

# WHY FARMING MATTERS TO THE BROADS



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# THE BROADS NEED A HUMAN FUTURE

A PERSONAL VIEW BY TELEVISION PRESENTER AND WILDLIFE EXPERT  
CHRIS PACKHAM



## The Broads

-  The Broads
-  Farmland surrounding the Broads
-  Farmland influencing the Broads



Sometimes as an idealistic indulgence I like to stand in a landscape and try to rebuild it. I fantasise hard, using all I know about its history, to remove the human influence and recreate a pristine natural wilderness. Then I study it with a flora and fauna of bygone species and have them swoop, sway or sing in an abundance that only such daydreams could realise. Some habitats elicit this nostalgic dalliance far more than others and the Broads is an irresistible palette for such a whim.

I think it's because they have such a distinct flavour, an ancient untamed appeal, a simplicity and vastness, a secrecy. And because more than enough of this unique habitat remains to provide a foundation for our imagination. But

then, in a peculiar paradox, I equally enjoy the pragmatic challenge of recognising the contemporary reality of the Broads. They are a 'manscape', a mosaic of our impact and management and, quite clearly, it is the future that is most important.

For me that future depends on those who live and work in the flatlands of our East, in particular the farmers and land managers who have helped make the Broads what they are today. As this report explains, the Broads need a human future. They need an economically sustainable prospect for the communities who work here. Only then can the rest of us expect these folk to wrestle with our demands and visions of the place.

So we incomers, we tourists, we conservationists must act to support them all – the farmers and others who live and work here – so that my dream bitterns may boom, my hallucinogenic harriers float, my swallowtails flutter and pike lie in icy eddies, so that future generations of romantics can idolise this beautiful place.

Chris Packham, 2010

# THE BROADS TODAY AND OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads is the UK's largest wetland and our only water-based national park. Shaped by the activities of man over many centuries, the Broads today is blessed with an outstanding landscape containing habitats of international importance.

Farming has and will continue to play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the Broads ecosystem, while at the same time contributing to its rural community and local economy. Farmers are uniquely placed to provide our food and fuel needs while sympathetically managing the countryside and protecting the environment.



The Broads faces major risks associated with the threat of climate change. It seems increasingly likely that, in the long term, the Broads will be subject to increased frequency and severity of floods and droughts. Farmers are part of, if not central to, some potential solutions for adapting to climate change. We face a future in which society will demand that our farmers produce more while impacting less on the environment. Farmers in and around the Broads are willing and able to meet that challenge.

Farming is inextricably linked with the environment, rural community and local economy. This document provides a snapshot of that relationship and sets out an NFU vision in which farmers are helped and encouraged to contribute to a sustainable future for the Broads.

For the purposes of this report, the Broads includes land not only within the national park boundary, but farmland immediately surrounding it. Furthermore, land draining into the whole lengths of the Broadland rivers (Bure, Yare and Waveney and their tributaries the Ant, Thurne and Chet) is included because of its potential impact on the flora and fauna of the national park.

## We would like to see:

- A thriving farming sector in and around the Broads, one that produces more while impacting less on the environment, and that makes a major contribution to food and fuel security (consistent with Defra's Food 2030 agenda).
- Transfer of all land that is currently part of the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area into environmental stewardship schemes designed to meet the needs of lowland graziers. This can only be achieved by introducing creative ELS/HLS prescriptions that recognise the economics of farming on the grazing marshes and which offer worthwhile payment rates; provide sufficiently flexible options; and encourage the direct participation of graziers as short term occupiers of land rather than their landlords.
- Committed long-term investment in the maintenance of existing sea and river defences, particularly those that protect the best quality agricultural land that is so abundant around the Broads.
- Funding for technical innovation to increase the sustainable use of water on farms, complete with training programmes to help farmers adopt techniques that maximise their efficient use of water.
- Continued emphasis on industry-led initiatives to improve water quality such as the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, Tried and Tested nutrient management planning and the pesticides Voluntary Initiative. Measures to address water quality must be based on scientific evidence; be carefully targeted; and enthuse and engage farmers. The costs to farm businesses of implementing measures must not outweigh the environmental benefits of the improvements.

# WHY FARMING MATTERS TO THE BROADS

FARMING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BROADS. THIS PICTURESQUE AND INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE WAS SHAPED BY MAN, AND FARMING CONTINUES TO FLOURISH IN ITS FERTILE AND PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT.



*Farming landscape of Brograve  
(Photo courtesy Claire Parfrey)*



“British farmers are tasked with increasing their production to help meet rising global demand for food, while minimising their impact on the environment. As this report shows, farmers in the Broads are well placed to play a leading role in meeting these challenges, but they need supportive policies in place that help and not hinder them.”

Peter Kendall,  
NFU President

The origins of the Broads go back to the Middle Ages, when peat from the land was excavated for heating and cooking by the monks of St Benets. There was huge demand for this fuel with the episcopal monastery of Norwich requiring 200,000 bales of peat a year alone. Within 200 years, nine million cubic feet of peat had been cut from the area.

During the 14th century sea levels rose, flooding the pits left behind from peat removal and forming the Broads as we know it today. The area comprises 41 shallow lakes, fed and interconnected by the rivers Bure, Yare and Waveney and their tributaries the Ant, Thurne and Chet, which together make up 190km of lock-free waterways.

The modern landscape of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads covers more than 30,000 hectares of floodplain and is the UK's largest wetland. Included within this area are 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which provide a habitat for some of the rarest plants and animals in the UK. The area is also designated as a Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation under European legislation and recognised as internationally important wetlands under the Ramsar Convention.

While the Broads national park is home to 6,000 people, the wider area surrounding and influencing the Broads has an estimated



*Harvesting in Wroxham  
(Photo courtesy Gerry Balding)*

population of more than 650,000 people, spanning eight district local authorities and two counties. This is a predominantly rural area with a mosaic of small towns and villages, and farming accounts for 87 per cent of total land use<sup>1</sup>.

In an area dominated by water, the Broads is highly sensitive to imbalances in water levels, and human intervention is needed to manage the risks of floods and drought.

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) are responsible for land drainage and manage an extensive network of watercourses and water pumps. Water in and around the Broads is overseen by the Norfolk Rivers and Broads IDBs (part of the Water Management Alliance), protecting 28,000 hectares of agricultural land and maintaining 36 pumps and 746km of watercourse.

The Broads is also threatened by coastal flooding and saline incursion. This risk will grow if climate change predictions are correct. Future scenarios suggest an increased risk of flooding, resulting from sea level rise, combined with an increase in the frequency and magnitude of storm events.

These forecasts highlight the need to maintain and improve flood and sea defences, particularly as much of the area is at or below sea level.

Farming is an integral part of the Broads, producing food and renewable energy, managing the landscape and providing local employment.

<sup>1</sup> 'Broadland Rivers Catchment Flood Management Plan Overview', Environment Agency (2006)

# WHY FARMING IN THE BROADS MATTERS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

FARMERS ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE, THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FACING THE BROADS TODAY. BY PROVIDING RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY AND IMPROVING FARM PRACTICES SUCH AS WATER CONSERVATION, THEY CAN BOTH HELP MITIGATE AGAINST AND ADAPT TO THE IMPACT OF THESE PROJECTED CHANGES.



*Somerton Wind  
Turbine, Somerton*



“Agriculture is a strategically important industry. It makes a major contribution to the landscape, tourism and community of the Broads, as well as helping adapt to climate change. The drainage management role that farmers perform will be a crucial part of our response to this challenge. Farmers are also key to maintaining and improving the Broads’ grazing marshes, an outstanding wildlife resource.”

John Packman,  
Chief Executive of the Broads Authority

UK Climate Projections 2009 forecasts the climate of the Broads over the next 50 years to become warmer and wetter in winter and hotter and drier in summer with an increased frequency and severity of extreme events. Sea levels are also predicted to rise by 6mm per annum during this period<sup>1</sup>.

The Broads is unlikely to be able to withstand this increase. Much of the 240km of flood bank protecting this area is made of silty clay and has deteriorated over time. If the defences are breached, flooding would mean a loss of productive farmland, the unique landscape and the biodiversity that goes with it.

Saline intrusion is an increasing threat. Land flooded by sea water takes many years to recover and salt ingress into groundwater harms the quality of water in the Broads.

For these reasons, continued levels of investment are essential to sustain and improve the current flood defences, and reduce the impacts of climate change on this important area.

Not only could farming be affected by climate change through flooding but it also faces an increase in summer temperatures, which could lead to drought and greater competition for scarce water resources. Farmers are taking steps to secure their own supplies of water, for example by constructing on-farm reservoirs.

<sup>1</sup> Broadland Flood Alleviation Project

## Henry Cator, Salhouse



*Henry Cator and his rare British White cattle (Photo courtesy EDP)*

Third-generation farmer Henry Cator runs a mixed farm covering 200 hectares around Salhouse. His main crops are sugar beet, potatoes, parsnips, horseradish and barley, complemented by a 30-strong herd of rare breed pedigree British White cattle, which trace their roots back to the Woodbastwick herd established by his family in 1840.

Henry believes strongly in caring for the environment alongside productive farming and he has land in both the Countryside Stewardship scheme and Entry Level Stewardship. He is also keen to promote green tourism, with moth evenings, bird walks and canoeing taking place

at Salhouse Broad, which is included within the farm's boundaries.

The farm plays an important role in local education as well, hosting annual events for local primary schools that allow children to find out about farming through seeing farm animals, interactive stands and talking to local farmers.

Henry is national chairman of the Association of Drainage Authorities and chairman of the Broads Internal Drainage Board (IDB). With his knowledge of the hydrology of the area, he knows how vulnerable farming will be to the impact of climate change.

These storage facilities are highly sustainable because they are filled during wet winter months and used to irrigate crops during the dry summer months.

In the longer term, temperature rises combined with water shortages may lead to changes in crops and cropping techniques. Investment in research and development, particularly in the potential use of biotechnology will be crucial. World-leading research institutes such as the John Innes Centre in Norwich must have the necessary funding, as they will have a leading role to play.

The EU Habitats Directive has been interpreted by some to state that if the Broads environment cannot be protected in situ, it must be recreated elsewhere. Depending on the location of the site eventually chosen, this could result in the loss of agricultural land needed to meet future food security demands.

English farmers are targeted with reducing their emissions by the equivalent of three million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) by 2020. Farmers in the Broads are helping achieve this by efficient energy and fertiliser usage and providing renewable energy for local consumers.

By the beginning of 2010, there were two wind farms in the Broads, generating enough energy to power more than 2,500 homes, using just 11 turbines. These farms prevent approximately 6,500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from being released into the atmosphere every year.

## Broadland Agricultural Water Abstractors Group



*An irrigator at work in Norfolk  
(Photo courtesy FLPA)*

Broadland Agricultural Water Abstractors Group (BAWAG) represents around 180 farmers and growers in the Broads by providing advice on water and abstraction, with the goal of securing long-term assured water abstraction licences. The group also promotes water and energy efficiency.

Chairman Andrew Alston says this makes commercial economic sense, decreases impact on the environment and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the only abstractor group to audit members' water usage.

Agricultural water abstraction relies on taking water from a bore hole. This water is then used to irrigate crops, with the residue returned by natural land drains and man-made drains (usually the Broads Internal Drainage Board) to the marshes. This is normally beneficial for both farmers and the environment, as irrigated farm land produces high crop yields and returning water to the marshes allows them to sustain the unique environment of the Broads.

The group's work in encouraging efficient use of water was demonstrated during the drought of 2006, when group members voluntarily agreed to use less water than legally permitted. This practice saved 190,000 cubic metres of water and, by eking out limited water supplies over a longer period, enabled irrigated crop production to continue throughout the growing season.

BAWAG highlights saline intrusion and balancing the need for environmental conservation, food production and tourism as key challenges facing the Broads. Salt water ingress occurs as sea defences are undermined (Brograve) and over-topped (Walcott), which has led to saline water being found in Hickling, Barton and Sutton Broads. Salt water reduces the quality and quantity of freshwater and there are fears it will ultimately lead to the destruction of the Broads' marshes and SSSIs.

## Malcom and Steve Filsell, Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe



*Fuelsell process 2,000 tonnes of woodfuel a year (Photo David Hosking/FLPA)*

The Filsells are a farming family in the Norfolk Broads, who have diversified into renewable energy supply. Faced with a declining market for pigs eight years ago, father and son farming team Malcolm and Steve Filsell set up Fuelsell.

They now supply a range of fuel that includes pre-packed, seasoned wood, sourced from sustainable woodlands in the region. This has become a best-seller.

Helped by Woodfuel East, the Filsells obtained funding through the Woodfuel East Strategic Investment Grant, which helped pay for fuel

processing equipment to increase Fuelsell's output. As a result, ten local people now process around 2,000 tonnes of woodfuel a year.

This ranges from log nets being sold at local garages and DIY stores, through to home delivery for two-cubic-metre bags.

The family still have more than 1,000 pigs, which are sold to a national supermarket chain, but they are also committed to building up their fuel supply business and are looking to source more locally grown wood.

### We would like to see:

- Committed long-term investment in the maintenance of existing sea and river defences, particularly those that protect the best quality agricultural land that is so abundant around the Broads.
- An energetic programme for de-silting water courses to improve water flow and increase flood resilience.
- An innovative approach to flood protection, such as a scoping study into the construction of a barrier across the River Yare.
- The long-term productive capacity of agricultural land (rather than its current market value) used to assess the costs and benefits of flood protection decisions.
- Analysis of the full impact of dredging operations around our ports, resulting in the development of a coastal management plan that fully reflects those impacts.
- Coastal and fluvial habitat creation schemes introduced as a consequence of flood protection policies, rather than a driver for them. Habitat creation has its place in coastal policy but it should not be the over-riding consideration.
- Funding for technical innovation to increase the sustainable use of water (and associated energy use) on farms, complete with training programmes to help farmers adopt techniques that maximise their efficient use of water.
- Incentives and sympathetic planning and licensing regimes, to encourage the construction of water storage reservoirs on farms. These will provide a source of crop irrigation and supplement low flows in local water courses, thereby supporting the local community, navigation and biodiversity.
- Commitment to plant breeding research that focuses on increased crop tolerance to droughts, salinity and pests.

# WHY FARMING IN THE BROADS MATTERS TO TOURISM

**THE BROADS IS ONE OF THE UK'S LEADING TOURIST DESTINATIONS, ATTRACTING OVER 11 MILLION VISITS EACH YEAR<sup>1</sup>. TOURISTS, CAPTIVATED BY THE AREA'S SPECTACULAR COUNTRYSIDE, CONTRIBUTE OVER £400 MILLION ANNUALLY TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY.**

Tourism flourishes in the Broads with visitors travelling to the area for many different attractions. With 87 per cent of the area in agricultural use, the farmed landscape provides the perfect backdrop for visitors to enjoy unique wildlife habitats, historic buildings and archaeological sites.

The Broads national park is the UK's largest protected wetland and third largest inland waterway. Its 190km of lock-free rivers are utilised by 13,000 licensed boats.

There is also an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways across farmland. Farmers play a key role in maintaining public rights of way and in volunteering the creation of so-called 'permissive paths' across their fields, where legal rights of access do not exist.

To help meet tourist demand, farmers are continuing to diversify their businesses to provide accommodation and leisure activities, ranging from farm shops and pick-your-owns to adventure and farm parks for tourists to enjoy.

Tourism is critical to the Broads, as it brings people and much-needed investment to the area. This provides employment for many thousands of local people and contributes millions of pounds to the economy.

<sup>1</sup> Defra Consultation on English National Park and the Broads (2009)

## Hannah and Ian Deane, Dairy Barns, Hickling



Hannah Deane  
of Dairy Barns

Hannah and Ian Deane run Dairy Barns, a farm diversification project that provides accommodation and function space, deep in the heart of the Broads. The barn complements the 145 hectare farm enterprise, which grows peas, potatoes, wheat and grass, the latter for a second farm diversification, Hungry Horse Haylage.

Opened in December 2005, the barn complex consists of six large en-suite bedrooms and a large function room. The original idea was to concentrate on the accommodation, but Hannah gets regular bookings for meetings and events as

well because there are few locations nearby that can accommodate 12 or more people. This has led to the barn being fitted with wi-fi and the property is used by a wide range of groups and organisations from cyclists to the Harley Davidson Club, RSPB, Defra, and Shell UK.

Dairy Barns can accommodate small wedding groups to large parties of more than 100 guests. Hannah and her mother also run flower workshops from the barn, which attract people from all over the region.

Farming is an integral part of Dairy Barns. Not only has it supported and provided the foundation for the new business, but as Hannah and Ian's guests regularly point out, having the barns intrinsically linked to the working farm makes their stay even more appealing.

Guests can take walks along the many permissive access paths located on the farm and enjoy locally sourced produce including sausages, bacon and eggs.

Dairy Barns has already won several accreditations including 2008 Farmhouse Breakfast East of England Champion, 2009/10 Visit England Gold Award for Excellence and 2009 Norfolk Tourist Awards Best Bed and Breakfast in Norfolk.



“The iconic Broads is one of the most recognised destinations in the country for rural tourism. Much of the awareness is based on its boating heritage but local food and drink have a growing role to play. With the well-documented growth of the staycation market, and the increasing consumer demand for quality and locally distinctive experiences, the outlook remains positive.”

Keith Brown, Chief Executive of East of England Tourism

### Simon Egan, BeWILDerwood, Hoveton



*Children playing along the boardwalks of BeWILDerwood*

Simon Egan is co-founder of BeWILDerwood, a farm diversification project that has transformed an unused 20 hectares of mixed woodland into a family-orientated, themed adventure park. The park only opened in 2007, but it has already picked up two prestigious national and international visitor attraction awards.

The park attracts approximately 160,000 visitors a year and employs up to 100 full time and seasonal staff throughout the year. As well as virtually all its employees coming from the local community, it maintains close ties to the area by sourcing the majority of its catering produce from Norfolk. For example, the park sells Kettle crisps as the farm's potatoes go to the Kettle processing plant in nearby Norwich. It stocks sausages from local award-winning butcher Archers and ice cream from Lakenham Creamery in Norwich.

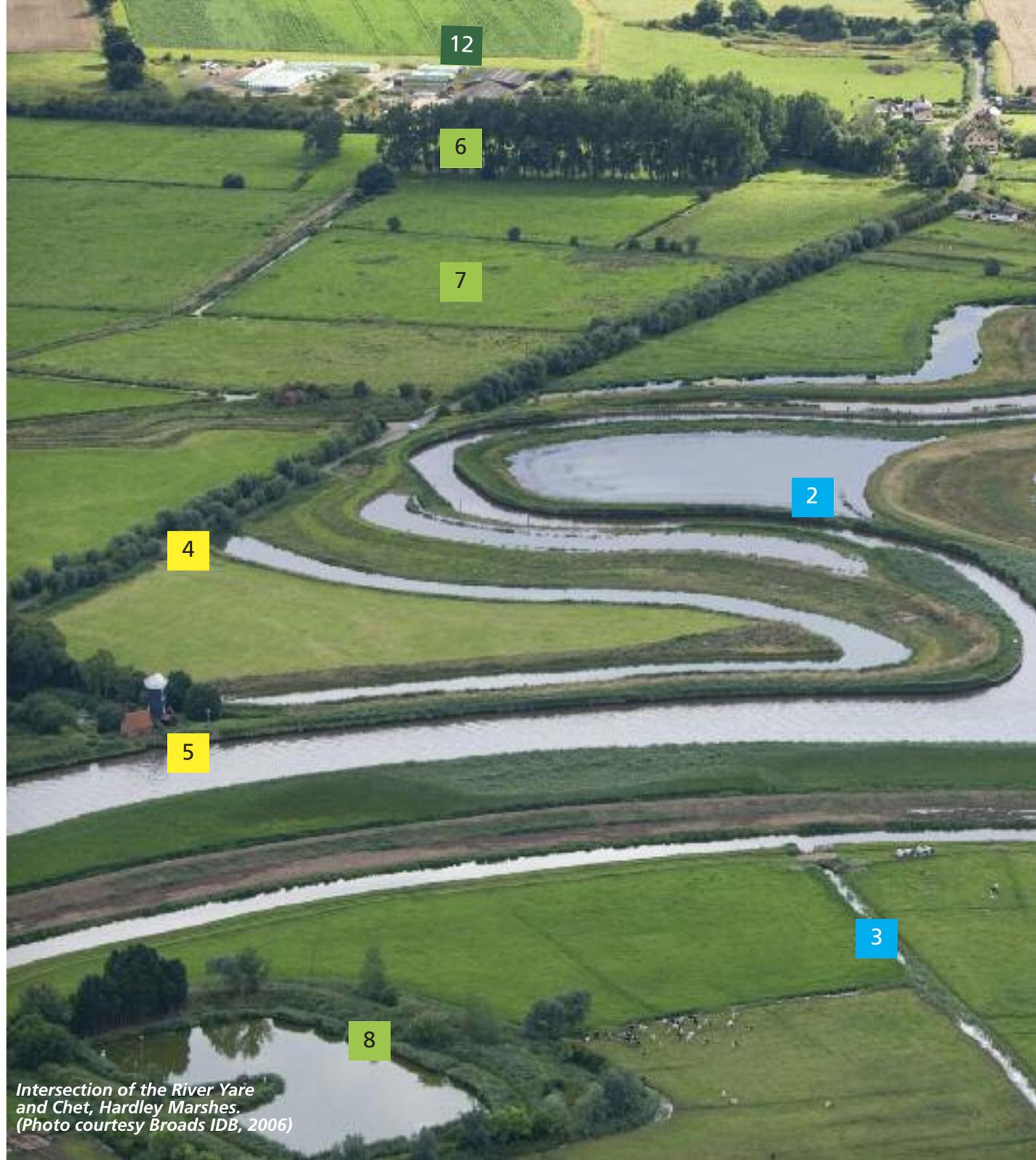
BeWILDerwood aims to operate in an environmentally friendly manner. Timber is the main construction material and buildings are of a temporary, removable construction, designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. The park is also working towards a Gold Award in the Green Tourism Initiative by saving paper through electronic mailing, encouraging recycling on site, converting boats from diesel to electric and using recycled packaging where possible.

### We would like to see:

- Flexible planning policies that allow diversified farm businesses to flourish.
- Greater simplicity and flexibility in the delivery of rural development schemes to support farm modernisation and diversification.
- A zero rate for agriculture for the Community Infrastructure Levy (or any future variation of the CIL) relating to building development on farms. The levy is designed to pay for infrastructure such as roads and schools needed by new housing developments, but could jeopardise the profitability of small scale farm tourism projects.

# HOW FARMING SHAPES THE BROADS

THIS AERIAL PICTURE SHOWS A TYPICAL FARMING SCENE IN THE BROADS: SUGAR BEET AND BARLEY GROWING ON THE ARABLE LAND, WHILE BEEF AND DAIRY COWS GRAZE THE WET GRASSLANDS. THIS PICTURE SHOWS HOW FARMING PRACTICES WITHIN THE BROADS PRODUCE HIGH QUALITY FOOD WHILE ALSO PROVIDING HIGH LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS.



*Intersection of the River Yare and Chet, Hardley Marshes. (Photo courtesy Broads IDB, 2006)*



### Climate Change

- 1 Peat marshes conserved by farmer through water level management.
- 2 New reed beds created to replace banked defences as part of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project.
- 3 Drains and ditches maintained by Broads IDB and farmers.

### Tourism

- 4 Part of Wherryman's Way walk from Great Yarmouth to Norwich, which continues along the other side of the picture, along the river bank as permissive access across farmland.
- 5 Restored mill now used for tourist accommodation.

### Environment

- 6 Farmer planted poplar trees.
- 7 Land in agri-environment agreement, with farmer managed water level and reduced fertiliser usage providing water quality improvements.
- 8 Farm pond, which provides food, oxygen and shelter for small animals and aquatic plants.
- 9 Wide grass buffer strip to minimise soil and water run-off from field into watercourses and provide habitat for wildlife.
- 10 Former arable land, now converted to grazing marsh under an Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme agreement.

### Economy

- 11 Malting barley, supplying a local Norfolk maltster, which is part of the leading privately owned malting group in the UK.
- 12 Sugar beet crop, destined for British Sugar's Cantley factory.

### Community and Education

A nearby farmer's barn has been converted so it can be used by the community for meetings, weddings and social events and by schools for educational visits.

# WHY FARMING IN THE BROADS MATTERS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

FARMING PRACTICES ARE INTEGRAL TO THE MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION OF THE BROADS. FARMERS ARE COMMITTED TO PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THIS UNIQUE LANDSCAPE, PLACING MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF ELIGIBLE LAND INTO AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEMES.



*A barn owl in flight over Norfolk farmland  
(Photo credit Simon Litten FLPA)*



“The second largest agricultural crop in Norfolk is grass and much of that is within the boundaries of the Norfolk Broads. The economics of farming reflect the environment of a living landscape and the Broads are no different. A rich diversity of cropping and wildlife depends so much on the economics of grazing. If the Broads are to fulfil their environmental aspirations, then grazing by ruminants has to be economically viable – a delicate balance indeed.”

Sir Nicholas Bacon,  
President of Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Broads farming is diverse, with farmers matching their management techniques to the landscape, to achieve harmony with the environment. For example, many Broads farmers graze livestock on the nutritious lowland near the water and grow arable crops on the higher land.

Unique factors that shape farming in the Broads are free-draining soil, availability of water and limited frost exposure. The local micro-climate allows both early and late cropping and extends the season of many crops by up to four weeks. This makes the environment crucially important to crop production.

One third of East Anglia's cattle grazing land is within the Broads. Livestock farming is vital to the Broads as grazing land supports internationally significant populations of raptors, aquatic plant and wet woodland communities in addition to nationally important populations of breeding waders, waterfowl and other plant and invertebrate communities. Some areas of peaty soils within the grazing marshes are extremely species-rich and support plants such as ragged robin and orchids and rare birds such as the bittern.

Farmers are rewarded for environmental management through agri-environment schemes. These schemes account for about

### Ed Wharton, Charles Wharton and Partners, Stokesby



*Grower Ed Wharton in a field of mint  
(Photo courtesy EDP)*

This fourth-generation family-run business farms 1,300 hectares, employs 23 full time staff and has adapted to the unique Broads environment. Half of the farm is grade 1 and 2 agricultural land and the remainder is marshland that produces grass and high quality crops.

The farm grows food for both national and local companies, with more than 5,000 tonnes of potatoes going to McCain, 400 tonnes of blackcurrants to Ribena, 10,000 tonnes of sugar beet to Cantley sugar beet factory and 250 tonnes of mint for Colman's in Norwich.

The farm also has strong environmental credentials. As part of its Ribena contract, the

farm provides a bird or bat box per hectare of blackcurrants and had 80 boxes by March 2010. The family have also placed the farm in three agri-environment schemes.

Grassland in the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme is showing reduced productivity through lower fertiliser and agrochemical inputs. Under Countryside Stewardship, the Whartons have planted about four miles of hedgerow and opened up miles of grass strips to walkers, and through the Entry Level Stewardship scheme they have taken small plots of land out of production and managed hedgerows in an environmentally-sensitive way.

## Gary Gray and Barry Brooks, Beckhithe Farms, Reedham



Gary Gray and Barry Brooks of Beckhithe Farms

Beckhithe Farms is a family-run enterprise in the heart of the Norfolk Broads, which has been recognised both for its commercial and environmental success. Overseen by owner Barry Brooks and farm manager Gary Gray, this award-winning farm covers 1,700 hectares. The accolades include Farmers Weekly's beef farmer of the year award in 2007 and regional winner of Natural England's Future of Farming Award in the same year.

The farm has 30 hectares of woodland and 410 hectares of arable cropping land. Maize, wheat and fodder beet are grown for feed for its 3,000 cattle. Finished cattle are supplied to Dovecote Park, which provides Aberdeen Angus beef for Waitrose.

The farm's commercial beef herd feeds on 1,215 hectares of floodplain grazing marsh. In addition to grazing of livestock, silage is cut from 200 hectares of marsh, which accounts for 40 per cent

of the farm's winter feed. However, the farm has found little or no difference between those marshes that are cut and managed, and those that are just managed.

Grazing is vital to keep the marshes in a favourable condition, as it stops the natural succession and reversion of the marshes to scrubland, while also delivering outstanding biodiversity benefits. These include habitat for 85 pairs of lapwing, 20 pairs of redshank, as well as the numerous pink footed geese, wigeon and golden plovers that nest on the marshes every year.

All the marshes are below sea level and rely on strict water level monitoring. That has led to the farm creating thousands of metres of foot-drains to prevent both winter flooding and summer drought. Beckhithe has also reinstated 26km of dykes, planted 12.3km of hedgerow and has all its arable upland in an agri-environment scheme.

two-thirds of the Broads area, with management options ranging from hedgerow and ditch management to creating buffer strips and the reversion of arable land to grazing marsh. These schemes are particularly relevant to the Broads, as the very first Environmentally Sensitive Areas designation was on Halvergate Marshes in 1987.

Between 2005 and 2010, an estimated £15.1 million<sup>1</sup> was spent on agri-environment schemes in the Broads, representing a huge cumulative investment since the first scheme was launched.

Water quality is crucial to the biodiversity of the Broads, with some plant species vulnerable to pollution. Farmers have a role to play in helping to maintain good water quality by adopting methods of best practice in the application of fertilisers and organic manures to land. Ensuring, as far as is practicable, that these nutrients are applied in accordance with crop requirements minimises the risk of them leaching into watercourses. Advice to farmers is available through the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative and resource protection is a key theme for the industry-led Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

<sup>1</sup> Natural England

## Louis and Fran Baugh, Neatishead

Fran and Louis Baugh live at Neatishead Hall, a mixed arable and dairy farm. Fran is the third generation to farm at Neatishead and Louis is a new entrant into farming.

The farm is located in the environmentally important and sensitive River Ant valley, where two Sites of Special Scientific Interest border the farm – Alderfen Broad, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust nature reserve since the 1930s and How Hill, a national nature reserve. The Ant valley is designated as a wetland area of international importance.

The pedigree holstein dairy cows and young stock graze the low lying, Environmentally Sensitive Areas peat marshes, which is made possible by drainage water being pumped up and into the river by an Internal Drainage Board pump. The milk from the farm is supplied to Asda for sale within the eastern region.

The arable land grows sugar beet, potatoes, cereals, maize for feeding to the cows and French beans for freezing.

The farm has a well established Countryside Stewardship scheme. This helps the farming operations to coexist alongside the species-rich natural environment, which includes barn owls, marsh harriers, lapwings, skylarks, oystercatchers, otters and the swallowtail butterfly.



Louis and Fran Baugh

The stewardship comprises wildflower meadows, conservation headlands, wild bird feeding plots, and 24km of grass margins, almost one third of which have permissive footpaths in place connecting the communities of Horning and Neatishead with the statutory rights of way to create circular walks.

## We would like to see:

- Protection of our best and most versatile land in and around the Broads, for its own sake as a national asset and for its productive capacity in providing food and fuel to the nation.
- Transfer of all land that is currently part of the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area into environmental stewardship schemes designed to meet the needs of lowland graziers. This can only be achieved by introducing creative ELS/HLS prescriptions that recognise the economics of farming on the grazing marshes and which offer worthwhile payment rates; provide sufficiently flexible options; and encourage the direct participation of graziers as short term occupiers of land rather than landlords.
- Continued emphasis on industry-led initiatives to improve water quality such as the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, Tried and Tested nutrient management planning and the pesticides Voluntary Initiative. Measures to address water quality must be based on scientific evidence; be carefully targeted; and must enthuse and engage farmers. The costs to farm businesses of implementing measures must not outweigh the environmental benefits of the improvements.
- Smarter regulation that balances the needs of businesses with those of the environment. Interpretation of EU legislation such as the habitat regulations, and local policies relating to planning and enforcement, should not unduly constrain agricultural production.
- Fair charging structures for the enforcement of environmental regulations that reflect the 'micro-business' scale of farms.
- Carefully targeted advice and information to help farmers improve their soil management techniques, thereby conserving the long-term fertility and productivity of this precious resource.

# WHY FARMING IN BROADLAND MATTERS TO THE ECONOMY

FARMING IN THE BROADS CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN £150 MILLION TO THE REGIONAL ECONOMY, AND PRODUCES HIGH QUALITY FRESH FOOD, WHILE MAINTAINING EXCEPTIONAL LEVELS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE IS DELIVERED INTO A PROCESSING INDUSTRY THAT IS THE UK'S LARGEST MANUFACTURING SECTOR.



*Cantley sugar beet factory  
(Photo credit Miles Bostock)*



“My business demands high quality ingredients and that’s what farmers in the Broads supply. Regionality and seasonality are also of paramount importance to me and my restaurant and, with my close locality to the Broads, I can source wonderful produce like petit pois, juliette potatoes and asparagus from local growers.”

Galton Blackiston,  
Celebrity chef and Norfolk hotelier

Agriculture in the East of England is at the heart of an £8 billion food and farming industry and farm businesses in the Broads make a significant contribution to this overall production.<sup>1</sup>

Broads farming encompasses many different farm types, ranging from arable crops and horticulture to livestock and dairy. These farms employ 8,500 people and support many more jobs in areas such as food processing, haulage, farm equipment suppliers and business advice.

Farmers in this area produce one third of the region's root crops, brassicas, fodder beet and maize and produce one fifth of the national sugar beet crop, which is delivered to British Sugar's factory at Cantley. The factory, which opened in 1912 and was Britain's first beet sugar factory, now buys one million tonnes of sugar beet from around 800 local growers a year. On average it produces 200,000 tonnes of sugar each year as well as 70,000 tonnes of animal feed pellets and 60,000 tonnes of Limex soil conditioner.

Horticultural production is particularly important due to the high value of the crops produced and the large number of people needed to harvest these fruit and vegetables. Specialist growers in the Broads produce almost 30 per cent of Eastern England's small fruit production and more than 40 per cent of its peas and beans. Seasonal peaks for harvesting produce mean that growers are heavily reliant on short-term overseas labour.

<sup>1</sup> East of England Development Agency 2020 Vision for the East of England Food and Farming Sector

### Tim Place, Place UK Ltd, Tunstead



Place UK grows and processes fresh and frozen soft fruit for supermarkets and food manufacturers. Tim is managing director of the third-generation family-run company. It officially started business in 1954, but his father recollects supplying raspberries and strawberries to King George VI's garden parties.

The company has a turnover of £9.5 million and employs 57 full time local staff, as well as 400 seasonal staff. These jobs bring money into the local economy through local food and drink sales, as well as the provision of evening entertainment for the boarding employees.

Place UK produces around two million punnets of strawberries and one million punnets of raspberries every year to Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco and the Co-operative. The company also supplies cartons of frozen rhubarb, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries to local businesses, as well as national manufacturing companies and retailers. The company is also one of only five large national bean sprout growers.

The success of Place UK is due to the quality of its produce, which is achieved by accurate monitoring of water and nutrients to its plants. The methods used are not only economically beneficial, but also have positive environmental benefits. For example, the crops are watered and fed with nutrients through trickle irrigation pipes laid directly beside each plant, so the risk of nutrient and water loss to the soil is greatly diminished.

The company has won two awards for water efficiency from the Environment Agency for the amount of water it recycles (38 per cent, saving 21,500m<sup>3</sup> per year) and for its irrigation scheduling, which only adds the optimum amount of water at the correct time to ensure the best yield.

Specialist potato production is important to the area. Growers have collaborated to provide a well-developed production and marketing infrastructure to meet the demands of today's fast moving market. North Norfolk Potato Growers and its sister business Nelson County Potatoes are farmer-run enterprises producing 60,000 tonnes of potatoes per annum for a range of buyers in the UK crisping sector including Kettle Foods. The group has a long history of crisping supply spread over three generations, originally supplying Smiths Crisps, which was based in Great Yarmouth.

Complementing this high level of production, Broads farmers are also routinely engaged in conservation schemes, which bring their own economic benefits. Not only does the Broads ESA scheme reward farmers for managing this cherished landscape, it also delivers environmental goods and services worth an estimated £150 to every member of the local community<sup>2</sup>. This is approximately ten times more than the second most valuable ESA, the South Downs (average of £14.75 per person).

Farming in the Broads is not solely concentrated on production. Agriculture in this area supports a further range of diverse businesses including hauliers, packers, wholesalers, food and drink manufacturers, as well as advisers and those involved in the tourism industry.

<sup>2</sup> 'Agri-Environment Schemes in England 2009 Report', Natural England

### Main crops grown in the Broads area

Crop	East of England Output (£)	Broads % of East of England Output	Broads Area Output (£)
Potatoes	£160 million	21%	£33 million
Sugar Beet	£115 million	27%	£31 million
Barley	£80 million	30%	£24 million
Horticulture	£400 million	18%	£72 million

Source: Defra, Agriculture in the English regions 2008

### Woodforde's Norfolk Ales, Woodbastwick

Woodforde's Norfolk Ales produced its first commercial brew in 1981 and, following continued success, opened the Broadland Brewery in Woodbastwick in 1989. The business has continued to grow and now employs 32 local people full time.

The brewery prides itself on producing the highest quality ale from the finest local ingredients, winning an impressive batch of awards in the process. As a result, it procures 450 tonnes of barley a year, almost all of it supplied by farmers in the Broads.

The brewery does not malt the barley itself, but it insists that all its malt is produced in Norfolk by Crisp Maltings in Great Ryburgh and Simpsons Malt in Tivetshall St. Margaret.

In 2000 it opened a brewery shop and visitor centre. This is a popular venue for both tourists and local residents, selling an exclusive



Loading up at Woodforde's Broadland brewery

range of bottled beers and brewery memorabilia including clothing, posters and a wide range of locally-produced preserves and gifts.

## D & F McCarthy Ltd, Norwich

This family-run fruit and vegetable distribution company has been operating in Norfolk for more than a century, making the most of the wide variety of quality produce grown in the Broads. It collects fruit and vegetables from local farms and delivers it to shops and food stores in Norfolk and north Suffolk.

Martin, Simon, David, and Peter are the fifth generation of the McCarthy family actively engaged in the running of the company, which in 2010 opened a new state-of-the-art distribution centre in Memorial Way, Norwich.

The company has an annual turnover of more than £10 million and handles up to 100 pallets of produce per day. The company sources about half its produce direct from local growers and the remainder from larger local suppliers. The business is well recognised and vitally important to the area as it employs 45 full time local staff and has Royal Warrants to the Queen and the Prince of Wales.

A condition of the warrants is that the company must meet high environmental standards. It achieves this largely through its modern purpose-built premises, as it reuses dirty water, has low energy usage and an efficient high tech refrigerated warehouse.

D & F McCarthy Ltd is also looking to build a biogas digester to turn food waste into energy and it hopes to increase the amount of local produce it sources.



David McCarthy of  
D & F McCarthy Ltd

### We would like to see:

- A thriving farming sector in and around the Broads, one that produces more while impacting less on the environment, and that makes a major contribution to food and fuel security (consistent with Defra's Food 2030 agenda).
- More procurement of local food by public bodies in Norfolk and Suffolk, especially in local schools and hospitals, with an emphasis on food produced to British farm assurance standards.
- More support for research and development, particularly provided by local institutions such as the John Innes Centre, to give farmers the tools they need to meet future food and energy needs. This should include genetic improvement of crops and livestock, and novel technologies.
- A reformed Common Agricultural Policy that is simple for farmers and governments to operate; remains market orientated; encourages a more productive and competitive farming industry capable of meeting future challenges; and is truly 'common' in its objectives and measures in all EU states.
- Flexibility in UK immigration policy that reflects and accommodates the essential role played by seasonal horticultural workers from overseas.

# WHY FARMING IN THE BROADS MATTERS TO COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

FARMERS IN THE BROADS ARE AT THE HEART OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY, HELPING BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS LEARN MORE ABOUT WHERE THEIR FOOD COMES FROM AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

Farming in the Broads plays a key role in raising awareness about how food is produced and how the countryside is managed.

Open Farm Sunday provides one such occasion, where Broads land managers join hundreds of other farmers across the country in opening their gates and welcoming the public on one day in June. This increasingly popular annual event is organised by farmers and LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming). In 2009 participating farms in the Broads were visited by an estimated 5,500 people.

But many farms also have a longer-term commitment to education, sharing their wealth of knowledge with students of all ages, from primary school, right up to A-level students, with some even having a dedicated education room. Farmers also participate in the Countryside Education Visit Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS), which ensures farmers are fully trained and qualified to provide practical learning on their farm. However, it is not only children that benefit – farms host teacher training days as well.

**Tim Papworth, Felmingham**



*School children learning about farming at the Papworth's farm*

Tim Papworth, together with other family members, farms 1,750 hectares in the heart of the Broads. The farm is mixed and includes potatoes, sugar beet, cereals, sheep and cattle.

Alongside the farming business, the farm hosts regular school visits, involving about 160 pupils every year.

For school visits, Tim concentrates on general food and farming, with interactive group questions using real farm produce, rides around the farm in a purpose-built trailer and demonstrations showing high-precision cropping using GPS systems on farm machinery. However, the emphasis is not

always on food, with discussions on topics including how clothing is made from wool and how wood is used for renewable energy.

Older students are encouraged to gain practical experience on the farm, utilising a close link with nearby Easton College. As a result, engineering and veterinary students regularly visit the farm as part of their studies.

In conjunction with Farming And Countryside Education, the farm runs an education day for local high school teachers as well, showing how farming can be included in a wide range of subjects within the National Curriculum.



“Climate change, food security, fragile ecosystems and economic challenges all come together as key issues in the Broads. It is vitally important that we educate the general public, and our young people in particular, on the choices and impacts that the farming industry will need to take in its long-term stewardship of the Broads.”

David Lawrence,  
Principal of Easton College

As well as education, farmers in the Broads support the community in many other ways. One example is the Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal, started by the late Michael

Buckingham from his farm at Swafield in the 1980s. With the support of local farmers, it has provided ingredients for thousands of Christmas meals for those in need.

### We would like to see:

- Improved integration of agriculture into the National Curriculum, with schools encouraged to build and maintain links with local farms.
- Delivery of a skills infrastructure that equips the agricultural workforce to meet future challenges, and that encourages young people into the food and farming industry.
- Reliable and fast broadband coverage so that farms can participate fully in a digital Broads.

### Nick and Judy Taylor, HFG Farm Shop, Beeston St Andrew



Nick and Judy believe strongly in education, whether it is explaining to customers why strawberries are not available in December, or working with their local schools. They hold farm visits for primary and secondary school children to learn about where their food comes from and also look at wider rural issues.

Thatchers and game keepers are among those who have given talks. The couple also attend school fetes and church markets to strengthen links between farming and the community.

Nick and Judy Taylor farm pigs, sugar beet, cereals, vegetables and flowers and work with other, often small producers to sell quality, fresh, local produce in their farm shop at Beeston St Andrew. They estimate that over 80 per cent of the shop’s customers come from within a five-mile radius.

It is not only children who benefit from visiting HFG Farm Shop. The shop holds open days specifically for teachers and other farm shop owners, to show how farming can be fully integrated into the curriculum and help bring rural communities closer together.

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