

Sixtieth Annual Report to Parliament on Smallholdings in England

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010



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**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
(Defra)**

**Sixtieth Annual Report to Parliament on
Smallholdings in England**

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 59 of the Agriculture Act 1970

Contents

	Page
Introduction	4
Some Examples of Best Practice on County Farms	
Case Study: - Stephen and Lynn Briggs, Whitehall Farm, Farcet, Cambridgeshire.	5
Case Study: – David Wheatley, Willock Farm, Wisbech St Mary, Cambridgeshire.	6
Statistical Information	7
Table 1 – Area of smallholdings land held by smallholdings authorities as at 31 March 2010	8
Table 2 – Land acquired or disposed of by smallholdings authorities during year ended 31 March 2010	9
Table 3 – Analysis of smallholdings by size as at 31 March 2010	10
Table 4 – Tenancies granted by smallholdings authorities for the first time and those terminated during the year ended 31 March 2010	11
Table 5 – Total revenue account of smallholdings authorities for year ended 31 March 2010	12

Introduction

Under section 59 of the Agriculture Act 1970, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is required to present an annual report to Parliament summarising for each financial year his/her proceedings and those of local authorities in relation to smallholdings in England. This continues the similar obligations imposed on the Minister of Agriculture by the Agriculture Act 1947. The report, for the year 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, is the sixtieth annual report.

Statutory smallholdings, or county farms as they are now more commonly known are administered under Part III of the 1970 Act. Under this legislation, smallholdings authorities are required to make it their general aim to provide opportunities for persons with sufficient experience to be farmers on their own account. The smallholdings must be capable of providing full-time employment for not more than two people, including the occupier.

Throughout the 2009/2010 financial year farming continued to experience significant change and the county farms service was not immune from this. The majority of the county farm estate is made up of what are regarded as smaller farms and these can often feel financial pressures more acutely than larger enterprises. However, although lower than in the previous two years, average farm incomes in 2009/10 were above the low levels seen earlier in the decade for many farm types.

We would like to thank all of those who have helped in the preparation of the report and kindly provided the statistical information.

Case Study: Stephen & Lynn Briggs, Whitehall Farm, Farcet

Stephen & Lynn Briggs farm 100ha at Whitehall Farm, Farcet. Stephen's background is in farm management and consultancy, Lynn is a part time organic inspector and runs a company which supplies specialised green manures seeds.

Although demand for organic has suffered due to the economic downturn, in the long term Stephen expects demand to grow. The farm will take two years to convert to full organic status; they will then grow a mixture of organic cereals, root crops and clovers. Stephen believes an organic farming system will be more insulated from input price fluctuations which can have a dramatic effect on business profitability.

Alongside the conversion of the land to organic production, Stephen and Lynn are establishing 50ha of apple trees, based on an '*agroforestry*' system with trees widely spaced with arable/root crops grown in-between the rows. This approach allows multi-functional land use, improved soil protection, diverse cropping and enhanced biodiversity, whilst capitalising on a resurgence in demand for English apples.



Stephen says 'We will move straight from cereal to fruit harvesting, allowing us to maintain arable cropping and income whilst the fruit trees are developing over the next 5 years'.

The organic crops must be separated from sprayed crops, therefore field margins, rich in pollen and nectar species have been established along field boundaries under the Organic Entry Level Scheme agreement. This will help populations of bumblebees and locally important Red List farmland birds – particularly breeding lapwing, redshank, snipe, reed bunting, corn bunting, grey partridge and yellowhammer.

On reflection Stephen says 'Being Organic is a big challenge, but we are aiming for new horizons to create a sustainable business integrating conservation and profitable farming'.

Case Study: David Wheatley of Willock Farm, Wisbech St Mary



Cambridgeshire County Farms tenant David Wheatley hosted his fifth Apple Day in September 2009 in the traditional orchards at Willock Farm, Wisbech St. Mary.

David took over the tenancy of the 126ha farm in 2001. With both Natural England and the Council's help, David has improved the traditional orchards on the farm. A major block of the orchard has been fenced and a substantial programme of pruning and re-planting was undertaken.

Approximately 350 people attended the Apple Day event and were able to walk through the traditional orchards and orchard trail and see some of the older varieties of apple such as Emneth Early, Annie Elizabeth and Lane Prince Albert. Bob Lever from the East of England Apple and Orchard Project was on hand to identify apples and apple juice and cider from the apples grown on the farm was for sale. The juice which is pressed by the Stamford Juicing Company has now been certified as organic and there are zero food miles

Willock Farm is also the home of the Regional Collection of some 250 of the lesser known varieties of apple, pears, cherries and plums in Cambridgeshire. The Collection will provide a ready source of bud and graft wood for propagation of rare local fruit. The collection was open for the first time this year

Statistical Information on Smallholdings provided by Local Authorities

Area

At 31 March 2010 the total area of land held by local authorities in England for smallholdings purposes was [96,455] hectares of which 90,967 hectares were let as smallholdings. **Table 1** gives figures for individual authorities. Authorities review and update their records from time to time; consequently some figures may not correspond with the figures in previous reports after taking into account acquisitions and purchases.

Table 2 shows the areas acquired and disposed of by individual authorities. 98 hectares were acquired in 2009/2010 and a total of 693 hectares were sold or otherwise disposed of during the year.

Numbers of Holdings

At 31 March 2010 local authorities were providing 2,504 smallholdings (compared with 2,907 in the previous year) of which 1,006 (40%) were 20 hectares or less in size; 757 (30%) were between 20 and 40 hectares; and 741 (30%) were over 40 hectares. The number of holdings provided by individual authorities and their size distribution is given in **Table 3**. Since 1966 the total number of local authority smallholdings in England has fallen from 12,882 to 2,504 (a reduction of 80%) whilst the average size of smallholdings increased from 11 to 36 hectares.

Tenants

There were 2,393 tenants of local authority smallholdings in England at 31 March 2010. During 2009/2010 87 tenancies were granted to new entrants and 1115 tenancies were terminated. Figures for individual authorities are given in **Tables 3 and 4**.

Financial position of Authorities

The total revenue of smallholdings authorities in England in the year ended 31 March 2010 showed a total income of £19,938,778 as against a total expenditure of £10,904,034 giving an operational surplus of £9,034,744. This compares with a surplus of income over expenditure in 2008/2009 of £10,591,287. **Table 5** summarises authorities' combined revenue accounts for the year.

General

Key to Tables 1 – 4

“-“ nil or not applicable.

** data not available.

.. authority did not submit a return.

* data is too small to be recorded.

Data in italic 08/09 data

Table 1: Area of smallholdings land held by smallholdings authorities as at 31 March 2010

	Land let as smallholdings	Land held but not let as smallholdings	Total small- holdings land	Rent roll of land let as smallholdings	Rent roll of total small- holdings land
County / Unitary Authority	Hectares	Hectares	Hectares	£	£
Bedford Borough	187	224	411	£34,615	£40,893
Bedfordshire Central	2210	303	2,513	£399,083	£444,503
Berkshire West	117	0	117	£17,210	£17,210
Bournemouth	86	**	86	£39,135	£78,038
Brighton & Hove	4043	257	4,301	£455,125	£465,226
Buckinghamshire	1242	100	1,342	£270,840	£357,399
Cambridgeshire	11800	1761	13,561	£2,589,865	£2,770,086
Cheshire East	1976	118	2,095	£524,472	£547,666
Cheshire West & Ch'ster	1667	163	1,831	£451,111	£498,204
City of York	58	28	85	£7,095	£27,645
Cornwall	4328	206	4,533	£921,235	£1,031,003
Cumbria	289	7	296	£61,989	£66,131
Devon	4047	22	4,070	£788,018	£793,503
Dorset	2743	26	2,769	£609,954	£609,954
Durham	573	193	766	£57,162	£89,144
East Riding of Yorkshire	2838	7	2,845	£488,157	£507,561
East Sussex	43	0	43	£5,750	£5,750
Essex	73	4	76	£13,507	£26,605
Gloucestershire	3435	11	3,446	£893,235	£944,452
Hampshire	1707	264	1,971	£443,652	£506,003
Hartlepool	88	0	88	£9,887	£9,887
Herefordshire	1901	45	1,946	£361,744	£361,962
Hertfordshire	1934	93	2,027	£406,542	£609,938
Lancashire	36	66	102	£15,880	£27,316
Leicestershire	2908	67	2,975	£685,279	£722,624
Lincolnshire	8076	15	8,091	£1,688,185	£1,694,807
Medway	56	0	56	£5,222	£5,222
Milton Keynes	313	130	443	£78,225	£83,069
Norfolk	6379	192	6,571	£1,114,560	£1,164,465
Northamptonshire	300	42	342	£52,617	£52,802
North Lincolnshire	422	0	422	£86,150	£86,150
North Somerset	329	4	333	£55,272	£56,157
Northumberland	230	6	236	£25,549	£26,583
North Yorkshire	2055	213	2,268	£362,521	£407,584
Nottinghamshire	744	0	744	£122,715	£131,415
Oxfordshire	361	1	363	£42,309	£42,834
Peterborough	1219	0	1,219	£229,073	£235,934
Shropshire	628	22	650	£160,206	£160,206
Slough	3	0	3	£13,500	£13,500
Somerset	2563	296	2,859	£583,182	£590,683
South Gloucestershire	490	3	493	£109,704	£111,054
Staffordshire	3480	144	3,624	£1,027,222	£1,055,124
Suffolk	5312	64	5,376	£946,399	£1,017,531
Surrey	867	44	911	£262,607	£276,047
Swindon	680	111	790	£119,156	£138,979
Thurrock	202	0	202	£21,340	£21,340
Torbay	25	**	25	£2,815	£2,815
Warrington	2	35	37	£365	£1,555
Warwickshire	2000	21	2,021	£573,897	£573,897
West Sussex	213	80	293	£125,364	£152,454
Wiltshire	2192	37	2,229	£422,023	£465,884
Worcestershire	1494	63	1,557	£305,954	£326,928
TOTAL	90,967	5,488	96,455	£19,086,674	£20,453,723

Table 2: Land acquired or disposed of by smallholdings authorities during year ended 31 March 2010

County / Unitary Authority	Land acquired Hectares			Land disposed of Hectares		
	Newly acquired, appropriated etc.	Formerly leased	Total	Sold, appropriated etc.	Leased land given up	Total
Bedford Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bedfordshire Central	0	0	0	0	0	0
Berkshire West	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bournemouth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brighton & Hove	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buckinghamshire	0	0	0	96	0	96
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	148	0	148
Cheshire East	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cheshire West & Ch'ster	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of York	0	0	0	40	0	40
Cornwall	4	0	4	25	0	25
Cumbria	0	0	0	34	0	34
Devon	58	0	58	19	0	19
Dorset	0	0	0	0	0	0
Durham	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Riding of Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	0	0	5	0	5
Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hartlepool	0	0	0	0	0	0
Herefordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	0	0	14	0	14
Lincolnshire	0	0	0	26	0	26
Medway	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milton Keynes	0	0	0	1	0	1
Norfolk	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Lincolnshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Somerset	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northumberland	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Yorkshire	0	0	0	1	0	1
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	7	0	7
Oxfordshire	5	0	5	8	0	8
Peterborough	0	0	0	2	0	2
Shropshire	26	0	26	0	0	0
Slough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somerset	0	0	0	53	2	55
South Gloucestershire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffordshire	0	0	0	2	0	2
Suffolk	0	0	0	8	0	8
Surrey	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swindon	0	0	0	4	0	4
Thurrock	0	0	0	0	0	0
Torbay	**	**	0	**	**	0
Warrington	0	0	0	26	0	26
Warwickshire	**	**	0	1	**	1
West Sussex	0	0	0	69	0	69
Wiltshire	5	0	5	98	0	98
Worcestershire	0	0	0	4	0	4
TOTAL	98	0	98	691	2	693

Table 3: Analysis of smallholdings by size at 31 March 2010

County / Unitary Authority	Number of holdings				Number of tenants			
	0 – 20 ha	20 – 40 ha	Over 40 ha	Total	0 – 20 ha	20 – 40 ha	Over 40 ha	Total
Bedford Borough	8	6	2	16	5	2	3	10
Bedfordshire Central	26	24	20	70	13	17	22	52
Berkshire West	0	2	1	3	0	2	1	3
Bournemouth	3	1	1	5	3	1	1	5
Brighton & Hove	25	5	22	52	25	5	21	51
Buckinghamshire	34	13	12	59	34	13	12	59
Cambridgeshire	123	57	130	310	111	54	122	287
Cheshire East	6	1	0	7	22	33	15	70
Cheshire West & Ch'ster	21	12	20	53	15	12	20	47
City of York	1	0	2	3	1	0	2	3
Cornwall	11	33	62	106	11	33	62	106
Cumbria	4	8	0	12	3	8	0	11
Devon	2	33	47	82	2	33	47	82
Dorset	3	20	37	60	3	20	36	59
Durham	0	0	9	9	0	0	9	9
East Riding of Yorkshire	62	46	20	128	62	46	20	128
East Sussex	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Essex	4	2	0	6	4	2	0	6
Gloucestershire	79	47	32	158	27	42	31	100
Hampshire	33	8	18	59	33	8	18	59
Hartlepool	**	**	2	2	**	**	2	2
Herefordshire	7	40	7	54	7	39	7	53
Hertfordshire	21	19	21	61	21	19	21	61
Lancashire	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	6
Leicestershire	20	49	20	89	10	49	20	79
Lincolnshire	107	83	76	266	107	83	76	266
Medway	1	2	0	3	1	2	0	3
Milton Keynes	5	2	5	12	2	1	6	9
Norfolk	**	**	**	0	**	**	**	0
Northamptonshire	6	3	2	11	6	3	2	11
North Lincolnshire	17	1	0	18	15	1	0	16
North Somerset	2	1	5	8	2	1	5	8
Northumberland	1	0	4	5	1	0	4	5
North Yorkshire	38	31	17	86	33	31	17	81
Nottinghamshire	12	5	9	26	12	5	9	26
Oxfordshire	30	3	1	34	23	3	1	27
Peterborough	11	12	14	37	8	9	13	30
Shropshire	24	16	1	41	21	16	1	38
Slough	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Somerset	15	37	23	75	15	38	23	76
South Gloucestershire	8	6	4	18	8	6	4	18
Staffordshire	27	56	25	108	27	56	25	108
Suffolk	**	**	**	0	**	**	**	0
Surrey	48	11	7	66	43	9	6	58
Swindon	11	4	6	21	4	4	6	14
Thurrock	6	3	2	11	6	3	2	11
Torbay	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	2
Warrington	3	1	0	4	3	1	0	4
Warwickshire	36	19	20	75	41	19	24	84
West Sussex	12	2	3	17	12	2	3	17
Wiltshire	0	17	22	39	0	13	21	34
Worcestershire	84	16	9	109	76	12	9	97
TOTAL	1006	757	741	2504	887	756	750	2393

Table 4: Tenancies granted by smallholdings authorities for the first time and those terminated during the year ended 31 March 2010

County / Unitary Authority	Number Granted	Number Terminated
Bedford Borough	0	0
Bedfordshire Central	1	1
Berkshire West	0	0
Bournemouth	0	0
Brighton & Hove	0	0
Buckinghamshire	2	7
Cambridgeshire	2	8
Cheshire East	0	0
Cheshire West & Ch'ster	0	1
City of York	0	0
Cornwall	8	10
Cumbria	0	1
Devon	4	6
Dorset	2	1
Durham	0	0
East Riding of Yorkshire	20	9
East Sussex	0	0
Essex	0	0
Gloucestershire	2	4
Hampshire	6	7
Hartlepool	0	0
Herefordshire	10	12
Hertfordshire	0	0
Lancashire	1	0
Leicestershire	4	4
Lincolnshire	5	7
Medway	0	0
Milton Keynes	0	1
Norfolk	1	7
Northamptonshire	0	0
North Lincolnshire	1	1
North Somerset	0	0
Northumberland	0	0
North Yorkshire	0	0
Nottinghamshire	0	0
Oxfordshire	7	6
Peterborough	2	1
Shropshire	0	0
Slough	0	0
Somerset	0	2
South Gloucestershire	0	0
Staffordshire	6	2
Suffolk	1	3
Surrey	2	0
Swindon	0	1
Thurrock	0	0
Torbay	0	0
Warrington	0	1
Warwickshire	0	1
West Sussex	0	1
Wiltshire	0	4
Worcestershire	0	2
TOTAL	87	111

Table 5: Total revenue account of smallholdings authorities for year ended 31 March 2010

	£
OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT	
Income	
Rent from Holdings	17,353,983
Other Rents	1,047,872
Other Income	1,536,922
TOTAL INCOME	19,938,778
Expenditure	
Repairs and Maintenance	5,358,832
Rents, Rates, Annuities and Water Charges	872,388
Net Tenant Rights Valuations	282,524
Estate Management	3,540,511
Other Expenditure	849,778
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	10,904,034
OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT SURPLUS	9,034,774
NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT	
Income	
TOTAL	446,953
Expenditure	
Central Support Costs	833,896
Other Expenditure	194,034
TOTAL	1,027,430
NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT (DEFICIT)	(580,477)
REVENUE ACCOUNT NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	
Operational Account Surplus	9,034,744
Non-operational Account (Deficit)	(580,477)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	8,454,267
Capital Charges	14,658,381
Net Surplus/(Deficit) including Capital	(6,204,114)

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Zone 8E, Millbank
c/o 17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Telephone: 0207 238 6523
www.defra.gov.uk

