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## Report into Rural and Farming Issues in Devon For Sue Smith, Devon County Council

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## Background

With two large-scale animal health crises in the last six years (2001 and 2007), Devon's farming sector has experienced a difficult time of late.

2007's Foot and Mouth/Blue Tongue and Avian Flu episodes resulted in restrictions on live exports, which were only lifted in January. This situation has been compounded by an over supply of lamb stock in the domestic market leading to a fall in prices. In addition, poor weather conditions have led to a fall in feed production and have pushed up costs.

At a meeting held at Darts Farm in November 2007 (see Appendix 1) it was widely acknowledged that further outbreaks would place the county's farming industry in an extremely vulnerable position. Although compiled in December 2003, a short report by The Family Farmers' Association (see Appendix 4) echoes these sentiments.

As a result, a number of interviews have been conducted with key figures from the local farming industry throughout January 2008 (see Appendix 3). This report summarises these interviews with the aim of producing a series of recommendations for Devon County Council (DCC) to consider, in respect of how it can best support local farmers, increase awareness of the issues currently faced by the industry and help it lobby for increased support at a national Government level.

## Interviewees

Interviews were conducted with the following:

Christine Marshall	SW Food and Drink
Cllr. Humphrey Temperley	DCC Councillor, Bideford South and Hartland
Helen Ashcroft	Meats South West
Pippa Woods	Farmer/Owner Occupier
Tony Lindsell	Farming Standards Manager, Devon County Council
Sir Harry Studholme	Chair of Chamber of Rural Enterprises
Professor Ian Mercer	Chair of Devon Rural Network
John Varley	Chief Executive, Landed Estate / Commissioner for the Commission of Rural Communities
Mary Talbot-Rosevear	Small Farms Association / Chair of the Sustainable Farming and Food Association
Brian Warren	Devon Farm Crisis Network
Phil Norrey	Chief Executive Devon County Council

## Objectives

Participants were asked a series of questions to ascertain their feedback/opinions on:

- the most pressing issues in farming today
- what issues they think will become more prominent as time goes on
- key areas for Devon - is it different from other rural areas?
- what lobbying activity they currently undertake
- what they would like to see DCC doing to help the farming industry as a whole and, more specifically, farmers and rural communities
- what support local MPs should be providing
- issues relating to setting land aside for wildlife
- the effects of the new towns planned for Sherford and Broadclyst

Please refer to Appendix 2 for a copy of the questionnaire.

## Overview

All respondents have lived in Devon for at least three years, some for much longer. In general terms, all of them painted a picture of a county where:

- farming is much harder now than it was ten years ago with reduced financial support and a number of farmers going out of business
- an expanding urban population has led to a bigger split between town and country and less focus on rural issues
- the price of housing has increased even though wage rates and skill sets have not
- an increase of people who are chasing the 'rural dream' has seen new residents moving to the county, buying up farms but not doing anything with them other than residence

On a more positive note, respondents did acknowledge that:

- the last decade has been a good one for those farmers who have diversified and adapted well to change
- local foods and providence have become increasingly important with a greater emphasis on supporting local producers and organic heritage

A summary of the key points from the interviews now follows.

## Current issues

Respondents identified a number of issues, which they consider most pressing in farming today. The key aspects cited included:

- A general feeling that DEFRA are not listening to the issues or recognising the essential nature of livestock farming
- A lack of young people who see farming as a viable career choice leading, in turn, to a lack of skilled labour and/or people with the appropriate training
- The welfare of animals and their health: TB was mentioned on a number of occasions, as were 2007's health episodes, the implications of which are long-term and which have increased hardship for those farmers who are still recovering from 2001's outbreaks
- The difficulties for farmers having to adapt and respond effectively to changing market and regulatory circumstances

- Huge contrast within the industry: hill and livestock farmers are struggling whereas some arable and lowland/dairy farmers are doing well
- Too much focus on other areas such as tourism
- A lack of profits combined with high grain and feed prices
- Badgers: culling is required in bovine hot spots

### Future issues

When asked about which issues they felt would become more prominent in the future respondents referred to:

- The need for farmers to be better equipped to deal with further animal disease outbreaks
- Increasing regulatory issues and bureaucracy
- Profitability issues: in particular, small or family farmers being squeezed out of the market
- Weather: climate change will bring its own set of challenges for those who work the land
- Food production: as the world economy changes support will be required to ensure the rural economy can meet increased demands for Western food

### Key areas for Devon

The areas that make Devon different from other rural counties were cited as follows:

- There is no encouragement for people to stay in farming, particularly young people
- Smaller family farmers are disappearing and the bigger ones are increasing
- More than 60% of the South West's landscape is protected so Devon doesn't get its fair share of environmental stewardship money
- Agriculture is a major factor in the county's economy and tourism industry but this is not recognised
- Mixed farming means mixed prospects
- There is a lack of infrastructure although improvements could help to develop the industry and help rural areas compete more effectively

### Current lobbying activity

When asked about their current lobbying activity, respondents presented a very mixed picture. Organisations such as SW Food & Drink and Meats South West provide support and advisory roles to the farming community while organisations such as CSWRE represent the

land-based sector on a number of issues, but none of them undertake any lobbying activities.

The Councillors and farmer both stated that they have lobbied various contacts within both local and national government to try and highlight specific issues.

Overall, it would seem that while some individuals are working hard to lobby for the industry, not enough is being done collectively.

### **Support for the farming industry**

In terms of what DCC could do to help farming industry there was a general feeling that it was already quite proactive and that, by canvassing opinion, it has taken a further positive step forward.

The vast majority of the comments referred to a need for increased awareness. At a local/regional level this centred on reinforcing the benefits of farming, having an effective rural policy that communicates how farming fits into an overall vision for Devon as well as encouraging the public to value and use more local food sources.

At a national and European level, comments focused on the need for 'real engagement' - making governments more aware of the issues that the industry is currently facing and the future needs that are important to its security.

### **Support for farmers and rural communities**

In specific terms, there were a number of suggestions made in relation to how DCC could support farmers and rural communities. These included:

- Continued support for farmers markets
- Retention of the Farming and Food Officer post - someone who can act as a champion for farmers and advise on policy formulation
- More support for smaller farmers: in particular, retaining a portfolio of smallholdings in order to give young people a foot on the ladder
- Making it easier to trade: grant or match funding to help diversification and make it easier for farmers to add value to their businesses
- Backing for key initiatives and making sure people know about it

### **Support from local MPs**

Respondents generally felt that there was a lack of support for and understanding of rural issues amongst local MPs. It would seem there is a real need for them to have a better awareness of the problems the farming industry is facing and the related knock on effects.

In addition, many commented on what they perceive to be as a lack of responsiveness amongst MPs - a feeling that they were not listening to what farmers want or need combined with a reluctance to provide feedback.

If the results of this survey are representative, there is a definite requirement for local MPs to work collectively and demonstrate support for Devon's farming communities. Raising their awareness and communicating the importance of farming to the county will enable them to be more vocal in Parliament and lobby the government more effectively.

### **Land for wildlife**

This question brought a largely positive response and farmers are already being encouraged and made aware of the need to set land aside. There were caveats alongside this however. Some respondents felt that farmers should be given financial assistance if they agree to set land aside for wildlife. At the very least, it would seem there is a need for a proper assessment to be made and a balance struck between those who need the land for their livelihoods and those who inhabit it.

### **The impact of new towns**

It was felt that the impact of the new proposed towns at Sherford and Broadclyst would have a limited impact on the farming community as a whole. On the negative side, some farmers living nearby will obviously find their development prospects reduced as the new towns erode the rural landscape and ingress into farming territory. The impact of farming on an urban fringe may also manifest itself in the form of trespassers and potential diseases from dogs. One respondent also felt that the opportunity to run the new developments using renewable energy had been missed. On the positive side however, it was recognised that an increased population could lead to increased demand for local food and markets.

## Recommendations

While issues such as infrastructure, funding, diversification and animal health and welfare present DCC and the farming industry as a whole with real long-term challenges, there are a number of shorter-term activities, which could be actioned now in order to address many of the points raised by this survey.

### Advocacy & Lobbying Campaign

The production of a campaign pack featuring a set of consistent, positive messages and an evidence base of good practice case studies would definitely aid effective advocacy and lobbying for Devon's farmers to MPs and supermarkets. Regular briefings would also ensure that MPs are well informed and adequately prepared to raise issues at a Government level. Working with organisations such as the South West RDA should ensure that farming issues have the presence they require when it comes to regional policies and agendas. The retention of a Farming and Food Officer will ensure there is a champion for local farmers and someone to advise on policy formation.

- Advocacy campaign pack
- Consistent, positive messages
- Good practice case studies
- Regular MP briefings
- Retain Farming and Food Officer post

### Awareness Raising & Communications

Increased joined up thinking, regular liaison and more effective partnership working with relevant, like-minded organisations will almost definitely lead to raised awareness and, where budgets are an issue, should support and strengthen activity. A list of suggested groups for partnership working is given on the next page as a reference point. Working with organisations such as the Devon Rural Network and SW Food & Drink will aid the dissemination of information and could also help to generate the best practice examples needed for any advocacy work.

Engaging with the local agricultural colleges, education and careers advisory sector could help to increase the presence of farming as a viable career option for young people. Agriculture is a recent priority sector for the region, but it has a much lower profile relative to other emerging industries such as the media or IT. Promoting the opportunities, training and career progression routes within the industry has to be integral to raising its status as a valid career option.

Messages need to be reinforced to the local community as well. A special feature or regular inclusions in the Devon Talk newsletter and an increased presence for farming issues in regional publications such as Devon Today, Devon Life and the regional and local media would aid this. Continued DCC support for farmers markets, support for other events such as the Devon County Show, Exeter Food and Drink Festival and Plymouth Flavour Fest and/or a special awareness raising conference could also help to meet this objective.

- Effective partnership working
- Increased editorial and media presence
- Continued support for farmers markets
- Support for other key events
- Awareness raising conference

#### Evidence & Research

If advocacy and communications work is to be truly effective, it is vital that DCC keeps its finger on the pulse of the industry. Further animal disease outbreaks, new regulations, changes in climate and more mean that issues affecting farmers today could easily change, improve or worsen in the future. Effective partnership working will obviously go some way towards helping DCC keep up to date with industry changes and developments. Identifying current gaps and working with the universities in Plymouth and Exeter could also help to produce an accurate picture of the region's farming industry at any given time.

- Use partnerships to stay up to date
- Build on current picture with university expertise

### **Suggested groups for partnership working**

- Devon Rural Network (keen to become more of a lobbying group)
- NFU
- CLA
- Tenant Farmers Association
- NMA
- NFA
- LAA
- AIMS
- Small Farmers Association (already work with South Hams District Council)
- South West RDA (key contact: Rob Hatt)
- South West Uplands
- Riverford
- National Trust
- District, Parish and Town Councils
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- Family Farms Association
- Education and careers sector including Universities of Exeter and Plymouth
- Learning and Skills Council
- Connexions

### **Suggested targets for lobbying**

- PM and Treasury
- Minister for Agriculture
- Department of Communities and Planning
- Department of Education and Health
- DEFRA (key contacts: Robin Mortimer and Hilary Benn)
- GOSW (key contacts: Andrew Slade and Jane Henderson)
- European Parliament (key contact: Neil Parrish)
- John Hatton, Secretary of State
- Ben Bradshaw, MP, Exeter
- Supermarkets
- Large landowners

## Conclusion

The last ten years have been a real challenge for Devon's farming industry. While the current healthy eating agenda means that the profile of local foods is extremely high, animal disease outbreaks and a perceived reduced focus on rural issues have left many of the county's farmers finding it tough to adapt and respond, and feeling under supported.

There is a real need for DCC to demonstrate that the farming industry has a vital part to play in Devon's future and a viable opportunity for it to take on the role of facilitator - lobbying on behalf of the region's farming communities, championing Devon as a farming, food producing county and helping Governments and local communities to understand that while farming may be an industry, it is also part of our culture.

## Appendix 1 - Darts Farm Meeting Minutes

Foot and Mouth/Blue Tongue  
Weds 21<sup>st</sup> Nov 2007  
Darts Farm

### Present:

Christine Marshall	South West Food and Drink
Ian Mercer	Devon Rural Network
John Varley	Clinton Estates
Melanie Hall	NFU
Robin Head	Devon Farms
Harry Studholme	SWRDA
Helen Ashcroft	Meatsouthwest
Phil Norrey	Devon County Council
Councillor Brian Greenslade	Devon County Council
Councillor Humphrey Temperley	Devon County Council
Edward Chorlton	Devon County Council
Sue Smith	Devon County Council
Tony Lindsell	Devon County Council
Julie Lammin	Devon County Council

### Apologies:

Guy Watson	Riverford
David Fursdon	Fursdon
Alex Raeder	National Trust
Paul Gompertz	Devon Wildlife Trust
Pippa Woods	Family Farms Association
Mary Talbot-Rosevear	Devon Rural Network

Councillor Brian Greenslade thanked everyone for attending. The purpose of the meeting was to get feedback on the current farming and tourism situation in Devon following this year's foot and mouth/blue tongue and avian flu episodes. He explained although it had not been headline news DCC realised the industries would have been affected by these episodes. DCC wanted to get a clearer picture of the current issues and suggestions on how they could help.

The tourism industry appears to be largely unaffected so far. The farming industry however has been affected mainly because of movement restrictions. Restrictions on live exports are not due to be lifted until January. Because 30% of lamb stock is usually exported at this time of year it has resulted in over-supply in the domestic market and an associated fall in prices. Feed prices have also increased due to a fall in production due to the weather. The situation is about to worsen as stock are brought indoors for the winter, though the mild autumn had helped. Most supermarkets are still importing meat. It was generally felt that DEFRA were not listening. There were concerns regarding food security and animal health. Overall it was felt the farming industry was in a vulnerable position should there be further outbreaks whether in Devon or elsewhere. In general, it is a mixed picture with hill farming particularly fragile at the moment.

It was requested that DCC should increase its support for the farming industry. A comparison was made with DCC support for the Tourism Industry. It was acknowledged that there was a better need for communication across organisations and within the sectors. Better collaboration and a wider outlook is needed. It was also felt that a good and robust evidence base was essential to enable analysis of trends and forward thinking. A farming questionnaire was suggested. A few ways in which DCC could help were discussed; positive lobbying of supermarkets regarding imports, a conference to raise public awareness and a "special edition" of Devon Talk dedicated to the subject.

**Actions:**

Lobbying campaign - DCC to produce a campaign pack which would ensure that we were all using the same key, positive messages. All to agree content and targets.

Communications and awareness raising - DCC to work with DRN to ensure dissemination of information and examples of good practice. Will also collaborate to organise awareness raising event early in the New Year.

Exeter Food and Drink Festival - DCC to speak to Taste of the West about interim support for this event.

Evidence Base -DCC to work with Universities of Plymouth and Exeter to look at gaps and what was needed in order to provide accurate picture of State of Farming in Devon

DCC Newsletter - to include an item on farming.

## Appendix 2 -Questionnaire

	Name
	What do you do / what is your role?
	What is your job title?
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community?
	What is your connection with Devon? How long have you lived here, etc?
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today?
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on?
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain

	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any?
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry?
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?
	What support would you like from local MPs?
	What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?
	How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?
	Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?

	Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?
	How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?
	Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?

### Appendix 3 - Interviews

	Name Christine Marshall
	What do you do? Oversee SW Food and Drink - not an MD as such. We are strategic not delivery agents - influencers
	What is your job title? Operations Manager
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? Link with SW Chamber of Rural Enterprise. Farming are our prime producers who need to link in with/marrying up on public procurement
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? Born in Devon. Moved away for 30 years but came back in year 2000.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Defra not recognising livestock farming essential. They are more interested in the environment instead of helping farmers with livestock. There is not enough money in farming unless they diversify. There was a push for food now it is tourism etc.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Food security. Not enough food to feed in this globe. Farming will be needed once people recognise this problem. Growing bio-fuel is a short lived solution but not necessary a solution to the problem - it doesn't actually help.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain Unique rural area. Issues are rural. Real problem in trying to keep people in work on the land. If people not making enough money to live they wonder why are they doing it! There is no encouragement for young people to stay in farming. There have been a lot of people into Devon (ie from London) buying up land but they do not necessary use it for its purpose. It is important that the land stays looking good for the tourism industry.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? None - we are an influencing organisation and we talk to anyone who will listen - NFU, Defra, Government Office for the SW.
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? They are doing quite a lot already. Need to have joined up thinking, embracing towns, liaising with the likes of us. Devon County Council is one of the most proactive councils and if they continue could achieve more.  Absolutely any help they can give to the farmers as they are hanging on by their fingertips.  Defra not very helpful - conservation will change landscape. At the end of the day we need animals on the land.

	<p>Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?</p> <p>Don't know enough about it. DCC are pretty supportive of farmers markets, coastal town initiative.</p> <p>They need to back initiatives but ensure they are not introvert and that money for support is spent in the right way.</p>
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?</p> <p>More proactive with rural problems - don't think they understand rural issues. There is no one in higher Government who knows about rural affairs and local MPs need to lobby for this huge problem.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?</p> <p>Ambivalent for that. If it keeps the farmer going - why not. Farmers have always taken care of wildlife.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?</p> <p>Haven't got a clue - not sure how it will affect the farmer but it will take a lot of land. The farmers who sell the land will make loads of money.</p> <p>The new houses built at Crediton has been ill thought out.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?</p> <p>Defra - lobbying to talk about livestock in the farming community.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?</p> <p>Minister for Agriculture Ben Bradshaw - local MP for Exeter Own MPs to be lobbying in Government Government Office - ensuring local area agreement is useful for farming community</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?</p> <p>I don't think it has changed. I moved away for 30 years and it seemed the same when I came back.</p> <p>Torquay has gone downhill.</p> <p>The rural scene has not changed apart from people going out of business.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>No, I think we have covered everything.</p>

	Name Cllr Humphrey Temperley
	What do you do ? Devon County Council Councillor for Bideford South and Hartland. Chair of the Strategic Planning and Regional Affairs Committee Member of the Economy and Regeneration Strategic Planning and Regional Affairs Advisory Group. On the Devon County Council Executive Committee  Retired Farmer
	What is your job title? Executive Member
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? Economy and regeneration strategy. We are all involved in farming one way or another. Farming is the 3 <sup>rd</sup> most important industry
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? I have lived in Devon now for the past 4 years.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Livestock farming on hills. TB and badgers Age structure of farming - not many young people going into appropriate training or seeing farming as a career. One serious issue is finding less skilled labour.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Welfare and food quality. Weather.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain The SW has more than half of its landscape protected - 60% designation. Because of this Devon is not getting its fair share of the Environmental stewardship national pot and it needs more. For example, in the South East it is easier to get it.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? Any specific issues. There is not enough done collectively. Defra Secretary of State
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? DCC needs to have a much more effective rural policy capability.
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? It would be wrong of me to answer.
	What support would you like from local MPs? The habit of a collective cross party response of Devon issues in the same way Devon MPs helped with the local Government Review. To work together collectively.

	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife? A thoroughly good idea.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community? Will mean less easy in respect development prospects of farmers getting their land developed. Half a dozen will benefit a lot, rest of Devon far less.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government? Would like to turn Devon Rural Network into a more lobbying group.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures? John Hatton - Secretary of State Defra European Commission I think we could get more positive results for large landowners.</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years? Number of farmers has halved. House prices - affordability has trebled. Wage rates/skills sets have not progressed as they should have done. Aspiration a problem in North Devon. For the young and house buying unattainable the incentive to save is limited. It will probably get worse.</p> <p>Immigration for rural dream - there are a number of people arriving, buying up farms and doing nothing with it.</p> <p>There is an old Exmoor saying - outsiders came in carriages but left with a wheelbarrow.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Not that I can think of - if I do I will email you.</p>

	Name Helen Ashcroft - Meats South West.
	What do you do? MSW is a trade organisation - red meat industry. We hold events, liaison, facilitate communications
	What is your job title? Project Manager
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? As above working with and on behalf of the meat industry.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? MSW looks after the whole of the SW and I am based in Devon. I have lived here now for 3 years.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? End price of products Health - especially TB
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Shortage of livestock as export becomes stronger Health - blue tongue, foot and mouth, TB
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain Most regions in the SW are similar
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? We don't
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? Good support for farmers. Encouraging public to use more local food sources. Making it easier to trade. Grant funding - diversifying, adding value to businesses.
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? Probably as previous. More support Liaison with public on what they do and encourage public to buy more from farmers.
	What support would you like from local MPs? Lobbying Government in the right direction - TB Listening to what farmers want An understanding ear As for MSW we are trying to get a protected food name - support in Brussels with this application.
	What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife? I agree there needs to be land set aside for wildlife as this is vitally important Farming needs to be sensitive. Unfair if farmers don't get financial help for set aside.

	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community? I don't know enough about it.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government? NFU CLA Tenant Farmers Association NMA NFA LAA AIMS</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures? European Parliament - Neil Parrish The Prime Minister and down Defra</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years? Probably the expanding urban population. Between town and country there is a bigger split in understanding each other. Farming is harder.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Listening to people. Regular meetings with relevant groups. Keep a finger on the pulse, as comments made now will be different in six months time.</p>

	Name Pippa Woods
	What do you do? Farmer
	What is your job title? Farmer/Owner Occupier
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? As above
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? Lived here for 53.5 years.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Lack of profit TB Badgers I am involved in campaigning for farmers - Western News carried an article which is worth reading (and has photo). <a href="http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk">http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk</a>
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Profitability Concerned also about small and family farmers disappearing or being squeezed out. Farmers need more acres to survive.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain Characteristics should be a multitude of family farmers. There used to be a good mix but the smaller farmers are disappearing and the bigger ones increasing.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? I have written to: Government on many occasions - badgers being one them European Minister for Agriculture Wrote to Mrs Fischer Boal at her invitation
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? Very good question. To hold on to portfolio of smallholdings to give young people a foot on the ladder. It is difficult to get started and they need a lot of capital unless it is handed down. Some new farmers are business people. Devon is very mixed. Support the smaller end to mixed farms and sizes.
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? I don't know. When we campaign, we feel it is at a national level not on a county or regional basis. They are not very much involved in agricultural scene - look after smallholdings more and keep as many as possible to get people started. Rates on farmhouses - you don't pay on businesses - continue not to make

	farmers pay rates.
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?  I write to mine quite a lot. I have been writing personally to ministers and government but you get a reply from Consumer Relations not from Minister. Need to bring MPs notice the stupidity of government proposals.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?  We have a policy that farmers should be encouraged to leave some land for wildlife. I had a circular about this and what should be set aside.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?  I don't know. It will affect people nearby - farming on an urban fringe is quite a problem. People walking dogs and trespassing. In addition, the disease of livestock carried by dogs which makes cattle abort. With 46,000 Sherford people it could make life awkward.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?  Small Farmers Association - work with Sth Hams DC - could be useful partnership.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?  Minister of Agriculture  Defra  Prime Minister</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?  DCC knows. The number of new houses a bit excessive.  Too much traffic  Shouldn't attract tourists  Medical facilities - okay in winter but not in summer  Why should we pay rates to advertise to bring tourists in?  Exeter expanding rapidly.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?  Great believer in conservation but more money should be spent on schools not money on tourism.  Rates go up, services poorer or lesser. Paying more and less services.</p>

	Name Professor Ian Mercer
	What do you do? Retired Chair of SW Uplands Federation Chair of Dartmoor Commoners Council Chair of SW Forest Chair of Devon Rural Network
	What is your job title? Chairman
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? As above but I do rub shoulders with farmers all the time.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? Since 1959 - 33 years in Moretonhampstead
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Huge contrast within farming generally. Livestock farmers are not well off but the market has just picked up (levels for lamb). However it is not consistent. Hill farmers getting the lowest prices Lowland farmers part dairy doing better Arable doing very well. Mixed farming - mixed prospect
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? Apart from small holding estates - this has always functioned - it needs to be maintained so that when it lobbies about farming the can say they are talking from experience.
	What support would you like from local MPs? More than we are getting. Met Younger Ross and Cox recently and Neil Parrish - they promise to talk to Ministers but we never have any feedback. Situation is very poor. There is a great fear that if hill farmers pull their horns in so that they are not reliant on moorland, the public will suffer. If you can't get access to moorland then tourism suffers.
	What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife? I am President of Devon Rural Wildlife Trust. In favour in farming looking after wildlife. European set aside - there is conflict between those who want land and those who habitat it. Need to strike a balance and keep at best a 50/50 situation.
	How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community? It will take land out of farming. Don't know enough whether farmers will go out of business. Can't help it - erode farm landscape which is sad.
	Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government? SW Uplands and equivalent groups in Exmoor. They need to convene meetings about devising lobbying campaign or its components so that we are all singing from the same hymn sheet. Work closely with other bodies.

	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?  Defra - pincer movement using its own ministers  Secretary of State  Arguing Devon's welfare good agriculture landscape.  It is in the interests of its economy. Devon bound up with farming of its landscape.</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?  Where I live there has been quite a lot of building. 100 new dwellings and these have quickly integrated into the village with the children attending local village school. These has been very good changes and population increases.  Agriculture - farmers in AONB under most pressure, as they are only managers. We have the welfare of the farming community considering how long they can go on, so are their children.  We have gone out of what was good public support for farming, an even balance sheet to that where Europe and Government have curtailed support. Millions of pounds in late 1990s but in last 3 years this has dropped considerably.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Very pleased DCC is doing this. If it can turn this enquiry into a good campaign lobbying on behalf of Devon Farmers then it will be a very good thing.</p>

	Name Sir Harry Studholme
	What do you do? Farmer - not livestock Board Member SWRDA Chair of Chamber of Rural Enterprises
	What is your job title? I have a number of job titles - Chair CSWRE
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? Farmer and landowner plus above.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? I have lived here on and off for 50 years.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Certainly animal health - TB, blue tongue High grain prices which in turn lead to high feed prices Existing and potential regulatory issues New directives coming in.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? National food security Changing weather patterns in longer term Increasing regulatory issues
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain Depends - one of the characteristics of Devon is that it is mixed farming.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? Complicated to answer. I represent the land based sector in a number of areas but not open lobbying.
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? There were a lot of things raised at the meeting in November. Working closely with existing organisations to support and strengthen activity.
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? Ensuring all are co-ordinated. At the time it was very important to support land market. Acting responsively at key times. I am aware of constraints on DCCC budget so working with other people and being connected.
	What support would you like from local MPs? MPs to understand what is going on. MPs working in concert with DCC. Better briefing MPs A more listening ear.
	What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife? A proper assessment has to be made. We have learnt a lot and it is getting better - targeting important.

	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community? I think the benefits will be increased local markets in growing climate of local food.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government? There are a lot of groups already. RDA Constituents of Rural Enterprise - Devon Rural Network is good.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures? Treasury Defra Ministers Supermarkets</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years? Much more prosperous. Local foods more important Population is more diverse It's healthy - vibrant Less rurally focussed and farming not decreased in terms of its percentage of the economy.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider? DCC is generally quite aware Remaining in touch with what's going on. Animal health - a big issue.</p>

	Name Tony Lindsell
	What do you do? I work for Devon County Council
	What is your job title? Farming Standards Manager
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? We enforce animal health and welfare, disease control, feed and seed hygiene in primary production. Our role also includes advice and education.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? I have lived in Devon all my life - born and bred
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Animal disease in livestock farming Blue tongue, Avian Flu has affected farming behaviour. Will have an effect for the foreseeable future. Farmers are still recovering from the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak. The outbreaks of foot and mouth, blue tongue and avian flu in 2007 have caused further hardship to some livestock farmers.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Food production is a real issue as the World economy changes and demands for Western food by China and India. It is important to support the rural economy in Devon to meet future demand. Being able to deal with animal disease outbreaks.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain Devon has the biggest agriculture in the country which is major to its economy and tourism industry.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? We don't. We give support and advice to the farming community. Currently considering supporting diversifying to make better use of land and business. Currently providing advice to farmers who are only rearing animals but wish to retail own produce.
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? We need to raise the issues that are currently being discussed ensuring public and Government are aware of current and future needs important to farming.
	Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities? This is a matter of resources. Question of balance on resources.
	What support would you like from local MPs? Similar to question 10. Making them aware of farming situation and importance to economy and country. Support for the farming community and community of Devon as a whole.

	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife? In support provided balanced in terms of economy and farmers' livelihood</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community? This is clearly going to take farming land but not significant in the size of Devon. With larger communities there will be more opportunity for Devon and for Devon farmers to supply the increased need of food.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government? The group at the Blue Tongue/Foot and Mouth meeting held at Darts Farm as this was a good balance of people.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures? Minister - Defra Our voice needs to be heard in Europe with regard to lobbying as well as in UK.</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years? Cost of housing has increased considerably. Young people unable to buy their own house - struggling to get on property ladder. It has been a tough 10 years for farmers but robust robust for those who diversified and adapted to change well. Those that survived did a good job in terms of food produce.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider? On our role here supporting farmers, we are better prepared as a country and locally than we were 10 years ago but we need to maintain vigilance.</p>

	Name John Varley
	What do you do? Chief Executive - Landed Estate in Devon 25,000 acres
	What is your job title? Chief Executive
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? We manage 25000 acres including tenant farms, 4 own farms, 35000 acres forestry, houses and commercial premises, amenities, public parks, beaches.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? I have no connection with Devon. My wife was born in Devon and I have lived and worked here for the past 7 years.
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Ability of farmers to adapt to changing circumstances both market and regulatory - food, energy agenda, management of land, regulations coming in from EU. Industry needs to ensure value chains are getting some value Animal health and bio security. How they understand and adapt which requires skills in niche marketing - the question is are farmers up to that. Relationship with government and policy makers ensuring policies are effectively managed.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Farming The ability to effectively respond to market forces. UK needs to understand where it fits. Is it energy or food - how is it going to deliver it. Rural Greater understanding. With immigration farm cottages being taken up, there is a disconnect. Opportunity now to understand and engage with communities and come up with policies.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain There is a whole range of opportunities but Devon needs to find its USP and find its niche. My view, trying to find and demonstrate how rural areas can compete more effectively. Encouraging and looking at infrastructure to develop industries. If infrastructure was right, it could be exemplar ie delivering energy into remote rural areas, joint ventures. We need to be bolder.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? National and local Government Snr Civil Servants - Defra National Trust Local Authority I am also Commissioner for the Commission of Rural Communities.

	<p>What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry?</p> <p>Real engagement It needs to understand its USP - what Devon is about and how farming fits into it. How farming and agriculture links into Devon's vision. Supporting industry initiatives being totally transparent. Help articulate - reinforce benefits of farming and what it can do. DCC has its own small holdings - needs to understand how they fit, what are they about, are they for training - what is the plan Reinforcing messages into Government.</p>
	<p>Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?</p> <p>As above. DCC needs to articulate its importance of how important farmers and landowners are to Devon's vision Reinforcing messages and the importance of managing land - not as a campaign for farmers but to the community as a whole.</p>
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?</p> <p>Local MPs need to understand what the problems are and knock on effects and seek facilitation from DCC. DCC to act as facilitators to ensure MPs understand thus making them well prepared with issues are raised at Government level.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?</p> <p>Set aside as a concept is a bizarre policy. Set aside was nothing to with wildlife. Now there are policies to remove set aside.  I am not precious about set aside.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?</p> <p>They will reduce farmland and some farmers will make lot of money. On the wider farming community it will have limited impact. It could have been an opportunity to ensure the new communities were run by renewable energy. An opportunity to engage with farmers and landowners has been missed.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?</p> <p>Regional CLA Regional NFU I am impressed with what DCC has started to do - getting view of Devon per se. The membership of the group should be broadened.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?</p> <p>Rob Hatt - RDA board Government Office for SW - Director, Andrew Slade, Jane Henderson Robin Mortimer - Defra Director General - Defra Aim high within Government and Defra Director General - Department of Communities and Planning</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?</p> <p>Significant immigration and it is going to continue. Decline in rural services Less sustaining Devon has been in a reactive state over last 10 years and trends are going to continue.</p>

	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>DCC to try to understand what is unique and special about Devon</p> <p>How farming and agriculture fits into it vision for the future.</p> <p>A clear, simple and understandable set of messages.</p>
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	Name Mary Talbot-Rosevear
	What do you do? Administration, books, records, minutes, accounts. Research for Small Farms Association on topical issues and represent them at all levels.
	What is your job title? Secretary
	What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community? The Small Farms Association was one of the founder members of Devon Rural Network. Devon Rural Network has 4 groups and I am Chair of the Sustainable Farming and Food Action Group.
	What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc? Lived here for 21 years
	What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today? Bovine TB in hot spots. There is approximately 20% increase year on year and it is a notifiable disease and a very big issue in the South West. Climate change Not the lack of subsidies but how prices will vary - farmers don't receive support. They are not seeing reasonable returns ie fair trade for farm gate prices. What will happen after 2012 will affect farmers not just in this country but also in Europe. The Government proposal of shared cost of disease control. Bureaucracy in farming ie double ear tagging of sheep.
	What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on? Climate change, which will have an impact on farming with flooding and extremes of weather. However it could also have a positive impact though.
	What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain  The size of holdings are smaller - more in Devon and West Country. Livestock - if prices don't stay at a reasonable level people will stop farming them. Moorland is very important but the amount of support has dwindled and now it is not possible to farm on moorland.
	What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any? We are part of an alliance with the Women's Institute lobbying for fair farm gate prices. Organised lobbying for selected cull of badgers in bovine hot spots.
	What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry? Continue to sustain the farming and food officer to act as champion to farmers to advise on policy formulation. The local government structure airbrushes out farming it is key we retain the ability to be a food-producing county.

	<p>Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?</p> <p>Make a better offer to new entrants and look at packages abroad. This will keep sector vital and working.</p> <p>Just maintain role of farming and food officer and maintain importance of farming in Devon.</p> <p>Provision of matched funding.</p>
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?</p> <p>To champion Devon as a farming, food producing county.</p> <p>To be vocal in Parliament on farming issues.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?</p> <p>Vast majority of farmers would support this but would depend on how much would be required. If farming done in proper fashion they will have land set aside.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?</p> <p>Can't say about Broadclyst.</p> <p>Farmers don't want new urban sprawl. It will ingress into farming territory. It would be better to have smaller developments on existing towns and villages.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?</p> <p>Devon Rural Network which is the umbrella for 150 rural groups.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?</p> <p>Prime Minister down</p> <p>Treasury</p> <p>Defra - Hilary Benn</p> <p>Minister of Food and Environment</p> <p>Department of Education and Health</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?</p> <p>Devon has had a lot more people coming to live here.</p> <p>There has been an increase in traffic and buildings.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Keep farmers farming - it's a culture not a business.</p>

	<p>Name</p> <p>Brian Warren - Devon Farm Crisis Network</p>
	<p>What do you do?</p> <p>I work for the Farm Crisis Network that covers the whole of Devon. We support the farmers on issues affecting them and even accompany them if necessary to solicitors, accountants. There are 12 of us in total on the team.</p>
	<p>What is your job title?</p> <p>Co-ordinator. I was a farmer but my son has now taken that over.</p>
	<p>What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community?</p> <p>Supporting local farmers.</p>
	<p>What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc?</p> <p>I have lived here all my life = 62 years.</p>
	<p>What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today?</p> <p>Finances. Getting a poor price for the product they produce.</p>
	<p>What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on?</p> <p>I think there are just not enough people to farm the farms. Once you have lost a generation, you have lost it.</p> <p>We are losing the skills within the industry.</p>
	<p>What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain</p> <p>There are a lot of small farms in Devon. In 2001/2 there were 4,000 in Wiltshire whereas in Devon there was 14000.</p> <p>Devon has not got a lot of massive fields and is a totally different landscape.</p>
	<p>What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any?</p> <p>None. We are not that type of organisation. I have spoken at WI meetings and was really surprised that they don't understand about farming and the issues.</p>
	<p>What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry?</p>

	<p>By supporting us. Local funding is difficult. Keeping us funded is a major problem. We used to be funded by Defra.</p>
	<p>Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?</p> <p>Difficult for them to do much more. They are good at promoting tourism in farming but these are only niche markets - a small percentage of what's going on.</p>
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?</p> <p>Can't complain about local MP and MEP - they are as helpful as they can be.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?</p> <p>My views - this country should make up their mind whether to eat good food, drive 4-wheeled vehicles or see wildlife.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?</p> <p>Yes because it will increase flood plain. The Exe is going to be flooded more.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?</p> <p>NFU</p> <p>And, of course, ourselves.</p>
	<p>Who should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?</p> <p>Ben Bradshaw</p> <p>NFU Exeter</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?</p> <p>It has changed by us spending money in supermarkets which takes it out of the local economy.</p> <p>Need to lobby for local produce and keep food miles down.</p> <p>We produce beef and sheep - need welfare on imports not welfare codes.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Why does Cornwall get more funding than Devon farmers? Cornwall farmers get financial support.</p>

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	<p>Name</p> <p>Phil Norrey</p>
	<p>What do you do?</p> <p>I am responsible for managing Devon County Council, the senior officer in DCC.</p>
	<p>What is your job title?</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>
	<p>What is your role with regard to the farming and rural community?</p> <p>Key part of our role is to advise and support on lobbying campaigns. We have a lobby function. Pulling together and joining up the various services of the Council, cross cutting issues, overseeing.</p>
	<p>What is your connection with Devon - how long have you lived here etc?</p> <p>I have lived here for 10 years and live in a rural area.</p>
	<p>What do you feel are the most pressing issues in farming today?</p> <p>Farm incomes especially with livestock. The pressure of depressed prices for sheep/cattle.</p> <p>Sustainability of farm incomes. A lot are surviving on accumulation capital of centuries of farmers. How we help sustain when we know the world market is changing.</p> <p>Many skills in farming are being lost.</p> <p>Social issues - pressure on the farmers causing them to suffer anxiety, stress, depression.</p>
	<p>What issues do you think are going to become more prominent as time goes on?</p> <p>Increasing costs is a significant problem. Devon is predominately livestock and we don't get an easy balance.</p> <p>Whole nature in change to subsidy.</p> <p>Defra - reduction in funding will have an impact on countryside management.</p> <p>The single farm payment undermines confidence in Defra. We have had our budget reduced half way through the financial year by Defra.</p> <p>The four animal diseases - Avian Flu, Blue Tongue, Foot and Mouth and TB all have impact on export markets.</p>
	<p>What do you think are the key areas for Devon? Are they different from those elsewhere? Please explain</p>

	<p>Government needs to understand the broader scope of farming. Farming determines some 70% of Devon. Its characteristics as an industry not fundamental, but one which critically links to tourism.</p> <p>Government has not got its head round the broader issues. Food security - the ability to feed ourselves and by allowing a percentage to decline - Government not facing up to the problem.</p>
	<p>What lobbying activity do you undertake at the moment, if any?</p> <p>At the moment we don't. We did a lot around the foot and mouth outbreak. The public enquiry in 2002 was fundamental which informed national policy. We want to get more into influencing Government.</p>
	<p>What would you like to see Devon County Council doing to help the farming industry?</p> <p>We can do a lot.</p> <p>Lobbying role</p> <p>Leadership role. We are landowners ourselves and able to share good practice, support and help farmers with diversity.</p> <p>We have a new duty to promote economic development and will have specialists to do this.</p> <p>Advocacy -- getting the messages out - eating local food - Devon Brand</p> <p>There is a whole range - I would like to see us do better.</p>
	<p>Are there any areas you feel Devon County Council could do more for farmers or rural communities?</p> <p>A lot of things I have already talked about.</p> <p>Advocate - more funding, lead on innovation.</p> <p>Shout louder on behalf of farming.</p> <p>We have what we call incubation period which are tenancy properties providing a stepping stone to the longer term.</p> <p>Looking to the future by doing things better.</p>
	<p>What support would you like from local MPs?</p> <p>Get MPs on message. We are currently working hard with our local MPs and we are getting better relationships with them.</p> <p>Getting them actively engaged.</p> <p>Work more closely with our MPs.</p>
	<p>What are your views on setting land aside for wildlife?</p>

	<p>Interesting. We have a statutory duty to promote bio-diversity. A balance has to be struck. There are perfectly manageable processes for bio-diversity use.</p>
	<p>How do you think the new towns planned for Devon in the Sherford and Broadclyst areas will affect the farming community?</p> <p>Increased local markets. Clearly there is an amount of land which will become urban settlements. They are there to exploit not to worry about. Farmers who own the land will do okay. Will keep the villages vibrant.</p> <p>A lobbying issue will be to try to get into national policy to enable villages to expand.</p>
	<p>Are there any groups DCC should be working with to lobby government?</p> <p>NFU CLA EBLEX</p> <p>We are currently meeting with these groups on an informal basis and are keen to work with them.</p>
	<p>Whom should DCC be targeting in terms of lobbying? Which key figures?</p> <p>Hilary Benn - Defra Gordon Brown - we also need to understand the people around him. Ed Balls Senior Civil Servants</p> <p>We need to look strategically and find which political advisers are worth getting to.</p> <p>We need a mix of Ministers, Policy Advisers and Civil Servants.</p>
	<p>How do you think Devon has changed in the last 10 years?</p> <p>Population has increased 10%</p> <p>A significant number of small farmers have left. There is some consolidation in the industry - some have expanded.</p> <p>Farms bought up but not farms and fields rented out.</p> <p>There has been a significant change in land use for example maize production from fields and were once pasture land.</p>

	<p>Increase in poultry farming.</p> <p>Decrease in cattle/sheep farming.</p> <p>Changes on uplands - farmers are finding it tough.</p> <p>Dartmoor is now undergrazed.</p> <p>Social patterns - people commuting.</p> <p>Lot more farmers diversifying and family members now subsidising them.</p> <p>Landworkers live in the towns and the country people work in the towns.</p> <p>More migration workers although they have helped the land-based industries.</p>
	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make, or things you think we should consider?</p> <p>Don't think so. Agriculture has gone through peaks and troughs and has the habit of bouncing back. I think there are grounds for optimism.</p>

## Appendix 4 - Family Farmers' Association Report

PATRONS:

The Countess of Mar  
Sir John Rose BT.  
Professor Sir Colin Spedding CBE  
Jonathan Dimbleby

CHAIRMAN: Mrs Pippa Woods

### THE FUTURE OF SMALL AND FAMILY FARMERS

It is very hard to write, or even think, sensibly about how the world's farming - and more importantly perhaps its farmers - can develop in a civilised way or even survive, because the confusion is now so great. Individuals who try to live by producing food have become the lowest and poorest section of society in most parts of the world. Correspondingly some individuals and corporations which deal in food and farm inputs have become so rich that they are virtually uncontrollable, even by governments and certainly not by wronged individuals. (What chance Percy Schmeizer against Monsanto?)

The machinations of these powerful global traders have engineered a situation where all the farmers of the world are competing against each other to sell their crops, usually at below the cost of production. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that, contrary to popular economic theory, when a farmer finds his income is not covering his costs, his immediate reaction is to produce more, to bring in more income. Often he is professionally advised to do just this. The result is the over production which is bedeviling the world trade in food. (Obvious examples are, locally, excess dairy production in Europe, and coffee, world wide.)

What we are trying to achieve, what are our goals, nationally and internationally?

Possibilities: to keep food production in the control of individuals rather than big business; to have food produced on a human scale, a happy medium between mass production with excessive use of chemicals and machinery on one hand, and excessive hard hand labour on the other (this will be relative according to the state of development of an area); to produce food ethically and sustainably, not exploiting people or environment.

What is preventing us from achieving these goals? As stated above, mainly greed and the ease with which determined individuals can build powerful business empires. Once individuals or corporate groups have accumulated sufficient economic power, they are in a position to ensure the governments do not even attempt to control them. Until some means of controlling them is discovered, the outlook for justice to food producers is poor.

I, personally, feel very strongly that the issue is much confused by the champions of the South - the third world, the undeveloped nations, however described - maintaining that all will be well with poor countries if only they are allowed to sell their produce to rich countries. We are all in the same boat, albeit at different levels, with our traditional way of life threatened and our opportunity for modest improvement of income per family blocked by large enterprises which either undertake the actual food production, or control the market of both inputs and produce.

While some countries are manifestly "least developed" this may be simply because the global entrepreneurs have not yet reached them. In much of the "South", both American and African, big business is now flourishing alongside less flourishing local farmers. If not contained, the rich and powerful will eventually gain control of most of the potentially productive land, putting an end to farming by individual families. The more world trade is opened up or "liberalised", the faster this will happen.

The other force for evil is the fact that subsidies, paid by governments to aid hard pressed farmers, enable the recipients to sell their product at less than cost. Worse than this is subsidising exports directly, or "dumping".

The solution to these two phenomena is simple, if unacceptable to those in power: prohibit export subsidies, and put a ceiling on the amount of subsidy any one farming enterprise may receive. (Just enough cash to bring a farm income up to the local average industrial wage.)

There still remains the problem of how to improve the present chaotic situation, which means changing government policy, to the extent that governments will attempt to control the multinationals.

A new philosophy will have to be accepted: that free trade is bad, not good, for world prosperity and that the principle of food sovereignty should be the basis of every nation's agricultural economy. It is a simple concept that all nations should be able to grow as much of their own food as is practicable and desirable. If this is accepted, it becomes axiomatic that imports should not be allowed to take the place of home grown, even if they are a little cheaper. Prosperous farmers will help the general prosperity of a nation. But means will have to be found to limit the production (and thus the prosperity) of any one individual.

Nobody wants greater control of individual activity, and some hard thinking will have to be done as to how multinationals (the rich) can be controlled for the benefit of the greater number (the poor) without such a plan being labelled communist. But surely there must be a way. If the powerful organisations which exist to produce aid for poor nations could be lined up behind a plan to curb multinationals and thus benefit family farming throughout the world, some success might be achieved.

Pippa Woods  
December 2003

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