



# Down on the Farm. Planning for Agriculture in 2014

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# Down on the Farm: Agriculture is central to the rural economy in 2014.

- ❖ Agriculture accounts for 70% of land in the United Kingdom.
- ❖ In 2012 the agri-food sector contributed £97 billion to the UK economy, employing 3.6 million people. (464,000 directly in agriculture).
- ❖ 56% of farms businesses have some form of diversified activity.
- ❖ The farming sector is incredibly diverse in size and complexity, although the majority (90%) of businesses run as sole traders or family partnerships.
- ❖ Farming has shaped rural towns and landscapes. It is still a major economic driver in rural economies and the dominant industry in many.

## Down on the Farm.

### What opportunities are there for agriculture in 2014?

- ❖ Food security is a growing issue – we need to Back British Farming to become more self sufficient. This helps reduce uncertainty in markets and allows the country to become more sustainable.
- ❖ People want to know more about their food, an NFU survey found 86% wish to buy more traceable food produced on British farms.
- ❖ People also want more choice and value (Lidl and Waitrose/farmshop).
- ❖ Supply chain demand for products helps drive innovation on farm and a wider choice of locally produced food.
- ❖ The opportunity to use renewables on farm allows farmers to reduce energy costs and become more self sufficient.
- ❖ New technology helps livestock management and the storage of produce.
- ❖ There is potential for more varied, rural base job opportunities within farming, to support graduates coming into the industry.

# Down on the Farm: The planning challenges to agriculture in social, economic and environmental terms in 2014.

- ❖ Farming income commonly only supports one generation on farm. The wider family often still helping out on farm, but needing separate occupations and places to live.
- ❖ Farming communities are increasingly isolated as nearby village services and public transport is reduced. They pay disproportionately more for goods and services.
- ❖ New environment regulations, modern agricultural practices and changing weather patterns require investment in new farm buildings and technology.
- ❖ Farm business decisions are restricted by market changes and environmental challenges.
- ❖ Farmers have to be digitally compliant – even when the infrastructure is not in place.

# Down on the Farm. How can the planning system stakeholders help?

- ❖ Promote a planning system that supports agriculture as part of the rural economy in economic and social as well as environmental terms.
- ❖ Provide consistent and supportive planning policies – nationally and in local plan documents.
- ❖ Simply and update permitted development rights (and associated procedures) for farm buildings and operations (Part 6).
- ❖ Encourage permitted development rights to be used (for example for re-using redundant farms for affordable rural housing).
- ❖ Recognise the value of farm businesses to the rural economy and encourage their sustainable development.

# Down on the Farm. How can the planning system stakeholders help?

- ❖ Recognise that farming is integral to protected and other valued landscapes.
- ❖ Avoid onerous guides and restrictions that don't meet with other legislation.
- ❖ Realise that renewables have a place to play in a sustainable rural environment.
- ❖ Provide equitable broadband and mobile phone coverage for all rural areas.
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