

# Land Business Update

Week Commencing 23 January 2017

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## Farming

### Income for farmers and contractors from CFAs increase slightly for harvest 2016

The provisional figures for harvest 2016 from our Contract Farming Survey show slight increases in income for both farmers and contractors, but remain below the five-year average due to the combination of weak commodity prices and lower yields. Download a full copy of the results [here](#) and call [George Badger](#) to discuss.

### Glyphosate: petition and new research threaten its continued use

The EU will consider a petition calling for a ban on glyphosate, reform of the pesticide approval procedure and mandatory EU-wide pesticide reduction targets, if the petition receives one million signatures by the end of 2017. Don't forget that the EU will publish its assessment of the herbicide by this summer, following last July's 18-month extension to glyphosate's license. Separately, research by King's College London found that low doses of glyphosate-mix chemicals (a 75,000th of EU permitted levels) over long periods (two years) can increase non-alcoholic related fatty liver disease in rats. The research was commissioned by the Sustainable Food Alliance. The researchers claim humans ingest higher levels of glyphosate than the rats were exposed to (possibly up to 1000 times higher) and that the recommended safety limits for human ingestion of glyphosate need to be reviewed as the chemical may be a previously unknown risk factor in causing fatty liver disease. In Europe, 20-30% of the population have this disease. Monsanto said that it will withdraw RoundUp if it is proven that it causes disease.

### Scotland: Fewer than 1,000 dairy herds left in Scotland

A fall of 17 farms in 2016 leaves just 957 dairy farms left, which is the lowest number since the Scottish Dairy Cattle Association's records began in 1903.

### US beef and veal market reopening to Europe

The US has confirmed that it will accept beef and veal exports from France for the first time since 1998, when the meat was banned due to BSE concerns. It marks further progress in restoring trade and the UK is working on the audit process needed by the US. This is good news although only small amounts of meat have been sent to the US by Ireland, Lithuania and the Netherlands, which already have export approval.

## Economy

### Rural businesses are faced with some of the largest rises in business rates

Livestock markets (average rise of 86%), vineyards (79%), kennels (75%) and stud farms (99%) are facing some of the largest rises, according to analysis by The Times of Valuation Office Agency data. The businesses say that the rises are not fair as they are not related to profits and that they could lead to them closing. There are growing calls for a change in how business rates are calculated; for example, The Times claims rates on landfill gas generator sites are rising by 144% while they are falling 16% on landfill sites. Please contact [Marcus Dorfman](#) if you would like to discuss business rates.

## Forestry

### Genome sequencing shows UK has different ash genomes to other EU countries

This allows foresters to assess more accurately which varieties are less susceptible to ash die back fungus, which will help plant trees that could survive the fungus.



## Planning

### Scotland: consultation of the future of the Scottish Planning System

The [consultation paper](#) makes twenty proposals to support sustainable economic growth across Scotland, and build on the recommendations of 2016's independent review of the planning system. Responses by 4 April 2017.

## Property

### Home rents rise more slowly

Residential rents grew by 1.7% in 2016, less than 2015's 3.8%, prompting HomeLet to say that an affordability ceiling may be approaching, particularly in regions where rents have grown fastest recently. The growth in rents was variable between regions, with the highest rises in Northern Ireland (6.4%) and North East England (4.9%) and the lowest in the East Midlands (-0.4%).

## General

### Rural councils facing bigger cuts than urban authorities

Councils in rural areas are facing bigger cuts (-31%) than urban authorities (-22%) under the Government's four year Local Government Funding Settlement. The Rural Services Network says that this will leave rural dwellers paying significantly more in council tax than their urban counterparts, from lower wages and whilst receiving fewer services.

## Environment

### Big Farmland Bird Count goes high tech (3 - 12 February)

New software that allows land managers to keep an electronic record of the birds on their land will allow long-term trends to be recorded. Register to take part [here](#).