the regulatory system, product labelling and how this alleged fraud could have been allowed to happen in the EU's internal market, must be addressed without delay."

"The time has come to see mandatory country-of-origin labelling for all meat, including meat used as an ingredient in processed food. This should include place of birth, rearing and slaughter. Current EU rules only require country labelling for unprocessed beef. The Greens had called for full origin labelling on meat products in 2010 but this was foolishly refused by EU governments."

The National Sheep Association has said the horsemeat scandal is the latest evidence against government cuts in infrastructure and regulatory enforcement.

Chairman of the association John

Geldard has called for an alliance between farming groups to support food producers.

"It is clear the farmer's voice is not being heard well enough by the Government and Farming Ministers, yet we are the foundation of the food supply chain, without whom the consumer would be hungry" he said.

"The horsemeat scandal and lack of farming consultation in finding solutions and future-proofing secure food supplies shows existing communication between farmers and Government is inadequate. I see this as the catalyst to create a new alliance of farmer organisations that can support Government in meeting our future food challenges."

The fear of eating contaminated beef has caused many shoppers to be wary of all meat sold in supermarkets.

Current impacts on farmers have been minimal. The average farm gate deadweight beef price has moved by less than 3p/kg between last week and the week prior to the issue





breaking. Slaughtering volumes have increased over this period.

NFU Cumbrian County Adviser, Mike Sanderson, said: "When the issue broke, the NFU immediately contacted major retailers to express our anger and disappointment that their actions and the actions of their suppliers had undermined the hard work of farmers in producing quality, traceable produce."

"This whole system of quality is being completely undermined by failures within the supply chain and reinforces my organisation's call for clearer labelling and a commitment from retailers to British produce."

"In the meantime, please buy from your local farmer, butcher or look for the Red Tractor logo on all the fresh meat you buy. Trust me, this is the only way you can be sure that the products you're feeding your family have been produced to world-class standards which are independently inspected.

Farmers and consumers have also been urged to work together to

prevent further cheating by cross-border meat suppliers who have substituted beef with cheap, unregulated horse meat.

"This can be done if consumers insist that the fresh beef and manufactured beef they buy is taken exclusively from cattle born, reared, and processed in the UK," explained NBA national director Chris Mallon.

"The integrity of their product contrasts hugely with the horsemeat which that has infiltrated the domestic food chain as a result of careless, or unscrupulous, actions undertaken by participants in a supply chain which is understood to cover companies in Poland, Luxembourg, Romania, France and the Republic of Ireland."

Retailers have been criticised over their scrutiny of the product as well as the price they pay for the meat.

They are 'in danger of losing their reputations' if more meat products have to be withdrawn according to Mallon.

"This disappoints us because some retailers, as well as some of their suppliers, have quite obviously been too relaxed about the origin, even the species, of some of the meat in their processed products and beef farmers believe the multiples can help restore consumer faith in their judgement if they make more effort to highlight the origin, and superior integrity, of domestic beef, and domestically manufactured beef products."

CLA Midlands Rural Advisor Donna Tavernor said: "The revelations that some processed beef contained up to 100 percent horse meat came as a shock, and it underlines what we have been saying for years – that shopping locally brings not just better tasting, fresher food, but is also traceable."

"Buying local ensure that the meat you have brought is of high welfare standards and supports our British farmers. Of course, some farms even sell meat direct through their own farm shops." ■



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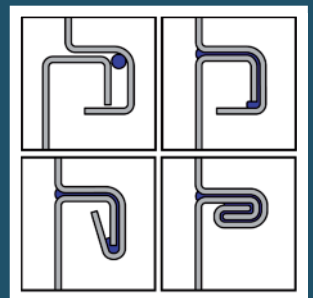
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The WiBE includes a WiFi router with built in Firewall.

For more information go to: [http://www.roalan.com/category\\_3G\\_Broadband.html](http://www.roalan.com/category_3G_Broadband.html)

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# Commission amending honey law to hide GM pollen

**EU Member States are set to discuss the Commission's proposal to amend the Honey Directive in what is widely believed to be an attempt to circumvent the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and hide the presence of GM pollen from consumers.**

The discussion, which will take place at the Council of Europe's Working Party on Foodstuffs, is the latest development in the long story of GM pollen in honey.

In September 2011 the ECJ ruled that pollen is an ingredient of honey and that honey containing GM pollen must follow GM regulations, meaning it cannot be sold without full food authorisation and GM labels.

A year later the Commission proposed an amendment to the Honey Directive reclassifying pollen as a "constituent" of honey, not an ingredient, which has a considerable impact on labelling.

Under GM rules each GM ingredient in a product must be listed on the label. Under the Commission's proposed changes to the Honey Directive GM pollen would still have to be authorised as food before it could be sold, but GM pollen would have to make up more than 0.9% of the total weight of the honey itself before it would have to be labelled - a circumstance that is unlikely ever to arise as total pollen weight in honey is normally around 0.1%.

Beekeepers say that by insisting that pollen is a constituent of honey rather than an ingredient the Commission is repeating a "substantive factual error" it first used (without success) in the ECJ case.

In a strongly worded statement issued in January 2013 a dozen European beekeeper and farming groups demanded the ECJ ruling be implemented in full saying, "There is a clear attempt by the Commission to circumvent the Court ruling."

Honeybees forage widely (up to several miles) for pollen, which they need as protein source. Colonies concentrate their efforts on pollen rich plants, such as oilseed rape,



which benefits farmers by enhancing pollination rates in their crops - as much as 20% in oilseed rape.

These pollination services are vital for European agriculture and are worth some €22 billion per year.

Phil Chandler, Director of Friends of Bees and author of the Barefoot Beekeeper, said: "Many crops rely on beehives being placed nearby to help with pollination and to boost yields."

"To some extent beekeepers can decide what pollen is present in their honey by where hives are located, and because of the dangers of insecticides present in many GM crops, they will choose to avoid

putting them in reach of GM pollen, but this may not always be possible."

"The Commission is proposing to legitimise GM contamination of honey and hide it from the public."

If the Commission's proposal is successful GM pollen in honey may become routine and legal, effectively preventing this contamination from being used as grounds to strengthen 'coexistence' rules that protect non-GM food and crops from GM contamination.

GM Freeze Campaign Director Pete Riley commented: "The EC is bending over backwards to help the biotech companies and is ignoring the long-term importance of

honeybees for food security and the rural economy."

"Consumer pressure forced retailers to remove GM ingredients from their products years ago and EU labelling laws have kept them out. If the Commission's proposal is successful people will not be able to make an informed choice when they buy honey or food containing honey."

"Europe's politicians must stand up to the Commission and biotech industry, give this proposal the boot and adhere to the ruling of the European Court of Justice. This would inevitably mean enacting solid laws on how and where GM crops can be used to enable all foods to be produced without GM contamination."

Phil Chandler added: "Honey consumers expect a pure and natural product and will not want GM pollen as an added extra."

"Beekeepers and honeybees are facing huge challenges at present with pesticide contamination, parasites and diseases threatening their very existence. GM contamination could be the last straw for both bees and beekeepers. If this happens European farmers will be one of the main losers. Apples and most other top fruit, as well as many seed crops, need a strong and healthy bee population to pollinate them and will be compromised if there are not enough bees around."

"Beekeepers and honey lovers need to unite and tell the EC that bees and honey need protection from GM contamination, not legislation that attempts to hide it." ■

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## Arable farmers continue to move to minimum tillage crop

**Arable farmers are continuing to move to minimum tillage crop establishment, while some early adopters of the system are now at the stage where they are upgrading their equipment on the back of strong combinable crop prices.**

That's been the experience of farm machinery dealer Ripon Farm Services, which covers territory across Yorkshire and Cleveland, and has holds the area franchise for drill and tillage machinery manufacturer Sumo.

Iain McPherson, sales manager at Ripon Farm Services Tadcaster branch, says that their sales of Sumo equipment continue to climb.

"In many instances farmers are moving on from simple sets of discs,

and looking to the tine/disc/press format of the Sumo Trio one-pass cultivator to combine deep loosening, seedbed creation and consolidation in a single pass."

"But others have been committed to minimum tillage for some time, and have found the system works well for them. Many of those are now trading in their original Trios to benefit from the latest design of current models, which feature ultra-low draught subsoiler legs with auto-reset, improved point choices, disc scrapers and a redesigned Multipacka."

"We've sold a lot of 3m mounted Trios from our Ripon and Darrington branches and, from Tadcaster in particular, there's been a demand for 2.5m units as well as 3m. We're

also finding interest is growing in trailed 3m units, as opposed to the standard mounted models."

"With a new branch at Stockton-on-Tees, following our purchase of the EA Clayton business, when added to our other branches at Keighley and Hull, we've now got a wider area across which to offer the Sumo range."

"The way Sumo equipment is made shows in the second-hand condition of the Trios we have taken in, which has been very good. As a result, second-hand demand is high and prices are strong. And the level of trade we do in Sumo wearing parts suggests customers are keen to maintain these values by refitting their Sumo equipment with genuine spares," he adds. ■

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# EU farm reforms as voted by the Committee



**Agriculture Committee MEPs set out their position on EU farm policy reform in texts voted on Wednesday and Thursday, after more than a year's worth of debates with farmers, cooperatives, EU agriculture ministers, MPs, experts and academics.**

This position will pave the way for negotiations with EU member states.

These payments provide farmers with a safety net in the form of a basic income support, decoupled from production, to stabilise their income from sales on the markets, which are subject to volatility.

Direct payments also help to provide basic public goods delivered through sustainable farming.

## **Who will get direct payments, and who will not?**

The precise definition of an "active farmer", i.e. the entity entitled to receive EU-funded direct payments, should be decided by member states and not by the EU, says the committee.

However, some entities, such as transport and real estate companies, airports, sports clubs, campsite operators, mining companies or other non-agricultural enterprises, to be defined by member states, should automatically be excluded from these definitions unless they can prove that their agricultural activities form a significant part of their overall economic activities, MEPs add.

It should be up to member states to extend the list of excluded entities (the "negative list"), on objective and non-discriminatory grounds and after notifying the Commission, says the committee.

This greatly simplifies the Commission's original proposal, which defined "non-farmers" as those whose income from direct payments amounts to less than 5% of their total receipts from non-agricultural activities (excluding those who get less than €5,000 in direct payment income).

## **How to allocate direct payments more fairly**

MEPs want the levels of payments to farmers to be rebalanced among member states slightly faster than originally proposed by the European Commission.



The committee agreed that member states with direct payments per hectare below 70% of the EU average (down from the Commission proposal of 90%) should see the shortfall reduced by 30%.

In member states with direct payments amounting to 70% - 80% of the EU average, the shortfall should be reduced by 25% and in those with over 80% of the EU average, by 10%.

This measure should ensure that farmers in no member state receive less than 65% of the EU average.

By contrast, to achieve greater consistency and convergence of direct payment rates within member states, the committee slightly relaxed the rules to balance payments among farmers within any given one.

As of 2019, payments received by all farmers in any given member state are to be based on a uniform unit value, as proposed by the Commission, but could nonetheless in some cases deviate from the average by up to 20% so as to avoid sudden sharp falls in support, says the committee.

However, where payments are reduced, their level in 2019 may not be more than 30% below that of 2014.

#### **Capping direct payments**

MEPs endorsed Commission proposals to cap direct payments to any one farm at €300,000, reduce payments to those receiving between €250,000 and €300,000 by 70%, and payments to those receiving between €200,000 and €250,000 by 40%. Payments to

farms receiving between €150,000 and €200,000 would be cut by 20%.

Other amendments, seeking to reduce payments to bigger farms even more, or on the contrary calling for the capping to be completely rejected, failed to win the support of a majority in committee. MEPs nonetheless adapted the rules proposed by the Commission so as to exclude cooperatives and other groups of farmers who distribute payments received to their members and ensure that capped money remains in the region where it was capped and is used for rural development programmes.

#### **Environmental protection**

New environmental rules for farmers should be more flexible and linked to the size of the ►



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holding, says the committee. The three key measures proposed by the Commission - crop diversification, maintaining existing permanent grassland and permanent pasture and ecological focus areas - would remain, but certain exceptions should be made to reflect geographical conditions and size of holding, say MEPs.

Farmers whose holdings are certified under national or regional environmental certification schemes, and hence are already using environment-friendly practices, would be exempt from mandatory greening measures on condition that these practices have an impact at least equivalent to that which the mandatory greening measures would have.

#### **Crop diversification**

Farmers with holdings of 10 ha - 30 ha of arable land should be required to plant at least two different crops (rather than requiring three crops

for all farmers cultivating more than 3 ha, as proposed by the Commission). None of these crops should cover more than 80% (as compared to 70%) of the arable land.

Farms of more than 30 ha of arable land should be required to cultivate three crops with the main one covering not more than 75% and two main crops together not more than 95% of the arable land.

Holdings in northern Scandinavia (north of the 62nd parallel) with more than 30 hectares of arable land should be exempt.

#### **Permanent grassland and permanent pasture**

Member states must ensure that the share of land under permanent grass and permanent pasture is maintained at national, regional or sub-regional level, to be decided by member states. Up to 5% and in exceptional circumstances up to 7% could be converted, MEPs say,

adding that exceptions should be possible for carbon-rich soils, wetlands, semi-natural grasslands and pastures.

#### **Ecological focus areas**

Initially, - during the first year's application of the new rules, farmers with more than 10 ha of arable land would have to ensure that 3% (rather than 7% as proposed by the Commission), excluding permanent grassland, permanent pasture and permanent crops, is reserved for so-called "ecological focus areas" (EFAs).

EFAs could include, for example, land left fallow, terraces, landscape features including hedgerows, ditches, stone walls, in field trees, ponds, land planted with nitrogen-fixing crops, buffer strips and afforested areas. Farmers could use EFAs for production provided they do not use pesticides or fertilisers on them, MEPs stress. ►►



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## Cheese plant closure threatens 70 jobs

A Canadian-owned cheese production plant in Carmarthenshire is set to close, affecting 70 jobs and its local suppliers.

The dairy plant in Newcastle Emlyn, West Wales, is owned by Saputo and manufactures cheese, milk, yogurt and other dairy products that are exported around the world.

The company said it was also closing another plant based in Heiden, Germany. Both the German and Welsh plant were bought by the company in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

"The past few years have been a learning and challenging experience," said a company spokesperson.

The firm's founder and chairman, Emanuele Saputo, told BBC Wales that the company had found the market for dairy products to be "marginal at best and highly competitive".

"We felt that the amount of time and energy it takes us to manage the business perhaps would be better utilised in other markets, where the margins are much more substantial."

NFU Cymru Deputy President Stephen James, a dairy farmer himself, said: "This news is undoubtedly a big blow to the area, as Saputo is a major employer in a very rural area of Wales. Our thoughts are with those whose jobs are at risk."

"It's imperative that all options are now explored to keep operations going and to keep workers in jobs - whether this is through finding a potential buyer or through a local co-operative model." ■

EFAs could be weighted on the basis of their ecological significance. Weighting coefficients should be drawn up by member states and approved by the Commission. The EFAs should be expanded as of 1 January 2016 to cover 5% of arable land, says the committee.

By the end of March 2017, the Commission would have to present an evaluation report and if necessary a legislative proposal to further increase the percentage to 7%. This proposal, if tabled, would be subject to approval by both the European Parliament and the Council.

The committee backs Commission plans to make 30% of the national budget for direct payments conditional upon compliance with greening measures. Farmers who fail to comply would lose the "greening" funds, but should not face further reductions in their remaining direct payments, MEPs decided.

### More money for optional greening measures

To further support greening efforts, the committee raised the ceiling on EU co-financing of agri-environmental and climate measures by 5%.

This would make less-developed and outermost regions and also the Aegean islands, eligible for up to 90% co-financing (as compared to 85% proposed by the Commission). For other regions, the co-funding ceiling would be set at 55% (as compared to 50%).

At least 25% of the total spending earmarked for rural development programmes would have to be reserved for agri-environmental and climate measures and support for organic farming. ■



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# Supermarkets adopted 'bullying culture' says Mallon

**Supermarkets and the public are paying the price for the purchasing tactics deployed by retailers for decades according to the National Beef Association.**

"They adopted a bullying culture aimed exclusively at securing as much farm food as possible" said Chris Mallon, NBA national director.

"The result is tortured supply chains that add so much unnecessary cost that short cuts on quality and traceability, and even cheating by some suppliers, was inevitable".

But the chief executive of Iceland supermarket chain Malcolm Walker said the horse meat scandal is a problem not caused by supermarkets but by local authorities and the catering industry.

"Supermarkets shouldn't be blamed. British supermarkets have got a fantastic reputation for food safety" Walker told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

"If we're going to blame somebody, let's start with local authorities because there's a whole side of this industry which is invisible, that's the catering industry.

"Schools, hospitals, it's a massive business for cheap food and local authorities award contracts based purely on one thing: price."

Mallon called for a reverse in the 'misguided tactics' in food supply chains. "This can only be done if a real and permanent effort is made to correct decades of misapplied endeavour and a new approach to food purchasing is adopted."

It is a view shared by the National Pig Association who recently blamed 'supermarket greed' for the horse meat scandal.

The fear of eating contaminated beef has caused many shoppers to be wary of all meat sold in supermarkets.

Farming groups have blamed retailers who 'habitually drive down meat prices' below the cost of production causing a lapse in quality or an adulterated content of the product.

"Where on earth do they think this cheap euomeat is coming from?" demanded Richard Longthorp, chairman of the NPA.

"If you consistently buy something below the price at which it can be produced, you must know that corners have been cut in quality, ►►



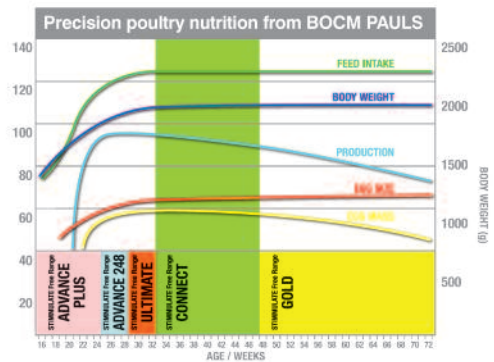
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**"If we're going to blame somebody, let's start with local authorities" said Malcolm Walker, the chief executive of Iceland supermarket chain.**



or safety, or legality, or all three."

Mallon said: "The multiples must start by focussing as much buying as possible on the high quality, high provenance, food that is grown on nearby British farms. If they do this they can secure both current and future supplies of essential products as long as they also make sure that all participants in the supply chain adequately cover their costs."

"One of the most immediate moves should be the elimination of profit taking, middlemen, like processors who add avoidable cost to the supply system at the same time, as has been made obvious over the last month, they reduce the control retailers should have over the origin and provenance of their purchases."

"The on-going horsemeat scandal has demonstrated conclusively that consumers only get what they pay for and that continued price reduction will jeopardise food quality".

"Concentrating on cheapness is myopic. In real terms British consumers are currently paying 20 per cent less for food than they did a decade ago."

Retailers have confirmed to Environment Secretary Owen Paterson that they expect the majority of their tests on processed beef products to be completed by Friday.

Retailers and the British Retail Consortium (BRC) met Paterson for the first time since test results covering 65% of the targeted products were published Friday.

Speaking after the meeting, the BRC also said that retailers are doing all they can to engage with consumers on the issue and establish the extent and causes of failures in the supply chain.

The last report said five brands tested positive for horse meat against the Food Standards Agency's threshold. These are the five own brand products that have already been notified to the FSA and withdrawn from sale over the same period.

Failures in the supply chains of supermarkets were highlighted by farming groups like the National Beef Association.

"The squeezing of their suppliers margins and the relentless search for profit through buying cheaper product is the reason horsemeat is in their products" the association said.

"The supermarkets spend millions on creating and protecting their brand but what is behind that brand is reflected in their own brand economy burgers. They are brands are funded by the exploitation of the consumer and the supplier.

"Supermarket own brands contained horsemeat and as such it is their name on the packet and their responsibility to be sure what is in the product. They cannot blame anyone other than their own buying policies for their failure to supply their consumers with what it says on the label."

British Retail Consortium Director General Helen Dickinson said: "Test results have continued to come in over the weekend. The labs are working flat out and our members are confident that the vast majority of testing will be completed by Friday." ■

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## Repairing pasture a priority this spring

**Grassland farmers need to plan remedial field work now to prevent forage shortfalls next winter says Rod Bonshor, general manager for Oliver Seeds.**

"While many farmers are quite rightly focussed on the daily tasks of feeding and eking out current forage stocks, they also need to think about how to bolster grassland productivity this spring and summer," said Bonshor.

"Around 20% of the seed purchased by farmers to sow last autumn never made it into the ground."

"Luckily, unlike cereals where there are specific winter and spring varieties, all cool temperate grasses used in UK mixtures will germinate successfully when sown from March to September in good growing weather. Drilling the seed this spring will be fine as long as it has been stored in a cool, dry place over winter."

### Damage

"Many fields have suffered from prolonged flooding, damage from vehicles or poaching by livestock. Grass dies if covered by water for too long, and you don't have to travel too far to see gateways and areas around water troughs in a mess."

"Significantly damaged areas should be over-seeded as a priority before unproductive weed grasses, like annual meadow grass and bents, take hold. Perennial weeds like docks will also take advantage if soil is left bare too long."

"Any new leys that were sown last autumn need checking for damage too. If the winter water table was high, the young grass plants are likely to be shallow rooted."

"When the cold snap came they could have been pushed out of the

ground by the process of frost heave. If the land is fit to travel, the only option is to try to roll the plants back down into the soil before they die. If already dead, the affected patches will need overseeding."

"Grass leys are like a bank, if you don't invest in them you won't get a return. Introducing new, modern varieties this spring as full reseeds or repairing damaged areas, will produce greater yields of higher quality grass which can be used to replenish the feed-stores for next winter." ■



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# Local butchers see trade increase amid horse meat scandal

**The Butchers Q Guild, a membership organisation of over 100 independent butchers around the UK, have said sales figures from all their members have increased.**

Butcher Brindon Addy has seen a 10% increase in trade since the horse meat scandal was first revealed, with beef burger sales up 30%.

"Consumers are heading back to the high street following the scare, which has dented consumer trust in the major supermarkets" said Addy.

Traceability standards for beef products are the subject of debate as news emerged over the content of meat products in UK and Irish supermarkets.

But Addy, who owns J. Brindon Addy Butchers and is national chairman of the Butchers Q Guild said: "We were selling some 200 burgers per week before the horse meat scare – now it's up to around the 300 mark."

"I think consumers have become more aware that there isn't transparency in purchasing meat,

burgers in particular, from their local supermarket."

The National Beef Association, who have campaigned for more stringent labeling of beef products, highlighted the issue of undervalued beef sold in larger supermarkets.

"At the moment we are led to believe that no one in the manufacturing process was aware of horse meat being sold as beef, it makes one wonder when the processors were purchasing this bargain beef raw material that ►►

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no one thought how can we be getting this beef at such a bargain price?" the association queried.

**Meat from local butchers are often sourced from local farms.**

A pledge that beef products are free of horse meat is a promise 'supermarkets can't guarantee' Addy said.

Findus is the latest company to be caught up in the controversy surrounding contamination of meat products, which has affected companies in the UK, Irish Republic, Poland and France.

The company removed one of its products, which in some cases contained 100% horse meat rather than beef.

"We believe that these two particular cases - the frozen burgers from Tesco and the lasagne from Findus - are linked to suppliers in Ireland and France respectively" the Food Standards Agency said.

"We are working closely with the authorities in these countries to get to the root of the problem."

Addy said: "Q Guild butchers can show the provenance of all the products they sell and we pride ourselves on being able to deliver from farm to plate and in knowing every step of the process."

"More and more customers are coming through the door. This has been a real win not only for us, but the Q Guild and butchers as a whole."

Oisín Murnion of the National Beef Association said: "The horsemeat scandal is a classic example of what happens when supermarket suppliers are squeezed in cost terms and consumers are encouraged to believe that beef, which they like and love to buy, is just as cheap as chicken or other less expensive meats." ■



# Kendall in second term as EU food chairman

**NFU President Peter Kendall has been endorsed for a further two year term as chairman of the Copa-Cogeca Food Chain Working Party that represents EU farming unions.**

Kendall, continuing in the role he started in 2010, said he was ready to push forward with 'significant progress already made' at the EU level.

"The significant issues in the food supply chain remain a personal priority for me, and indeed for the NFU as an organisation" he said.


"With the recent appointment in the UK of a Supermarket Adjudicator, after a decade of lobbying, my resolve is strengthened further to help make changes in the EU supply chain for the benefits of farmers and growers."

"Proper rules in the supply chain at EU level are crucial as big retailers and processors are increasingly operating on a pan-European basis."

"Regulation in one country alone will not prevent abuses in the supply chain across borders. When we have significant price pressure, and long and complicated food supply chains, there are opportunities for some processing and retailing operators to cut corners which is completely unacceptable; the current issue with horsemeat in the supply chain is a case in point.

"I will continue to provide leadership on food chain issues and to work with Copa-Cogeca representatives to build equitable, fair and transparent supply chains. Finally, with the recently launched green paper on unfair trading practices from the EU Commission, I will provide robust leadership to ensure we take advantage of the opportunity this presents for strengthening the position of farmers in the supply chain." ■

# Farmers opt for euro subsidy payment as sterling falls



**As the UK economy continues to falter, UK farmers face another challenging year brought on by adverse weather conditions, soaring costs and a weak eurozone export market.**

Farmers in the UK have highlighted the importance of CAP after the industry suffered in the wettest year on record and other problems affecting farm profits, the National Farmers' Union have said.

Defra's Farm Business Income forecasts for the year ending February 2013 predict a decline in the profitability of farming across the majority of farming sectors.

Weather-impacted output coupled with increased input costs have hit farming over the last year, and these figures are the first to indicate the financial impact on farmers.

The increasing costs serve as a 'timely reminder', farmers said, that single farm payments act as a lifeline for many businesses.

UK farming businesses eligible to receive EU subsidies can opt to receive the payment in either Sterling or euros.

This is not a decision to be taken lightly as exchange rates fluctuate constantly and consequently the Sterling-euro exchange rate remains the biggest detriment on sector-wide farm income in the UK.

However as the Pound continues to fall against the euro, UK farmers may gain more from their EU subsidy by opting to take the payment in euros, but the timing of the actual currency transaction will be key.

Thomas Walsh from FC Exchnage said: "In times of currency volatility it is vital those needing to change money - especially large sums such as EU subsidies - seek the best rates in a changing and complicated market."

"With continued uncertainty surrounding the Pound, those eligible for EU subsidies may wish to take receipt of this year's subsidy in euros as the currency continues to rally."

"Taking payment in euros could result in significant gains - for example based on today's EUR/GBP rate of [1.1540/0.866] on a subsidy of €200,000 will achieve £13,706.05 more than the rate set by the Rural Payments Agency in September 2012."

HSBC Head of Agriculture Allan Wilkinson said the agricultural



sector needed to concentrate 'on the basics' in order to preserve margins in 2013.

Livestock producers are among the hardest hit with feed prices and an increased feed use hitting margins.

The forecasts show profitability for the pig and dairy sectors falling by 50% and 42% respectively.

For beef and sheep producers, falls of 44 per cent are predicted for lowland producers, while their uplands counterparts have fared worse with income falling by 52 per cent. Only the poultry sector remains unchanged, according to the Defra forecast.

Wilkinson warned that farm incomes are expected to plateau, which means farmers must place extra emphasis on

costs of production and enterprise margins.

Recent weather events impacted on the UK cereal sector and price volatility has highlighted the need to plan effectively.

"There are no secrets to being the best – the attributes have been well documented and include a strong desire to succeed, a clear strategy, maximising the deployment of all business resources, regular benchmarking and business planning. Last but not least, a thorough understanding of your main customers is essential" Wilkinson said.

"Price volatility on both sides of the budget mean that the range in the final margin can be wider than ever, the margin for timing difference being shorter than ever."

"After recent high levels of farm incomes, this has to be the year to concentrate on the basics in order to preserve margins. Forward Planning 2013 not only allows current capital investment to be assessed prudently, it also allows those in the agriculture sector to quickly assess the changes required in order to maintain viability as market conditions change." ■

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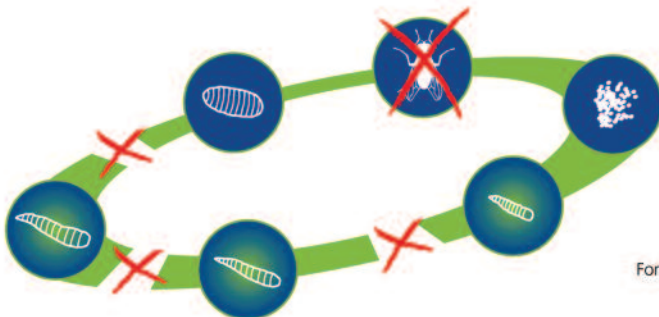


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# Farmers face tough start to year over feed prices

**South West farmers are facing one of their toughest starts to a new year as they battle to keep livestock fed and healthy in the face of poor forage, high feed costs and continued bad weather.**

Cattle are spending longer indoors this winter due to the wet weather - but summer deluges had a huge impact on silage quality and farmers are having to use more bought in and supplementary feed, for which prices are high - again because of weather-related poor yields.

At the same time there has been less revenue coming into many farming businesses, with poor forage being blamed for falls in milk yields per cow right across the UK and leading to beef farmers struggling to produce cattle at their finished target weight.

Sheep farmers face similar issues with poor quality and quantity of grazing, the need to supplement feeding and the practical issue of tending flocks and managing lambing time on sodden and increasingly muddy fields.

"Our inspectors are on the ground every day talking with and supporting farm business and the combination of problems our Members are having to deal with right now is causing real distress" said Philip Wilson of Cornish Mutual.

"Soil quality is affected due to soluble nutrients being washed away by the rain which has affected the quantity and quality of fodder and on top of that feed prices are high globally."

"However, farmers feel they have no choice but to winter cattle indoors for longer due to the rain and the risk of damage to waterlogged fields by grazing cattle, which they fear could affect their Single Farm Payment for the upkeep of the land. In Somerset in particular, many fields are simply still underwater."

"There's no doubt animal wellbeing has suffered also as a result of the weather and this is reflected in the reports of reduced milk yields and animals coming to market showing signs of the poor quality of the grass and the forage they've been eating in recent months."

Dr Michael Lee at an NFU Cymru Annual Poultry conference said: "Feed costs are a key element to the profitability of a poultry unit." ►►

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"The price of wheat a soya has rocketed and we need to reach a point where poultry producers can have access to a sustainable source of protein."

Research into alternative protein sources for all ruminants and aquaculture, is underway at IBERS.

Last year IBERS started a couple of projects looking at the nutritional value and improving yields of lupin, pea and bean crops in collaboration with industry and other research partners. The main aim of the projects is to give farmers more control on the sourcing of protein by providing alternative home-grown solutions.

Clare Morgan, NFU Cymru Poultry Board chair said: "The common theme from the Conference was that feed price is eroding profits."

"We know that the wheat yield and quality were badly affected by last year's extremely wet season and the poultry sector is now suffering."

The latest NFU survey on poultry cost of production shows a considerable rise in feed costs across all the categories of poultry production.

Feed costs for both cage eggs and free range eggs have risen by £60/t compared with January 2012, while broiler producers also reported an increase of £50/t in feed cost.

"We should not lose sight of the fact that the feed price is not just high in the UK, it is a global situation" Morgan said. ■



## Councils urged to show commitment to younger farmers

**County councils have been urged to show 'greater commitment' to younger farmers by helping them secure tenancies, it has been revealed.**

"Many young farmers and new entrants have limited access to land, compounded by prohibitive land prices and rental values" said Darren Williams (pictured), of Garthbregy, Breconshire who wrote to local authorities.

However, the Farmers' Union of Wales fears a number of local authorities are consolidating and disposing of these holdings or reducing the length of tenancy agreements to the extent that investment in holdings by tenants becomes unviable.

The new committee is concerned that councils are struggling to move older tenants on from the medium/larger sized holdings preventing the younger generation accessing them. This results in stagnation within the industry and a less dynamic local rural economy. "It is understandable why tenants,

who have been farmers all their lives, would not want to abandon the farming industry altogether.

"It is, therefore, suggested that councils should consider offering the older generation tenant one of the smaller CCHs as a retirement / smallholding opportunity, releasing the larger holdings for a new generation of tenants in order to facilitate their entry into the industry," Mr Williams stated.

His letter also mentioned that some local authorities are no longer employing an in-house land agent. "This can often result in an expensive service that delivers little for both the tenant and landlord.

"The union asks that neighbouring councils group together and employ a full time agent specifically to deal with CCHs and believes this would represent better delivery for local authorities, tenants and the public purse."

Members of the new committee are also concerned that councils no longer consider CCHs as a service to their county despite the 1970 Agriculture Act specifying that local authorities should "aim to provide opportunities for persons to be farmers on their own account by letting holdings to them".

"We are constantly reminded of the need to encourage the youngest and brightest talent into agriculture and, for many, CCHs remain one of the only entry routes in the industry," Mr Williams stated. "CCHs must therefore be kept as a legacy for future generations."

The committee expressed further concern that if CCHs are no longer intended as "holdings for life" then councils have a duty to assist tenants to move on to larger holdings.

"If the CCH system works as it should, then these farms should hold the prospective tenants for the private sector landlords," Williams added. ■



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**Ray Goodfellow:**  
RSPCA Chief Legal Officer



# RSPCA seeks hearing over live exports decision

**The RSPCA is to seek a hearing in the High Court to determine whether the charity can take its live animal exports judicial review application to a full hearing.**

The charity applied in December to seek a judicial review of the arrangements operated by Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) for the approval and supervision of live animal exports through the port of Ramsgate.

The permission was refused by Mr Justice Males following a consideration of the court papers.

He stated: "There is no arguable illegality in the policy or practice of AHVLA in relation to its authorisation or inspection of live sheep through the Port of Ramsgate to Calais."

Thanet District Council lifted its temporary ban on live exports at Ramsgate in November.

The animals are transported over to Calais on an open-decked, flat bottomed converted Russian tank transporter, the MV Joline.

The local authority had closed the port, which has no livestock handling facilities, to live exports in September following an incident when over 40 sheep had to be destroyed.

The port was then re-opened in October following legal action by Dutch exporters.

The RSPCA said AHVLA 'acted unlawfully' in failing to require exporters to use ports with appropriate facilities and failing to impose sailing restrictions.

"We are taking this stand because we believe AHVLA's approach is failing to safeguard animal welfare and is in breach of European laws designed to protect animals from injury or undue suffering during transport" said Ray Goodfellow, chief legal officer at RSPCA.

"We believe we have a strong case which deserves to be heard."

"The issues remain the same - the lack of facilities at or near the port to deal with emergencies, the use of an old tank transporter to ship animals across the Channel in rough weather and the failure to thoroughly inspect animals at the port are all unacceptable."

"These issues have serious implications for animal welfare which is why the RSPCA is pressing its case further." ■



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# UK manufacturer spots Brazil opportunity

**TMAT Ltd, manufacturer of acoustic components for tractors and excavators whose customers include Case, New Holland, JCB and Volvo, is planning to open a new factory in Brazil.**

With Brazil due to host both the 2014 football World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, SOBRATEMA (Brazilian Association of Technology for Equipment and Maintenance) states that Brazil aims to complete 12,265 infrastructure projects by 2016.

The events represent a once in a generation opportunity for Latin America's biggest economy to show it can execute large projects, as the government seeks to roll out an ambitious plan to invest R\$955bn (£306bn/\$470bn) in new roads, ports, airports and power plants, with the participation of foreign investors.

The Brazilian government is keen to see that product is sourced locally rather than shipped in from abroad, creating the opportunity for a foreign investor like TMAT to open a factory in the country.

"The existing customers and other OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) we've spoken to about our plans have been very excited indeed, in light not only of the opportunities in Brazil but also of the red tape they have encountered when trying to do business there" said Jason Lippitt, Managing Director of TMAT.

"We've had a very positive initial meeting with DTI (Department of Trade and Industry). The next stage will be for me to head out to Brazil in March for exploratory meetings. All being well, we should be able to move ahead at the end of the first quarter."

"We will be retaining all engineering design and intellectual property at our Chesterfield site, and the Brazil opportunity could well create more UK jobs as our work in Brazil generates more demand upon specialist engineering resources."

TMAT's growth has risen from £5m per year to in excess of £10m since 2009 and TMAT aims to drive turnover to more than £20 million by 2015.

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# Oilseed rape exports benefit from sterling's weakness

**The falling value of Sterling has helped raise the competitiveness of UK oilseed rape with exports leaving Openfield's deep water facility in the south west, Portbury Grain Terminal, for the first time.**

The terminal, which can load panamax vessels up to 70,000 tonnes, and is operated exclusively by Openfield, is one of the UK's busiest exporting centres.

Earlier this week 2,500 tonnes of oilseed rape sourced from farms across the south west was loaded on to the Oosvoorne, a bulk cargo ship registered in the Netherlands, destined for Hamburg where it will be processed in to biofuel.

The shipment is the first of several planned for the Portbury terminal with the next cargo scheduled to be loaded by the middle of February.

The export of oilseed rape from the south west is significant because it demonstrates the importance of currency values in promoting exports.

In a more typical year, oilseed rape is normally exported from ports along the east coast of England due to their closer proximity to the continent.

"The market has remained firm since Christmas led by strong demand for oilseeds from China, deteriorating weather in South America's soybean growing regions and supply disruptions in Brazil," said John Thorpe, Openfield head of oilseed rape trading.

"Consequently, the market is up £35/tonne compared with pre-Christmas values, but currency changes alone account for £22 of this movement. This has improved

the competitive position of UK oilseed rape, particularly that produced a considerable distance from the domestic crush, such as the south west," he added.

Since July 2012 Sterling has depreciated by 10% against the Euro, but it is the fall since the New Year when fears surfaced that the UK economy had slipped back into recession in the final quarter of 2012 that had the biggest impact on the competitive position of UK oilseed.

In the month to the beginning of February Sterling fell by almost 6% against the euro while the euro:dollar relationship remained largely unchanged. ■

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# Urban foxes 'dumped in the countryside'

**Urban foxes, which have been responsible for a number of attacks on young children, are apparently being trapped in major cities and dumped in the countryside.**

Roger Gent, chairman of the British Free Range Egg Producers' Association (BFREPA), says he has seen urban foxes at large on farmland, despite denials by local authorities that they are being rounded up and dumped in the countryside.

"You can tell they are urban foxes. It is easy to see the difference because urban foxes are scavengers. They look completely bewildered in the countryside; they don't know how to hunt, they are just completely lost away from the houses where they normally scavenge for food."

Pressure has been increasing on local authorities following a number

of disturbing attacks by city foxes. In the most recent incident a four-week-old baby boy was attacked in his home in south east London.

The child, Denny Dolan, underwent an operation to reattach one of his fingers following the attack. He also had stitches in wounds on his face after his mother reportedly found the fox dragging the baby from his bedroom.

Public reaction to the attack resulted in an intervention from the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who said more needed to be done to deal with what he said was the growing problem of urban foxes.

"They may appear cuddly & romantic but foxes are also a pest and menace, particularly in our cities," he said.

"This must serve as a wake-up call to

London's borough leaders, who are responsible for pest control. They must come together, study the data, try to understand why this is becoming such a problem and act quickly to sort it out."

Londoners have become increasingly concerned about foxes. In a previous incident in 2011 a five-year-old boy awoke to find a fox in his third floor bedroom in Hackney.

With the attacks on children in London increasing people's fears about the threat from urban foxes, pressure is likely to increase on local authorities to come up with a solution. Rather than dumping the animals on other people's doorsteps, in an environment that is completely alien to animals that have grown up in urban areas, Roger believes that the authorities should deal with the problem where it has arisen. ■

# Paterson confirms badger cull will go ahead



**Two badger cull schemes to tackle the spread of bovine TB will go ahead this summer in Gloucestershire and Somerset, Environment Secretary Owen Paterson confirmed today.**

Speaking at the National Farmers Union annual conference, Paterson said authorisation letters have been issued by Natural England who confirmed culls can proceed in the summer.

"Bovine TB is spreading at an alarming rate and causing real devastation to our beef and dairy industry" the minister said.

Paterson also announced a reserve pilot will also be prepared in Dorset in the event that unforeseen circumstances prevent one of the cull areas from being used.

But recent research conducted by Durham University claimed a

widespread badger cull will have no impact in solving the problem of tuberculosis in cattle.

Professor Peter Atkins, from Durham University's Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience investigated the spread of the disease.

"Badgers almost certainly play a part in spreading the disease, but my conclusion is that their impact over the decades has been far less than suggested" said Atkins.

"Very carefully arranged culling may have a part to play alongside other measures in areas of particular prevalence such as South West England and South Wales, but my research suggests that extending the policy elsewhere may neither be justified nor particularly effective. It certainly won't be a panacea."

However, Paterson said he was determined no further delays are

made this year: "The authorisation letters issued today confirming culling can proceed this summer in West Gloucestershire and West Somerset is an important step towards taking the action we need to tackle the spread of this disease in wildlife."

"I am determined that there are no further delays this year. That is why we have taken the sensible step with the farming industry to elect a reserve area that can be called upon should anything happen to prevent culling in Somerset or Gloucester."

But Atkins claimed that 'no one' has yet proved which direction the infection travels between species and that the disease is a 'spillover' from cattle rather than an endemic condition. He also claimed a cull could even 'exacerbate the problem'.

"The Randomised Badger Culling





Trial, which ran from 1998-2006 indicated complex, interwoven patterns of infection and concluded badger culling was unlikely to be effective for the future control of bTB."

"When badgers are disturbed, they seem to perceive they are being attacked and move from their original area by a kilometre or more and join other badger groups, which spreads the disease."

Following 2001's foot and mouth crisis, different parts of the country were restocked with cattle from the southwest, a traditional breeding area and that this has been a factor in the spread of bTB to regions that had previously had low incidence of it.

A likely solution to the problem was said to lie in vaccination, but inoculating cattle for TB is forbidden by EU rules as it would render testing for the disease as ineffective, because all vaccinated cattle would

test positive for it.

The Environment Secretary said the pilot culls were 'just one part of our approach to control' TB.

"We are using everything at our disposal to get to grips with TB including new tougher controls on moving cattle, increased herd testing and working to get effective vaccines ready as soon as possible."

The experience of countries such as the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Australia and New Zealand shows that TB in cattle cannot be controlled without also tackling the disease in the surrounding wildlife.

In New Zealand, the number of infected cattle and deer herds has been reduced from 1,700 in the mid 1990s to fewer than 100 in 2011.

This is as a result of rigorous bio-security measures, strict cattle movement controls and proactive wildlife management.

The authorisation letters issued by Natural England mean that culling will be able to proceed at any point from 1 June. The pilot culls will last for 6 weeks and will be repeated annually for four years.

The pilots are being carried out to test the chosen method of culling through free shooting. The pilots will be independently assessed to check the method is both effective in removing enough badgers and humane.

The reserve pilot in Dorset will be prepared in the same way as the two licensed areas so that it is ready to proceed if necessary in the summer.

The search for an adequate TB vaccine for cattle continues, but badgers can be vaccinated now to help prevent the spread of TB as an alternative to culling.

New government-backed research revealed that vaccinating badgers can reduce the level of TB within an infected colony by 54%.

The results, which are from a four year study by the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), conflict the view that culling badgers is the only method to stop the disease.

"This report must be the final nail in the coffin of the plan to cull badgers" said Philip Mansbridge, CEO of wildlife charity Care for the Wild.

"Pro-cull supporters claim that the disease can only be stopped if the so-called reservoir of disease within wildlife is reduced – this study shows that vaccination can achieve this."

But farming groups claim that a vaccine to help control TB in the future 'remains many years away'.

Unions such as the NFU have admitted a vaccine should be part of a package of measures to help control the disease but said that measure alone would not be enough to combat it.

"We need a package of measures to tackle TB and yes, cattle vaccine must be one of them. But as Defra's chief vet Nigel Gibbens said cattle vaccine, and the tests and regulations needed to put it in place across Europe, 'may take years'. In the meantime, the spread of TB is doubling every nine years" said NFU President Peter Kendall.

Professor Atkins has concluded that the government should take a more comprehensive approach to controlling TB: "The assumption that badgers are always responsible for this disease in cattle has to be reviewed."

"If our analysis showing the lack of disease persistence in medium and low density badger populations is correct, the improvement of cattle controls including improved testing, tighter movement controls and, eventually, a useable vaccine should be enough to halt the spread. We should continue to investigate, and cooperate with farmers over this problem." ■



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Assured Chicken Member



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## **POULTRY SALES SPECIALIST (or TRAINEE)**

A Poultry Sales Specialist (or trainee) is required for our client, who has a first class reputation as an employer and with farmers, to service established accounts with producers in a territory between the M4 and Birmingham.

### **The key attributes of the successful candidate will be:**

- A good practical knowledge of livestock husbandry
- Ability to build lasting business relationships with farmers
- Ability to learn and adapt
- Hard working
- Resilience and determination
- Confidence with people.

### **Those who are encouraged to apply include people with at least two of the following:**

- experience of selling to livestock farmers
- experience of practical livestock farming
- ambition and a competitive streak.

A valid driving licence is essential.

**Rewards:** A competitive salary, company car plus a performance bonus will be offered. Support will be provided for those seeking poultry or sales training.

### **Interested?**

If so, please call **John Davies** on **01684 310208** or **07980 859953** (8am-8pm)

You can also **e-mail** your enquiry or CV to **[johndavies@delacyexecutive.co.uk](mailto:johndavies@delacyexecutive.co.uk)**

Please be assured that all calls are treated in complete confidence.

Thank you.

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- 4 years old
- 8 Halo/ Liberty houses each holding 3,000 birds
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- Staalkat Packer (40 case/hr) in seperate Halo egg store (12m x 8m)
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**Complete with Collinson 2 tonne bin.**

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**Soil Association**  
Certification

## 2 x Certification Officer (Producers)

**Permanent**  
**£20,966 pro rata**  
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**1 x full time**  
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Soil Association Certification Limited is the UK's leading certification body for organic farming and production. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Soil Association, the leading environmental charity campaigning for people and planet-friendly food and farming.

We are seeking a highly motivated individual with experience in the agricultural industry, with particular knowledge in either the horticultural, arable or livestock sectors. You will have an understanding of the principles of organic food and farming and the certification processes involved.

You will be responsible for the effective account management of a portfolio of farm businesses with a diverse range of organic producing systems. You will be dealing with all aspects of organic certification; the role will include an emphasis on both technical and business aspects of the sector you will be working with some focus on development of that sector.

The successful candidate will be educated to degree level or equivalent experience, ideally in an agricultural subject, be an excellent relationship builder, highly organised and have an awareness of the commercial demands on the farming businesses. Excellent verbal and written communication skills, computer literacy and a confident approach to service delivery and the ability to provide solutions within tight deadlines are essential.

**Closing date:**  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**Interviews are likely to be held at the end of February or beginning of March.**

**To apply please visit**  
**[www.soilassociation.org/jobs](http://www.soilassociation.org/jobs)**

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