

# Fifty Ninth Annual Report to Parliament on Smallholdings in England

1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009



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

**Fifty Ninth Annual Report to Parliament on  
Smallholdings in England**

**1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009**

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



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## 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 2008 to 31 March 2009, is the fifty ninth 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 2008/2009 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. .

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 Jon and Melissa Ravenhill, Woefulthane Farm, Minchinhampton



Photograph of Melissa Ravenhill by kind permission of The National Farmers Union

Jon and Melissa Ravenhill began on the Gloucestershire County Estate in 1983 with a heifer rearing business on a 23 acre starter holding. In 1985 they moved to a 50 acre holding with a small organic dairy unit selling cheese and cooked meats direct to the public through a farm shop and at farmers markets. In 2005 they moved to Woefulthane Farm, Minchinhampton, a 110 acre organic dairy holding with grazing rights over the common. Milking 50 dairy Shorthorns and having invested in a cheese processing plant they produce organic milk and 8 different cheeses including Double Gloucester, smoked, fresh and blue cheeses, winning gold, silver and bronze medals at the annual British Cheese Awards.

A family business, daughter Olivia also manages a livery business for 9 horses and son Henry is now running the farm shop which opened in the village in August 2009. As well as the award winning Cotswold cheeses the shop also supplies milk, butter, cream, homemade salad dressings and free range eggs all from the farm just half a mile down the road. Conscious of carbon footprints and food miles the Ravenhill's are keen for everything to be made and sold as locally as possible. The family plan to grow the business to produce yoghurt and ice-cream which will ultimately provide employment in the dairy.

Melissa, who is self taught, has a passion for producing high quality cheeses and runs training courses in cheese making on behalf of Hartbury College and has also hosted food tourism trips in connection with a hotel in Tetbury.



## Case Study Chris and Dawn Cardell, Trevorva Cot, near Probus



Photograph of Chris and Dawn Cardell  
by kind permission of The National Farmers Union

Chris and Dawn Cardell started on the Cornwall County Council Estate on a 50 acre beef unit in 1985, after four years they progressed on to a 100 acre dairy unit initially stocking with Holsteins and then moving to a Jersey herd. In 2005 Chris and Dawn were offered the tenancy of Trevorva Cot, near Probus, another dairy unit. They retained the Jersey's but also took over a Kennels and Cattery business started by the previous tenant. Whilst Chris focuses on the dairy, Dawn is in charge of the kennel and cattery, employing their daughter and an additional full time worker and a number of part time dog walkers.

As demand for the Kennels and Cattery continued to grow they decided to invest in providing additional accommodation and now can provide high quality boarding for 80 dogs and 30 cats. The current customer profile not only includes locals leaving their pets when they go on holiday but also those that are coming into the region for a holiday and leaving their pets somewhere safe and not too far away. Chris believes that this has proved a successful diversification that adds to the farm's overall financial wellbeing.



## Statistical Information on Smallholdings provided by Local Authorities

### Area

At 31 March 2009 the total area of land held by local authorities in England for smallholdings purposes was 97,144 hectares of which 92,140 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. 71 hectares were acquired in 2008/2009 and a total of 1,253 hectares were sold or otherwise disposed of during the year.

### Numbers of Holdings

At 31 March 2009 local authorities were providing 2,907 smallholdings (compared with 2,966 in the previous year) of which 1,144 (39%) were 20 hectares or less in size; 895 (31%) were between 20 and 40 hectares; and 868 (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 2,907 (a reduction of 77%).

### Tenants

There were 2,706 tenants of local authority smallholdings in England at 31 March 2009. During 2008/2009 77 tenancies were granted to new entrants and 105 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 2009 showed a total income of £21,329,734 as against a total expenditure of £10,738,447 giving an operational surplus of £10,591,287. This compares with a surplus of income over expenditure in 2007/2008 of £8,930,706. **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.

**Table 1: Area of smallholdings land held by smallholdings authorities as at 31 March 2009**

	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
<b>County / Unitary Authority</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Bedfordshire	2,638	386	3,024	£415,172	£580,192
Berkshire West	117	0	117	£17,210	£17,210
Bournemouth	88	4	92	£39,135	£39,645
Brighton & Hove	4,486	36	4,522	£454,915	£497,526
Buckinghamshire	1,377	61	1,438	£298,836	£378,012
Cambridgeshire	11,968	1,654	13,622	£2,434,702	£2,587,058
Cheshire	3,798	158	3,956	£991,587	£1,063,812
City of York	98	28	126	£12,695	£32,444
Cornwall	4,460	95	4,555	£870,664	£975,198
Cumbria	..	..	0	..	£0
Devon	4,031	0	4,031	£791,934	£791,934
Dorset	2,773	26	2,799	£614,000	£614,000
Durham	761	234	995	£55,805	£73,670
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,844	7	2,852	£470,060	£511,883
East Sussex	43	0	43	£5,750	£5,750
Essex	73	4	77	£13,347	£26,045
Gloucestershire	3,441	9	3,450	£832,312	£861,177
Hampshire	1,806	132	1,938	£465,014	£557,839
Hartlepool	88	0	88	£9,887	£9,887
Herefordshire	1,893	45	1,938	£366,617	£370,443
Hertfordshire	1,934	93	2,027	£398,092	£619,076
Lancashire	37	68	104	£18,778	£26,496
Leicestershire	2,930	59	2,989	£676,033	£710,899
Lincolnshire	8,098	18	8,116	£1,631,333	£1,636,333
Medway	56	0	56	£5,222	£5,222
Milton Keynes	224	221	445	£35,115	£90,909
Norfolk	6,454	117	6,571	£1,063,557	£1,097,727
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	£22,937	£23,971
North Yorkshire	2,075	162	2,236	£356,985	£405,593
Nottinghamshire	217	534	751	£114,635	£138,308
Oxfordshire	360	19	379	£51,786	£53,286
Peterborough	1,217	0	1,217	£190,166	£197,027
Shropshire	602	22	624	£150,608	£150,608
Slough	3	0	3	£13,500	£13,500
Somerset	2,638	276	2,914	**	£0
South Gloucestershire	491	3	494	£81,085	£98,843
Staffordshire	3,477	66	3,544	£971,128	£999,030
Suffolk	5,253	131	5,384	£942,318	£942,318
Surrey	867	44	911	£262,607	£276,047
Swindon	817	80	897	£143,000	£143,000
Thurrock	202	0	202	£21,340	£21,340
Torbay	25	**	25	£2,815	£2,815
Warrington	28	35	63	£2,865	£4,055
Warwickshire	2,001	21	2,021	£535,965	£535,965
West Sussex	213	80	293	£125,364	£152,454
Wiltshire	2,323	0	2,323	£411,493	£453,119
Worcestershire	1,534	27	1,561	£308,362	£334,676
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92,140</b>	<b>5,004</b>	<b>97,144</b>	<b>£17,890,770</b>	<b>£19,321,451</b>

**Table 2: Land acquired or disposed of by smallholdings authorities during year ended 31 March 2009**

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
Bedfordshire	0	0	0	1	0	1
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	13	0	13
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	55	0	55
Cheshire	0	0	0	47	0	47
City of York	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cornwall	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cumbria	..	..	0	..	..	0
Devon	0	0	0	68	12	79
Dorset	0	0	0	23	0	23
Durham	0	0	0	89	1	90
East Riding of Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	0	0	0	29	0	29
Gloucestershire	**	**	0	2	**	2
Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hartlepool	0	0	0	0	0	0
Herefordshire	0	0	0	171	0	171
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	10	0	10
Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	0	0	6	0	6
Lincolnshire	0	0	0	5	0	5
Medway	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milton Keynes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norfolk	0	0	0	152	0	152
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	85	0	85
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	53	0	53
Oxfordshire	0	0	0	21	0	21
Peterborough	0	0	0	25	0	25
Shropshire	0	0	0	31	0	31
Slough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somerset	**	**	0	139	0	139
South Gloucestershire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffordshire	2	0	2	3	0	3
Suffolk	0	0	0	33	0	33
Surrey	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swindon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thurrock	0	0	0	0	0	0
Torbay	**	**	0	**	**	0
Warrington	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwickshire	**	**	0	0	**	0
West Sussex	0	0	0	69	0	69
Wiltshire	69	0	69	35	0	35
Worcestershire	0	0	0	74	0	74
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1253</b>

**Table 3: Analysis of smallholdings by size at 31 March 2009**

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
Bedfordshire	34	30	24	88	32	30	24	86
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	36	16	12	64	34	14	12	60
Cambridgeshire	126	61	133	320	115	58	126	299
Cheshire	48	48	33	129	38	47	33	118
City of York	1	0	2	3	1	0	2	3
Cornwall	9	49	49	107	9	49	49	107
Cumbria	..	..	..	0	..	..	..	0
Devon	3	34	47	84	3	34	47	84
Dorset	5	22	33	60	5	22	33	60
Durham	0	0	9	9	**	0	0	0
East Riding of Yorkshire	66	51	19	136	61	51	19	131
East Sussex	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Essex	6	2	0	8	6	2	0	8
Gloucestershire	82	49	31	162	33	45	30	108
Hampshire	39	8	18	65	39	8	18	65
Hartlepool	**	**	2	2	**	**	2	2
Herefordshire	6	39	9	54	6	39	9	54
Hertfordshire	21	19	21	61	21	19	21	61
Lancashire	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	6
Leicestershire	10	49	20	79	10	49	20	79
Lincolnshire	114	83	77	274	114	83	77	274
Medway	1	2	0	3	1	2	0	3
Milton Keynes	8	2	4	14	4	1	5	10
Norfolk	89	49	67	205	49	37	61	147
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	41	32	18	91	30	32	18	80
Nottinghamshire	12	5	0	17	12	5	0	17
Oxfordshire	28	3	1	32	22	3	1	26
Peterborough	10	12	15	37	8	8	12	28
Shropshire	24	15	1	40	21	15	1	37
Slough	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Somerset	16	39	23	78	16	39	23	78
South Gloucestershire	8	6	4	18	8	6	4	18
Staffordshire	28	55	26	109	28	55	26	109
Suffolk	16	17	69	102	16	17	69	102
Surrey	48	11	7	66	43	9	6	58
Swindon	4	8	6	18	4	6	6	16
Thurrock	6	3	2	11	6	3	2	11
Torbay	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	2
Warrington	3	2	0	5	3	2	0	5
Warwickshire	36	19	20	75	41	19	24	84
West Sussex	12	2	3	17	12	2	3	17
Wiltshire	0	18	23	41	0	18	23	41
Worcestershire	85	22	4	111	85	22	4	111
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1144</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>2907</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>2706</b>

**Table 4: Tenancies granted by smallholdings authorities for the first time and those terminated during the year ended 31 March 2009**

<b>County / Unitary Authority</b>	<b>Number Granted</b>	<b>Number Terminated</b>
Bedfordshire	1	1
Berkshire West	0	0
Bournemouth	0	0
Brighton & Hove	0	0
Buckinghamshire	1	1
Cambridgeshire	3	10
Cheshire	0	5
City of York	0	0
Cornwall	13	11
Cumbria	..	..
Devon	4	5
Dorset	0	2
Durham	9	0
East Riding of Yorkshire	1	1
East Sussex	0	0
Essex	0	0
Gloucestershire	5	6
Hampshire	2	2
Hartlepool	0	0
Herefordshire	0	0
Hertfordshire	**	2
Lancashire	0	0
Leicestershire	2	3
Lincolnshire	6	8
Medway	0	0
Milton Keynes	3	1
Norfolk	1	8
Northamptonshire	0	2
North Lincolnshire	1	1
North Somerset	0	0
Northumberland	0	0
North Yorkshire	0	0
Nottinghamshire	0	2
Oxfordshire	13	11
Peterborough	1	1
Shropshire	0	0
Slough	0	0
Somerset	0	3
South Gloucestershire	0	0
Staffordshire	6	9
Suffolk	0	0
Surrey	2	0
Swindon	0	0
Thurrock	0	0
Torbay	0	0
Warrington	0	0
Warwickshire	1	1
West Sussex	0	1
Wiltshire	1	2
Worcestershire	1	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>105</b>

**Table 5: Total revenue account of smallholdings authorities for year ended 31 March 2009**

	£
<b>OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
Rent from Holdings	18,375,095
Other Rents	1,258,715
Other Income	1,695,925
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>21,329,734</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Repairs and Maintenance	5,338,415
Rents, Rates, Annuities and Water Charges	901,084
Net Tenant Rights Valuations	229,399
Estate Management	3,648,780
Other Expenditure	620,770
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>10,738,447</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT SURPLUS</b>	<b>10,591,287</b>
<b>NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>162,876</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Central Support Costs	869,284
Other Expenditure	231,916
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,101,200</b>
<b>NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(938,324)</b>
<b>REVENUE ACCOUNT NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	
Operational Account Surplus	10,591,287
Non-operational Account (Deficit)	(938,324)
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(9,652,963)</b>
Capital Charges	13,685,504
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) including Capital</b>	<b>(4,032,541)</b>





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