

Countryside Recreation



ISSN 0968-459X
VOLUME 9 NUMBER 3/4
AUTUMN/WINTER 2001

*Exchanging and Spreading Information to develop best Policy
and Practice in Countryside Recreation*



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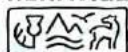
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Countryside Recreation Network

CRN is a network which:

- covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors networks thousands of interested people

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals in three areas:

Research:

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

Liaison:

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

Good Practice:

to spread information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.

Chair: John Thomson, Scottish Natural Heritage

Vice-chair: Eileen McKeever, Environment Agency

Countryside Recreation is free and is published four times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers. The copy date for the next issue is **20th February 2002 with the theme of Social Inclusion**

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Editorial

John Thomson, Chairman, Countryside Recreation Network



Photograph courtesy of Dr Kevin Bishop

The smoke from the pyres was a familiar sight in the countryside during the peak of the Foot and Mouth crisis

Piles of smouldering carcasses. The stench of singed wool and charred hide. Farmers weeping over the loss of a lifetime's work. Tourist operators protesting at the threat to their livelihoods and the perceived inequity of their treatment by Government.

These are not the sights and smells that we associate with the British countryside. They are more reminiscent of civil war in the Balkans or our imaginings of medieval plagues. Yet they are precisely the scenes that confronted people daily, whether in their travels or through their television screens, for many weeks earlier this year. Even today the epidemic is not over and veterinary experts have issued stark warnings of the danger of renewed outbreaks later in the year.

The long term consequences of such a traumatic and (in many senses of the word) costly episode are hard to foresee. There can have been few of us who, on witnessing the slaughter, the disruption and the heartache, did not resolve that it could not be allowed to happen again. Yet the scientific issues are complex, the policy context international and the political stakes high. Whilst there can be little doubt that in certain profound ways rural life – and the relationship between town and country – will never be the same again, there is a risk that, as the countryside returns to something like normality, the determination to learn the lessons for future public policy will wane. This, it would appear, is largely what happened after the last two major outbreaks in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the thorough-going inquiries instituted at the time.

There are some grounds for hoping that things will be different this time. The major land using industries, agriculture in particular, were already in crisis before the disease struck. The epidemic has served to highlight the fact that the rural economy is far more diverse, and far more inter-dependent, than was the case in the past. Public attitudes towards authority have changed, with a weakening in particular of people's willingness to defer unquestioningly to "expert" opinion. Any perceived attempt to sweep discomfiting issues under the carpet and to return to "business as usual" is unlikely to wash with voters at large.

The debate that has begun and which will hopefully gather pace once the epidemic is finally brought to a close is of immense significance for CRN members. If there is one fact that the outbreak has brought to the fore, it is the importance of tourism and outdoor recreation to the rural economy. Furthermore it has highlighted just how dependent these activities are on access to the countryside and on the quality of the rural environment. These insights are directly relevant to impending decisions about the statutory framework for access in Scotland and to the ongoing dialogue about the basis for public support for the rural economy everywhere. Also germane to the arguments about the extent of public access that is compatible with land-managing interests is the high level of responsibility demonstrated by the public in response to the restrictions imposed to help to combat the spread of the disease.

It is still too early to draw firm and detailed conclusions from the experience of this outbreak as to how similar episodes could be better handled in future. But it is not too soon to begin pointing up the issues that will need to be addressed and drawing attention to some of the pitfalls to be avoided and examples to be followed. Much of this edition of *Countryside Recreation* is devoted to doing precisely that. We are grateful to all those who have contributed articles based on their own involvement, whether in a personal capacity or as a representative of their organisation.

If there are any lessons that stand out, even at this early and necessarily anecdotal stage, they relate to the need for co-operation between all the relevant interests and to good communication. Given the suddenness with which the disease erupts, arrangements that can meet these challenges need to be in place beforehand, rather than cobbled together in response. This underlines the importance of institutions like Local Access Forums, which just happened to be the subject of our last workshop! If you ever doubted the value and relevance of CRN.....

Rural Change and the Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease

Dr Deborah Roberts, University of Aberdeen

Since the last major Foot and Mouth disease outbreak in the UK in 1967-68, agriculture, tourism and the whole nature of rural Britain has changed dramatically. As a result, the impact of the disease has been very different from that observed three decades ago and there is a clear need to reassess where and on whom the impact of the current epidemic has been most severe. Many have argued that the outbreak has re-affirmed the importance of agriculture in rural areas. Certainly the effects on farm businesses have dominated media attention. At the same time, there is widespread recognition that, as a result of the policies adopted to control the disease, the impacts of Foot and Mouth disease have spread beyond agriculture to other rural businesses and even beyond the rural economy itself. This article describes how the current Foot and Mouth epidemic has developed over both time and space, and considers the distributional effects of the impact in the light of changes in the nature of rural areas.

The Spread of the Outbreak and Basic Control Strategy

Although yet to be confirmed, it appears that the source of the current Foot and Mouth epidemic was a pig farm at Heddon on the Wall in Northumberland. Critically, the case was not diagnosed until pigs had been sent for slaughter at an abattoir in Essex on 20th February. Prior to that date, the virus is believed to have been spread, by air, to seven other farms in Tyne and Wear, from one of them to Hexham market and then on to Longton market in Cumbria on the 15th and 22nd of February. The extensive animal movements that now characterise the livestock sector ensured that, from that point on, the virus was dispersed widely across the UK before a total ban on movements was introduced at 5pm on 23rd February.

Foot and Mouth is not a fatal disease (most animals recover within two weeks) and it does not threaten human health. It does however effect the long term productivity of animals and the confirmation of the first case in February this year resulted in the immediate loss of the UK's livestock and meat products export market, valued at £427m in 2000 (Meat and Livestock Commission, 2001).

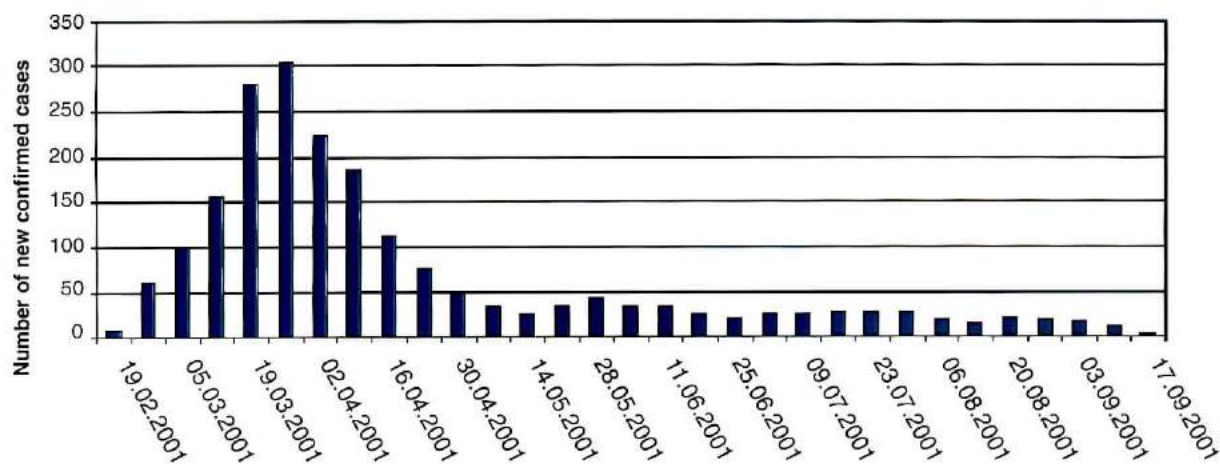
Urged on by the National Farmers Union, the government has adopted a control strategy aimed at eradicating the disease as quickly as possible. The basic control strategy consists of four elements:

- culling animals on infected farms within 24 hours of the infection report;
- slaughtering susceptible animals on neighbouring contiguous farms and where there had been dangerous contact within 48 hours (subsequently relaxed to a discretionary slaughtering regime assessed on a case by case basis);
- a pre-emptive cull of sheep in areas where large outbreaks may occur (e.g., in the Brecon Beacons and Lake District), and finally;
- restricting the movements of animals, contaminated people, equipment and vehicles in high risk areas.

At time of writing (September 23rd), 2,026 cases have been confirmed in the UK, approaching 9,500 premises affected by the slaughter policy and 3.9 million animals culled. Figure 1 (overleaf) indicates the spread of the disease over the seven months following the initial confirmed cases in February.

In addition to the increased movement of stock across the country, there have been other fundamental changes in the nature of the livestock industry. In particular, the industry is more intensive, farm sizes and stock numbers have increased,

Figure 1 - Number of New Confirmations of Foot and Mouth Disease per Week [19/2/01 - 23/9/01]



Source: Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

production cycles shortened, and livestock markets and abattoirs are now larger and fewer in number. All have made the disease more difficult to contain than in the past.

These changes have also contributed to the disease being geographically more dispersed than in 1967-68. However there have been areas where the disease has been particularly concentrated, in particular, Cumbria, North Devon, Dumfries and Galloway, and Northumberland have suffered a high incidence of cases (see Figure 2). Research by the Countryside Agency suggests all three areas are already exposed to economic setbacks. (Countryside Agency, 2001). More generally, restrictions on movements, increased costs and impacts on domestic market prices have meant that virtually no farmer in the UK has been unaffected by the impacts of the disease.

Foot and Mouth Disease in a Changed Rural Context

A combination of economic, political, social and environmental pressures have fundamentally changed the nature of rural areas in the UK over the last three decades. What appear at first to be similar types of rural areas have responded quite differently to the drivers of change and, as a result, it is difficult to generalise about the main impacts of the

pressures. However four key trends can be distinguished which have, to varying extents, affected all rural areas. First the economic significance of agriculture has declined to the extent that very few areas could now be defined as agriculturally dependent, even taking into account the activities of those sectors linked to farming in the

Figure 2: Number of confirmed cases in the UK (to 23rd September 2001) by region

Regional Development Agencies	Confirmed Cases to date
England:	
West Midlands	130
East Midlands	15
East of England	11
North West	1053
<i>of which Cumbria</i>	892
North East	96
South East of England	9
South West of England	268
<i>of which Devon</i>	173
Yorkshire	140
Wales:	113
Scotland:	187
<i>of which Dumfries and Galloway</i>	176
Northern Ireland:	4
Total:	2026

agri-food chain. Second, increasing amounts of manufacturing and in particular service sector employment has spread to rural locations resulting in an apparent narrowing of the differences in urban and rural economic structures. Third, all but the most remote rural areas have experienced a net immigration of households. Finally, there has been an increase in demand for rural leisure goods and a growth of rural tourism with, for example, the number of visits to the countryside growing by 69% between 1990 and 1999 (English Tourism Council, 2001a). Amongst other things, this latter trend has created valuable opportunities for the more traditional rural sectors, in particular farmers, to diversify and, in principle, helped to cushion the impact of their long term structural decline.

Taking all these changes into account, social and economic relationships both within rural areas and between rural and urban areas have changed significantly. They have also meant that the impact of the current Foot and Mouth outbreak has been very different than that of the 1967-68 epidemic. The outbreak has highlighted both interdependencies within rural economies (for example between farming and tourism) and potential conflicts between the needs of those associated with the farm sector and other rural sectors, inhabitants and countryside visitors. Some of these become apparent when considering the impacts of the disease.

The Impact of the Disease

To date, estimates of the total economic impact of the epidemic have ranged from £1.6bn or 0.2% of UK GDP (Oxford Economic Forecasting, National Institute of Economic and Social Research) to £9bn, 1.1% of GDP (Centre for Economic and Business Research) (the latter subsequently revised downwards to £6.3bn). Importantly, all of the forecasts suggest the impact on tourism and recreation has been greater than the impact on agriculture and agriculture-related industries, even taking into account the tourism displacement to areas of the country less affected by the crisis and the indirect and induced effects associated with the

disease. In contrast, an evaluation of alternative control policies for foot and mouth following the 1967-68 crisis suggested tourism was not significantly affected (Harris and Power, 1973). Part of the reason why the sector has been so affected by current outbreak relates to the initial handling and public response to the crisis.

Concerned by the potential spread of the disease through the (increased) movements of the general public in rural areas, the government announced a closure of all country paths and the inland waterway network within a week of the outbreak being confirmed. This, combined with widespread media coverage of the adverse impacts of the disease on farming communities, suggested that it was in the best interest of the countryside as a whole for the general public to avoid visiting all rural areas. For example, in a statement on 27th February the Prime Minister said: *".....by staying away from farmland areas, unless we have good reason, we can show our support for farmers in these difficult times and help contain and then eradicate the disease from Britain as soon as possible."*¹

Rural pursuits such as walking, climbing, riding, recreational angling, and shooting were immediately severely curtailed, many rural visitor attractions closed, and agricultural and sporting events cancelled. The combined effect had obvious implications for rural businesses including those who, whilst not totally dependent on tourism and recreation, never the less have grown to rely on visitors for a significant proportion of their demand. Importantly, of the total value of rural tourism, 6% is attributable to overseas tourists, 17% to domestic staying visitors and 77% to UK day visitors (English Tourism Council, 2001a), the latter being particularly strong in spring months when the outbreak was at its most intense.

If the disease had been brought quickly under control so that the restrictions could be lifted, the initial intention of limiting the spread of the disease through the movement of the general public would undoubtedly have been validated. However, despite

the setting up a rural tourism taskforce and high profile statements to the contrary, it has proved extremely difficult to reverse the perception that the whole of the countryside is closed for business. It is the impact of these perceptions as opposed the direct effects of the disease which have resulted in the most significant economic impacts of the current crisis.

Research to date suggests that the sectors most affected by the decline in tourism associated with the Foot and Mouth disease have been accommodation providers particularly small independent hoteliers, businesses specialised in countryside attractions and those providing opportunities for rural pursuits. More indirectly, public houses and outdoor pursuits suppliers also appear to have been badly hit by the fall in countryside recreation and tourism. Within the agriculture sector, those who have diversified into supply consumer services (for example, farmers with direct markets, Bed and Breakfast accommodation and/or offering rural recreation facilities) have unfortunately faced a "double whammy" effect with both strands of their business affected. Whilst animal feed suppliers may in future be hit by a predicted reduction in livestock numbers, the effects of the outbreak appear to have been felt most severely downstream from the farm gate through the loss of income and employment associated with the closure of markets, abattoirs and impact on the haulage industry. Again small businesses are likely to be most adversely affected through cash-flow problems especially in areas where the incidence of the disease has been high, and where rural tourism and agriculture-related activity provides a substantial proportion of income to the local economy.

There have however been gainers as well as losers from the crisis. It has been widely reported that tourism over the Easter period was not as badly affected as originally anticipated with some areas, particularly coastal areas, experiencing an increase in tourist numbers as a result of displacement (English Tourism Council, 2001b). Likewise, there is evidence of a switch in demand towards visitor attractions located in urban areas with Blackpool tower and

circus for example reporting 30% more visitors over Easter than in 2000. Moreover, recent retail analyses suggest an increase in demand for household goods, attributing it in part to would-be rural visitors choosing to spend their money on other items. Overall, whether or not urban areas have gained from the outbreak at the expense of rural areas depends on whether the switch in domestic consumption and tourism activities has compensated for the decline in overseas tourism, the vast proportion of which is urban based. Recent figures suggest foreign tourist numbers in June (four months after the first case and in a time when new cases have been confirmed to single figures) were some 13% below those in the previous year (Office of National Statistics, 2001). The speed at which the economy recovers from the impact of the disease will depend as much, if not more, on the rate at which the perceptions of rural visitors are changed than the speed with which farmers and agricultural markets recover.

The Case for Re-considering Control Mechanisms

One of the conclusions being drawn from the impact of the current Foot and Mouth outbreak is that it re-confirms the importance of the agriculture sector for the health of rural economies. A far clearer point emerging from the crisis however is the significance of tourism and recreation for rural livelihoods. Certainly the outbreak has highlighted the fact that farming provides an important backdrop to wide range of rural activities. However, the reason why rural economies have been so badly affected by the current Foot and Mouth outbreak can be attributed to the original message in late February suggesting that the countryside was closed to the general public and the subsequent difficulty in reversing this message. Only around a fifth of UK tourists undertake activities directly affected by the Foot and Mouth crisis and the calculated risk of the general public spreading the virus whilst staying off farm land is very small. Thus it could be argued, that if the exclusion of the general public had been less extreme, the vast proportion of economic losses in rural areas could have been avoided without significantly increasing the risk of the virus spreading.

Given changes in the nature of rural economies and their increasing reliance on tourism and recreation demand, there is a strong case for a re-evaluation of the costs and benefits of alternative control strategies for Foot and Mouth disease, including the policy of vaccination .

Arguably one of the greatest impediments to rural development over the last few decades has been the propensity for both rural practitioners and policy makers to treat agriculture and rural as synonymous. It would be unfortunate if, given all the difficulties rural areas have faced over the last few months, the wrong lessons drawn from the experience of the outbreak and the policies for recovery were too narrowly focussed on finding value-added activities for farm-related resources and output.

Dr Deborah Roberts is a Senior Research Fellow at the Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research, University of Aberdeen and Senior Economist at the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute. She would like to acknowledge the help of Andrea Kay in finding many of the statistics referred to in this article.

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A Personal Perspective from Galloway, South West Scotland

Dr Mary-Ann Smyth, Consultant

"DEAD" is what is says on the first page of this notebook. Richard wrote that sometime in April, along with "how old were the lesions?", "edge of 3km?" and "knock on door", underlined and re-traced. Notes from a phone call in mid crisis.

That fear which accompanied every phone call lasted for a month. We were lucky; our Form D was lifted at the end of May, though many friends were slaughtered out.

Our lives went upside down. I'm a rural onsltant, working from a homeoffice on our sheep farm. I found it hard to work effectively, spending hours glued to websites instead of writing my report. Hours on the phone to friends who were loosing their stock, in preference to phoning people in offices. The partnerships I work with cancelled AGMs. Projects did not start. Everything was postponed, trivial compared with the urgency of virus control. I washed and disinfected myself and my car every time I left the farm, didn't even sit down at the kitchen table with my 'clean clothes', for fear of invisible contamination. Who was dirty, who was clean? We avoided seeing other farming families, barricading ourselves in against the invisible menace.

I was angry every time somebody expressed an opinion without knowing the reality. We supported the cull, we knew it had to be done quickly, and we knew it would hurt. How dare these well-meaning people think they know the issues? They had only read about the disease from the papers and the net, a web of urban myths based on partial truths. They had no first hand experience of it.

The council erected large red and white signs: "Please avoid using minor roads if at all possible".

Our resident neighbours stopped walking. We trusted them absolutely; they understood that if one local farm got it, the whole south of the parish would be wiped out. We had closed the farmyard gate in early March, and strung bunting across the entrance of the house to deter callers. Blue and green plastic bags on some bailer-twine — anything except the dreaded red-and-white that meant death.

Our absentee neighbours had a sign erected on our shared access. "Due to foot and mouth - Walkers keep out". They phoned from Essex and Herefordshire asking to be kept informed.

I don't think there are any local rights of way, so locals walk on farm and forestry tracks. Everyone knows not to go through lambing fields in spring, but we also have a young plantation, jumping with roe deer. We wanted our neighbours to be able to walk there, but didn't want to spread disease or break the law. In the end, once our Form D was lifted, we rang the council and asked if we could re-open. They said yes, so we spread the word.

For a fortnight neighbours sprayed their feet (and their dogs paws) with disinfectant before and after their walks; then when our area was re-classified from "Infected" to "At Risk", we relaxed somewhat.

Now we wonder - shall we take down our absentee neighbours' sign?

Dr. Mary-Ann Smyth is a Consultant for RSK ERA - Environmental Research Associates - Specialists in the rural environment and can be contacted at: mas.galloway@dial.pipex.com

Foot and Mouth - Its Effects on Open-Air Recreation in Scotland

John MacKay, Scottish Natural Heritage

Foot and Mouth disease had very serious direct effects on south Scotland, and very significant indirect effects elsewhere in the country. The Dumfries and Galloway outbreak was one of the main focal points of the national crisis, with 176 cases between early March and the end of May and there was some infection eastwards into the Borders region. Elsewhere, there was no infection, although there were some anxious moments over false alarm cases in Grampian, and there was one event of precautionary slaughter in the far north of Sutherland, arising from a dangerous contact.

As was the case elsewhere in the UK, there was a general closure of access to the countryside, and a very willing acceptance by the public of the need for restraint. The extent of this demonstration of responsibility has been praised by all who were involved. Out with the infected and at-risk areas, closures were mainly done on a voluntary basis, without the deployment of any formal regulations. Obviously, a main concern in Scotland was the great extent of open-hill country, where sheep might catch the disease unnoticed and harbour it for the future. But an equal concern was the prospect of the large open-range red deer population becoming infected, and also becoming a potential future reservoir of infection. Slaughter of the deer herd would have been impracticable.

As elsewhere, the outbreak began at a time when the volume of open-air recreation was seasonally at a low level, and the main infected areas in Scotland do not normally attract large volumes of day-trips from urban centres. But both Borders and Dumfries and Galloway are important tourism destinations, and there are important out-of-season countryside attractions such as the large populations of over-wintering birds in the Solway area. The outcome was

that the main effect of the earlier closures on the general public lay in the central belt, distant from the infected areas.

However, the winter sports-skiing and winter mountaineering and climbing were at the peak of their season, and this had been the best winter for these activities over recent years. It was agreed that the ski fields would stay open because of their important local tourism role, and because most of their income comes over a very few weeks at this time. The high hills mainly stayed closed to climbers and walkers, but credit should go, nonetheless, to some estates - such as Balmoral and Invercauld - who assessed the risk to the deer populations and kept their hills open, but with some precautionary measures of disinfection. At this time, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland played an important role in compiling information about access arrangements to the hills on its website.

Once the control measures had reached a point where they were having effect, the same concerns felt elsewhere in the UK, about the effects on other rural businesses began to surface and, by this point, the crucial Easter season was in sight. Credit is due here to the National Trust for Scotland, which took the lead in convening a meeting of the public and private sector interests to assess the scale of risk, and to debate whether we could not now begin to agree a programme for opening-up the countryside.

This turned into be an excellent co-operative effort between the voluntary recreation bodies, the Scottish Executive and the relevant agencies. At first, the Executive advised on dividing the country into three zones: the infected and at-risk areas in the south; a precautionary zone extending up to the central belt, and thereafter the rest of the country

where the risk was judged to be minimal, and where opening could proceed. Procedures were agreed for risk assessment, to assist owners and managers to take their own decisions on opening-up, and a campaign was developed to open-up the countryside, based on the 'Comeback Code'.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) was asked by the Scottish Executive to lead on the publication and promotion of the Code, which has a simple, nine-point message on common-sense actions by visitors to the countryside, to ensure that risk of infection is always minimised. The promotion was extensive, using newspapers and TV adverts, posters and wide distribution of an A4 folded leaflet - half a million were printed and distributed. The campaign aimed to both summarise the precautions and to promote that a wide range of sites and attractions were open. This also directed people to a telephone help-line and Website established by VisitScotland to field queries on which parts of the countryside could be safely visited.

The transfer back to normality took a few weeks and, soon after the cessation of new cases in Scotland (the last being on 30th May), the area of restraint was drawn back to the infected and at risk locations nearby. The slowish pace of opening-up some parts of the countryside did raise concerns, especially for the remoter areas, but Scottish Ministers have now taken a strong line that the only paths which are now formally closed are a few which lie in the infected area: elsewhere, the public may ignore any residual notices claiming restriction on the grounds of risk from foot and mouth.

The Foot and Mouth disease outbreak coincided with the Scottish Executive's consultation on the draft Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, which contains the proposals for a new general right of access to Scotland's countryside (and it also coincided with the consultation on the proposal for a National Park on the Cairngorms). The first and obvious outcome was the difficulty of holding consultation meetings in the rural areas, and the consultation periods for both of these proposals were extended. The admirable

response by the public in showing restraint for a common-sense reason has greatly reinforced our conviction about the merit of the approach of responsible behaviour, which will underpin the proposed new Scottish Access legislation. The new Scottish Outdoor Access Code will be the reference point for defining responsibility in access.

But there still remains an issue over the speed at which the countryside was closed down and the protracted process of opening it up. All these issues will be reviewed in the months ahead, to review the lessons from the recent crisis, and consider how best to react to any future events of this kind. However, the big message, already apparent from the Scottish experience, is that co-operative action between all the key parties is the best way of ensuring a measured, effective and corporate approach, should any crisis of such a magnitude arise again.

We must fervently hope that this will not recur. Meantime the process of recovery in the infected areas is under-way, with a multi-agency approach to promote a programme of environment and access investment to underpin tourism. But for all of us, there must arise some longer-term thoughts about how our support to rural land management can secure benefits for all of society in a way which helps bring rural and urban society closer together.

John Mackay is the National Strategy Manager for Scottish Natural Heritage and is based in Edinburgh.

For further information about Scottish Natural Heritage visit the website at: www.snh.gov.uk

The Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease on the Youth Hostels

Helen Smith, Youth Hostels Association

Youth Hostels Association (YHA England and Wales) is one of the UK's leading charities, serving the recreational and outdoor educational needs of young people. We have approximately 300,000 members, and many of these are outdoor enthusiasts (walkers, cyclists etc) and countryside lovers.

The immediate impact of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease on the YHA has been severe. We offer a programme of led walking holidays (eg the "Coast to Coast" and the Dales Way) and a central booking service for independent walkers covering accommodation (Youth Hostels and alternatives) on the main long distance footpaths in England and Wales. YHA also markets and administers more than 50 privately run camping barns in networks covering Exmoor; Dartmoor; the Peak District; the Forest of Bowland; North Yorkshire; the Lake District and the North Pennines. With the countryside being effectively 'closed' for many weeks (with rights of way and public open spaces being out of bounds) our visitors all but disappeared.

We operate 230 Youth Hostels across England and Wales. Of these:

- 99 (43%) are in, or adjacent to, National Parks;
- 135 (59%) are on, or close to National Trails;
- 24 (10%) are in areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- 26 (11%) are in historic cities (including seven in London).

About 20 hostels were closed shortly after the outbreak, where the hostel was on farmland or depended on the goodwill of a farmer for continuing operation. A further 90 hostels were closed because visitor numbers dried up and we faced an urgent need to reduce operating costs. (At the time of writing, August 2001, all but six of our 230 hostels

have now been re-opened). Beyond closing hostels, the main action has been to discontinue the employment of all seasonal staff. This has left 200 rural jobs unfilled.

Our Youth Hostels recorded more than two million overnight stays last year (2000) and the financial turnover was £30,701,000. More than half a million overnights were accounted for by visitors from overseas, including:

- 17 per cent from Germany;
- 14 per cent from Australia;
- 12 per cent from the USA;
- 8 per cent from France; and
- 5 per cent from Japan.

In financial terms, the YHA had incurred a net loss of £2 million by the end of April and a further net loss of £3 million through May and June. As the rights of way re-open and the countryside starts getting back to normal, visitor numbers are beginning to pick up again, but the medium to long term impact of the crisis on visitor attitudes in respect of the countryside remains to be seen. A major concern is the extent to which people from overseas will have been discouraged from visiting Britain, now and in the future.

What the crisis has demonstrated, above all else, is the value of the countryside as a recreational asset, both in economic and social terms, and the vital importance of the Rights of Way network. YHA, along with many other stakeholders in the rural economy, has suffered greatly as a result of the Foot and Mouth crisis and the closure of the countryside. We cannot afford for something like this ever to happen again.

For more information about the YHA visit their website at: www.yha.org.uk

The Impact of Foot and Mouth on Three Outdoor Recreation Providers in Northern Ireland

Kate O'Neill, Queen's University Belfast

Introduction

Following Northern Ireland's first outbreak of foot and mouth in Meigh, Co. Armagh on March 1 2001, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARD) issued guidelines which included that recreational visits to the countryside should be avoided. This decision had significant impact on many sectors of the community.

Although the media focused on the devastating effect foot and mouth was having on the agricultural and tourism communities, this short paper:

- describes the impact the disease had on three outdoor recreation providers;
- considers some of the major issues experienced; and
- proposes a series of changes, which could help overcome similar problems in the future.

The Study

The three organisations chosen for this study were an Education and Library Board Outdoor Centre (equivalent to a field centre in the UK), a commercial outdoor centre specialising in corporate training and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Following consultation with each, the following comments are made:

All three organisations reported that the foot and mouth crisis had significant implications with respect to staffing and financial loss.

Impact on Staffing

The Education and Library Board Outdoor Centre was closed to groups for a period of five weeks. During that time permanent employees (instructors, administration staff, catering and domestic staff)

continued to work their regular hours although some annual leave had to be taken during the period. However, during the period of closure, the Centre did not require its normal complement of part time staff. This resulted in three people losing their main source of income for the five-week period.

A similar position was reported by the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, although they were able to maintain their own staff throughout the period, they were aware of staff redundancies within some voluntary organisations that use the scheme, due to group cancellations.

Impact on Finances

It is estimated that group cancellations during the five-week period cost the Education Centre approximately £25,000 in lost income. The full extent of the income lost from the commercial centre will not become apparent until next year. This is because there is still a belief within the general public that much of the countryside is still closed and people are therefore reluctant to initiate visits to the countryside.

Impact on Organisation Activities

Although the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the commercial centre reported that they were able to carry on a limited programme of activity using urban-based facility sites this was not an acceptable alternative to all customers.

In comparison the Education and Library Board Centre's programme was halted until restrictions placed on the use of forest parks for recreational purposes were lifted. The venues that were used were those deemed to be of 'lower risk' by DARD.

Because of this, one suggestion by the Education and Library Board was that consideration should be given to increasing the development of facilities for outdoor recreation in the urban fringe/urban locality. All three organisations recognised the importance of the recreational community adopting the advice issued by DARD and emphasised the importance of their organisations acting responsibly and not adding to the already existing stresses on the farming community. Although the organisations recognise that their daily activities are only possible because of the goodwill of the farming community in allowing permissive access onto their land, it was proposed that further research was required to assess the risk of spreading the virus associated with the use of the countryside for recreation by those who otherwise had no contact with the farming community.

Closures

Concern was expressed that land owned or managed by local and central government or other major land-owning bodies had adopted a reactive approach to the re-opening of the countryside. It was proposed that a more proactive countryside management approach was required to determine risk so that those areas deemed as posing no significant risk were re-opened as soon as possible. Or indeed, whether such venues need to be closed in the first place!

Communication and Guidance

One of the greatest concerns expressed was the apparent lack of communication between all the interested parties. This ranged from no communication between the three organisations and those bodies responsible for managing the land they wished to access; to poor communication between the land managing/owning bodies and DARD. This caused confusion among the recreational community as the guidelines issued by DARD, which advocated the re-opening of the countryside, were "woolly" and that rather than issuing statements that required interpretation by the land agencies, it would have been preferable if DARD had given clear and specific guidelines as to which land could be 're-opened'. What was required, therefore, was clearer advice with fewer ambiguities, which could be acted upon immediately.

It was felt that although the closure of the countryside for recreational purposes was well publicised, this was not the case for the re-opening of the countryside. One such proposal is that current public perception of the countryside needs to be changed so that it is seen to be safe and acceptable to return to the countryside.

The Role of the Countryside Access and Activities Network

One positive consequence of the crisis was the work of the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN). The network is an umbrella organisation which represents the full cross section of countryside recreation and other relevant interest groups including participants in recreational activities, local and central government organisations, farmers, environmental and community organisations and outdoor education and youth organisations. The Network's main objectives are to:

- ensure that recreational use of the Northern Ireland countryside is managed in a way which provides a high quality and consistent experience for all recreational users;
- ensure that new and developing facilities for countryside recreation within Northern Ireland are resourced, supported, provided and managed in a strategic way; and
- raise the public's awareness of countryside recreation opportunities within Northern Ireland and encourage participation in countryside recreation by well-informed users.

All three outdoor organisations commented favourably on the work of CAAN during the foot and mouth crisis. CAAN acted as a central co-ordinating body, giving up-to-date information on those areas closed/re-opened for all land owned or managed by the statutory agencies namely, Environment and Heritage Service, Water Service, Forest Service and Rivers Agency and also for the National Trust. It was proposed that if the need arose again, the service offered by the Network should be extended in future to embrace the tourist and farming industries – provided that the Network were adequately resourced to perform this role.

Key Lessons

Therefore, the key lessons from the foot and mouth crisis in Northern Ireland are:

- the need for a facilitator of information, such as the Countryside Access and Activities Network, in times of uncertainty so that the general public and all recreation providers are informed of developments as they occur.
- to provide proper research on the risk of people movements in countryside and the spread of the virus.
- to encourage a more proactive countryside management approach to determine risk by major land-owning bodies so that areas deemed as not posing a significant risk can be re-opened as soon as possible or not closed at all!
- to generate a conscious effort to provide accurate information to the public so as to counter false perceptions of the impact of Foot and Mouth on the countryside, 'often fostered by the media'.

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Time to Start Walking Again

Nick Barrett, Ramblers' Association



THIS PATH IS NOW OPEN

**THE FOOT AND MOUTH OUTBREAK IS
SERIOUS AND DEMANDS SPECIAL CARE
FROM YOU TO HELP PROTECT
THE COUNTRYSIDE.**

If you keep or handle farm livestock please stay off all other farmland.

Please observe the following precautions

1. Stay on the path and leave gates exactly as you find them.
2. Respect "Keep Out" and "Footpath Closed" notices.
3. Don't go near sheep, cows, goats, pigs or deer.
4. Don't go into any field if you can't easily avoid these animals.
5. If you do come across them walk slowly away, retracing your steps if necessary.
6. Don't leave waste food or litter anywhere and don't feed ANY animal.
7. Keep dogs on short leads at all times and off all land where livestock is present.
8. Use disinfectant where provided.
9. Clean your boots after each walk.

This advice is issued by the Vale of Glamorgan Council based on guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Departments of the Environment, and Transport and the National Assembly of Wales issued to local authorities on 28th March 2001. It has the approval of those departments.

Photo courtesy of Dr Kevin Bishop

The light at the end of the tunnel for walkers

Foot and Mouth disease might only be caught by cloven-hoofed animals, but there have undoubtedly been many human casualties of this epidemic.

The most obvious have been livestock farmers. Hundreds have watched their livelihoods go up in smoke, while others have spent five months in a permanent state of terror that they will be next.

Perhaps more unexpected has been the devastation to rural tourism. With paths closed, the public has stayed away from the countryside, with the result that thousands of rural businesses have seen a

terrifying slump in income. Even now many owners are wondering how and if they will survive the winter.

Also affected - albeit in a very different way - have been those whose daily routines and recreations have been halted in an effort to minimise the spread of the virus. From the onset thousands of rural attractions were shut, royal parks cordoned off and sporting events cancelled, and the Ramblers' Association (RA) found itself in the unusual position of having to tell people to keep off paths.

It was a routine veterinary inspection back in February which led to the terrifying discovery of foot and mouth disease on an Essex farm. Initially facts were scarce, and official guidance for the general public was less than forthcoming. It quickly became clear that the RA had a crucial role to play in filling this gap.

As more cases of the disease were confirmed, calls and emails flooded in. The RA decided - as a precaution - to advise members and the public not to walk across farmland or other areas near livestock. Within 48 hours of the outbreak our 420 groups across Britain had voluntarily cancelled their walks programmes or rerouted walks away from farmland.

Despite the overwhelmingly responsible public response, one week into the crisis the government took the precautionary step of allowing local authorities to close paths near to livestock farms. A few days later the vast majority of England and Wales' 130,000-mile path network was shut.

The justification for many of these closures, could, at least at the beginning, be understood.

Foot and mouth disease's incubation period meant the disease could well be present in areas which to all

appearances were infection-free. Furthermore, the virus was known to be highly infectious, and it was thought could be easily spread on boots or clothing. The Chief Veterinary Officer himself appeared on TV imploring people to stay away from the countryside.

Yet local authorities and the government had clearly not anticipated the catastrophic effect footpath closures would have on rural businesses. Meanwhile, evidence began to emerge that recreational countryside users did not pose the risk that had first been suspected.

In early March a risk assessment found that there was no veterinary justification for the blanket closure of all paths, and the government published guidelines aimed at getting the countryside open again. Armed with this evidence, the RA joined forces with the National Farmers Union (NFU) to urge councils to reopen paths in line with government advice. Since that time the RA has continued to support genuinely-needed path closures, but has pushed for reopenings where safe.

So what can the RA take away from the last five months? Firstly, we can be pleased that the organisation's responsible attitude during the crisis drew praise from government ministers and senior farming officials. Crucially, not a single case of the disease has been attributed to path users. We have also, for the first time, worked together with the NFU - a relationship we hope to develop further in the future.

Most importantly, the crisis has shown the vital role that visitors to the countryside play in the economic health of rural communities. It has also shown the vital role of the path network within that countryside - it is abundantly clear that psychologically, the countryside feels closed when paths are shut.

We shall, of course, be making this point to government and local authorities in the future, in an attempt to secure more resources for the underfunded path network. But for now, let's concentrate on the fact that, after a long and difficult

five months, the countryside is finally opening up for business. It's time to lace up our boots and start walking again.

Nick Barrett is the Chief Executive of the Rambler's Association. For more information about the RA visit their website at: www.ramblers.org.uk

Overlooking the Importance of Countryside Recreation - Who is to Blame?

Richard Broadhurst, Forestry Commission

We have grossly underestimated the contribution that leisure, recreation and tourism can make to our health, our well being, our development and our environment, for years. Who is to blame? This state of affairs could be a natural consequence of the protestant work ethic bequeathed to us. Under this scenario, leisure is still seen as a frivolous use of time. Perhaps we could attribute some of the blame to Adam Smith, and his *Wealth of Nations*, that encouraged us to divide our labour and specialise? Of course, many would argue that his work provided for just that, or at least the wealth of some nations. In the same year that his work was published (1776), a group of people set up the constitution for the United States, and included within it the inalienable right of individuals to happiness.

We are the prisoners of our past. Although we may not be able to escape entirely, we can at least throw off the shackles of the blame culture. The arrow of time points (all too clearly) in one direction only. Although we can always reinterpret or rewrite our past, if we want to bring about change we can only look forward. In management circles in the UK, programmes have been set up to counter the seemingly magnetic attraction of working longer and longer hours. These programmes seek to ensure a balanced approach, a balance between the needs of the organisation for effective working, and the needs of the individual for effective living, for the needs of home, family and friends.

For real success in this area, we need to re-evaluate the concepts of 'leisure', 'recreation' and 'tourism'. How do these words become so devalued? The 'leisure' industry is in many minds equated to the selling of alcohol and gaming or gambling. In the eyes of some, these may be honourable pursuits and taking part (in moderation) undoubtedly enjoyable,

but this is certainly a long way from leisure in ancient times. The word 'school' is derived from the Greek for leisure. Then, leisure was seen as a higher state of mind. Contrast this with the escape or sense of oblivion provided by alcohol and gambling. Of course it is too easy to overlook the great role that alcohol has had in society, providing a lubricant in social gatherings. Gambling too has an honourable side to its past, and encapsulates elements of risk taking which we cherish amongst entrepreneurs, and amongst white knuckle sports, but seemingly treat differently when enjoyed by people at leisure. 'Recreation' too has suffered as a word, devalued from time to time, and yet maybe there is a great richness in meanings, locally held. Rarely, is the full extent of activities in which people engage, encapsulated. Related terms, such as 'hobbies' and 'pastimes' provide no indication of the importance of such activities for the people who choose to live in these worlds. 'Tourism' has probably suffered most, having become synonymous with 'mass' tourism. The term 'tourist' has a rich (if socially exclusive) heritage derived, as it is, from the Grand Tour indulged in by gentlemen (more usually than ladies), and aristocrats of Europe, visiting cities and taking in culture. The modern day equivalent is possibly the 'gap year', enjoyed by some between school and further education. (Whatever happened to the sabbatical!)

Most of us would be happier to be described as visitors, rather than tourists. Other people are tourists. Few of us would describe ourselves as explorers, and yet surely much of our tourism is founded on discovery of the new; new people, new activities, new cultures, and new landscapes. Surely, tourism is nothing to be ashamed of, unless it is bad tourism that exploits the natural environment, and only takes from the host community, or worse still

(source: Broadhurst, *Managing Environments for Leisure and Recreation*, with the kind permission of Routledge)



Different kinds of recreation

from future generations. We should not fool ourselves though. It is salutary to recall that one return transatlantic ticket on a flight is responsible for as much carbon output as an average year's motoring in Britain. On the other hand the freedom of personal mobility is something that we hold most dear. We have to keep this freedom balanced by obligations to society, in just the same way that participation in leisure has to be balanced with the other needs of families and friends.

Each of us is a manager of environments for leisure and recreation. What, you might ask, is there to manage? We distribute activity through time and space, we select or alter the physical environment, and in the same way we change, or select the social environment. What makes leisure and recreation stand out as really special is the freedom they give,

the freedom of choice: of activity, association, freedom to go where you like, when you like, with whom you like, doing what you like, at whatever time you like and for however long you choose. This freedom is balanced by a sense of obligation towards friends and family, and to the communities of neighbourhood or interest. It is all about choice, for more (or for less) physical activity, for more (or for less) mental activity, and more (or less) social activity, for example. We exercise such choice as citizens and consumers, and as managers, whether as parent, teacher, employer, or friend.

Could a new responsible approach to leisure and recreation be part of the antidote to globalisation. In managing the settings and activities, can we take care to consider the impacts that people have in the past ignored? Can we adopt an environmental

management approach? Rather than merely adopting the systematic approach, or mantra, the book urges us to adopt a systemic approach, so that in our every move we consider the longer term and incremental, as well as the direct effects, on the bio-physical and socio-economic environments, on the land and its people. Needless to say the effects in the past, upon which most attention has been focused, have tended to be the negative effects. The positive effects have been ignored or undervalued. Now at last, with initiatives such as the Benefits based approach (see Benefits network) and the focus on Life -Work balance, we may be on the verge of raising the profile for leisure and recreation, for all the right reasons. In doing so we need to use the widest definitions, and to celebrate diversity. We need to remember the value of providing space and time for simple social pleasures such as conversation, and laughter, as well as the more physical and cerebral. Most of all we must avoid erecting needless barriers. To begin the process, we can start with ourselves, and award ourselves more leisure and recreation. Lighten up, for all our sakes!

If we want to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from leisure, recreation and tourism, we could do worse than to encourage everyone to practice a role as manager of settings for leisure and recreation; of physical and social settings, large and small, and of every conceivable kind. Each of us has a fantastic role to play, with consequences which could change the world for the better. That is surely something well worth taking the blame for.

Richard Broadhurst is the Policy Officer for the Forestry Commission's National Office for Scotland, but this article represents the views of the author, not the organisation. Before taking up his current post, he enjoyed 25 years (and three days) working in different areas of leisure and recreation. He still occasionally lectures on the subject. His views are amplified in 'Managing Environments for Leisure and Recreation', which is published by Routledge in their Environmental Management series, and the paperback is available for £19.99. This book grew out a series of lectures given to fourth year recreation students at Edinburgh University.. Richard can be contacted by e-mail at: Richard.broadhurst@forestry.gov.uk

Handling Foot and Mouth Disease for Waterway Recreation

Kate Griffin, British Waterways

In the early days of the Foot and Mouth outbreak, British Waterways (BW), which cares for a 2000-mile nationwide network of canals and rivers, recognised the severe impact this would have on the lives of people who work or live by the waterways and those who use them for recreational purposes. Connecting the great urban centres that developed during the Industrial Revolution, waterways also pass through wide areas of rural and farm land and many outbreaks of the disease occurred close to our network.

The crisis began in February and BW kept the position under constant review, preferring to keep all the waterways open until closures became inevitable. But on 2nd March, the difficult decision to close most rural sections (about 70%) of our network to both boaters and all other users was taken. A major factor in this decision was the stance of local authorities. Around 30% of our towpaths are designated rights of way, and most local authorities were using their special powers to close them. Eventually, some 600 miles of towpaths were closed by local authorities. In addition, they asked us to shut our own permissive access paths and stop navigation.

We recognised the implications this would have for our users and identified the groups who would feel the pressure most keenly: hire hotel and trip boat operators, waterside businesses, farmers, individual boaters, local authorities and communities and general towpath users. It was clear that some of these groups had conflicting interests and that a key challenge for BW would be to balance their concerns.

A crisis team, headed by BW operations director Stewart Sim, was established drawing together

different areas of expertise throughout the organisation. After the first meeting on 2nd March, the group met regularly to ensure a rapid and consistent approach to the developing situation. It was recognised that we should work in concert with related organisations and Howard Pridding, Director of the British Marine Industries Federation (BMIF) was also a full member of the team.

From the first it was decided that our approach should be based on:

- listening to the people and groups affected;
- taking the best and most up-to-date independent scientific advice;
- communicating frequently and clearly with those concerned; and
- effectively backing up all internal decisions out on the patch through our local staff.

It was agreed that our overriding aim throughout would be to minimise damage or inconvenience to all concerned. In particular we sought to recognise the interests of the tourism industry, while retaining the confidence of the farming community. Some 160 million visits are made to the waterways each year and visitors help support around 55,000 jobs. In addition to the wider boating industry (there are nearly 400 different companies operating hire boats, trip boats and restaurant boats), the waterways support numerous businesses such as pubs, shops and restaurants which depend on tourism to survive.

Into Action...

Initially our users expressed anxiety and confusion about what was open, what was closed and what actions they should be taking. Not surprisingly, we were bombarded by calls and emails and were prepared for this. We immediately extended our office opening hours and made staff available to

answer users' questions. We also set up special facilities on our website to keep people updated. Traffic increased by 50%.

As the financial year was drawing to a close, the renewal of hireboat licence payment quickly became an issue – a real problem for operators whose cashflow was affected. To ease the situation we delayed payment of hireboat licences to June.

Re-opening the waterways safely and responsibly was the top priority and to help us achieve this with the support and understanding of the farming community we commissioned ADAS, the well-known and respected agricultural and environmental consultancy, to devise a risk assessment procedure for the waterways. It was vital that this would be acceptable to MAFF and the NFU and once we had their confidence we began to assess all our waterways. Four teams of ADAS representatives and local staff worked continuously for eight days to complete their survey of the whole waterway network, including 4,000 miles of boundary and adjoining land.

As soon as a stretch of waterway was cleared to open, we re-opened it, putting in special precautionary procedures, such as disinfection facilities or signage indicating appropriate actions. The Environment Agency and Manchester Ship Canal, among others, followed our example and used exactly the same method of risk assessment procedure as the one devised with ADAS. All well and good, but the key to success was making sure that our users were informed and felt confident that they knew not only what was happening, but what they should do to help.

Boating is not a slow-moving, low-tech backwater these days and more than 12,000 individuals and companies registered on our special email update service, which gave regular information on canal openings. The updates gave detailed information about the additional special measures that were to be taken at certain high-risk locations and listed stockists of 'Steril Tabs', which boaters were able to use on board to disinfect footwear. British Waterways'

website was constantly updated giving information on closures and openings on all canals and also detailed advice on the precautions that boaters should be taking. In addition, throughout this period we kept up continuous communication with the broadest range of our users. Along with telephone calls and face to face meetings, we sent out four letters and detailed briefing packs to:

- hire and hotel boat operators;
- riparian MPs;
- local landowners;
- BW staff; and
- the 12,000 users registered for email updates.

The waterways began to re-open for boating on 28th March and by 4th April, the whole network was re-opened, except at locations still closed by planned engineering works (unconnected with Foot and Mouth disease). In parallel we began risk assessments at major visitor sites and angling facilities at reservoirs and rural towpaths. Four popular angling facilities opened and rural towpaths began to re-open from 2nd April. In fact towpaths presented a complex challenge. Used for recreation by a wide range of people including walkers, cyclists and anglers, in certain locations they are accessible only via footpaths crossing farmland. Before re-opening, our assessments with ADAS had to make certain that these locations presented no risk of spreading infection.

On 12th April 2001, just before Easter, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott visited our historic lock making workshops at Bulbourne on the Grand Union Canal near Tring in Hertfordshire to announce that 1000 km of canal towpath were now open. Remarking that it was possible again to walk 40 miles from Bulbourne into the heart of London along the towpath, Mr Prescott said: "I am delighted that British Waterways is opening up its canal towpaths wherever they can do so safely without undermining efforts to stop the spread of Foot and Mouth disease. Canalside attractions and hundreds of miles of waterways and towpaths are now open to visitors. I urge people to take advantage of this and visit.

Where Are We Today?

Foot and Mouth disease certainly hasn't gone away and we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. As autumn approaches the possibility of flare-ups cannot be ruled out. On writing this (12 July, 2001) all of British Waterways' 2000 mile network is open to boating except in a few places where engineering works are being completed.

In addition, 1900 miles of towpath and river walks are open walkers and other visitors. ADAS continues to assist us in assessing the risk associated with re-opening commercial offshore fisheries, popular visitor centres and rural towpaths to walkers, anglers, cyclists and other visitors.

What Have We Learned?

In July British Waterways held a special meeting for key staff who had been involved in handling the Foot and Mouth crisis as it developed. The aim was to identify what the organisation had done well and why, and the areas where it could improve. Generally it was felt that we had coped well, and that a key to this 'success' was the early appointment of ADAS to assist and guide our programme of risk assessments. By bringing outside expertise on board at an early stage we were able to roll out a speedy and authoritative response programme. We recognise that in future situations, the importance of identifying and working with the right expert body from the earliest possible stage cannot be underestimated.

Electronic media has permanently changed the way in which we will deal and respond to a crisis. The phenomenal response to our website and the emails received during the peak of the crisis confirmed the important role that effective electronic communication has played during the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Communication was generally perceived to have been a success. We received many letters and emails thanking us for the clarity and accuracy of information available on our website, through the email updates and from our customer services team and local offices.

After a winter of floods and rising water levels, we were already aware of BW staff's commitment and flexibility – often working through the night to ensure that property and land was safeguarded. The Foot and Mouth crisis demonstrated once again that staff were determined to go the extra mile, with people giving up weekends and evenings to operate helplines and complete ADAS assessments.

The crisis also helped us to identify areas where we can improve – notably in terms of communicating throughout the organisation and in recognising the 'trickle down' impact that a challenge like Foot and Mouth presents. This is best illustrated by the response of many dog walkers to the closure of canal towpaths. Suddenly they found themselves with nowhere to exercise their pets and this became an unforeseen and hotly debated issue.

Looking to the Future

Foot and Mouth disease may be with us for some time yet, but we are confident that we have the right procedures and organisational structures in place to continue to respond if necessary.

The disease has certainly made a dramatic impact upon the holiday hire boating industry and we are now working with other waterway organisations including the Broads Authority, BMIF, and The Environment Agency, to promote inland waterways as a prime way to rediscover the heart of the British countryside. Waterway Holidays UK is the umbrella body supported by these organisations established to achieve this.

Probably the most important challenge facing British Waterways today is to help rural businesses and tourism to regroup and re-establish. We are determined to rise to this.

For further information about British Waterways visit the website at: <http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk>

Cycling in the Countryside - Back on Track

Cath Harris, Cyclists Touring Club

Cyclists were amongst the groups hardest hit by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease. In line with other countryside users, cyclists were initially urged to avoid all offroad tracks and trails. The Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) encouraged all cyclists, through direct contact with our members and through the press, to comply with the restrictions.

We had hundreds of calls and website hits doubled because of concern about day rides, trips to other parts of the country and even routes to work. Our advice was based on that given by the government and we requested callers and those visiting our website to act responsibly. Our website was updated regularly and, as restrictions were relaxed, we published details of initiatives we had taken with MAFF and the DETR to assure cyclists that road riding was not a risk and to inform them of the reopening of national parks and other areas likely to attract offroad cyclists.

CTC initially advised cyclists to support and respect farmers and health agencies in their attempts to curb the spread of foot and mouth. The 11 members of the Cycle Liaison Group issued a joint statement urging cyclists to avoid affected areas and venues where livestock and wildlife would be put at risk. We advised offroad event organisers to cancel or postpone. Road event organisers were asked to avoid car parks and other offroad or agricultural venues. We were keen to emphasise that road riding was not otherwise restricted unless within infected areas.

CTC subsequently agreed a set of guidelines with MAFF encouraging cyclists to support the tourist industry and rural economies and to continue with plans for Easter breaks away from areas of infection. We urged cyclists to avoid confrontation with landowners and act with consideration and sensitivity towards those affected by the disease. With the backing of MAFF, we also produced a poster

for cycle shops emphasising the fact that road cycling was not restricted outside infected locations. The following month CTC, together with the Association of Cycle Traders, the Bicycle Association and Sustrans urged cyclists to continue with rural holidays in safe areas and to take advantage of the 100,000 miles of country lanes in the UK.

Many events were cancelled, however, including CTC Cymru's Welsh International Cycling Festival in only its second year. Offroad racing also came to a halt and two new CTC offroad weekends in countryside areas also had to be called off.

As the disease appeared to abate CTC expressed strong support for the government's moves to reopen rights of way outside exclusion zones. The original framework for reopening was strongly biased towards walkers but talks with DETR minister Beverley Hughes persuaded the Department to revise its wording so that the framework was more balanced.

CTC was identified by DETR (now DEFRA) as the contact body for cycling and we followed up by urging our network of almost 300 Right to Ride representatives to lobby local authorities to reopen rights of way outside exclusion zones. We publicised our eight weekend and week-long events through the summer and autumn as evidence that the countryside was open.

In late May, MAFF confirmed that the risk of spreading foot and mouth on cycle tyres was 'minimal'. After the Ministry revised its reopening guidelines for local authorities, CTC urged all local authorities without infected premises to reopen rights of way immediately. CTC has repeatedly backed the government's subsequent announcements on reopening.

Photo reproduced courtesy of the Forestry Commission



Cyclists have a key role to play in the regeneration of countryside economies

Throughout the course of the outbreak, CTC consistently encouraged cyclists to act responsibly whilst also emphasising the opportunities for cycling that remained. We fully supported the pressure put on local authorities to reopen rights of way where the government believed there was no risk of spreading the disease and we were keen to help boost the ailing tourist industry by encouraging cyclists not to postpone countryside visits.

Whilst we obviously have enormous sympathy with those adversely affected by foot and mouth we were pleased that government departments came to recognise us as the body best able to represent cyclists. Cyclists have a key role to play in the regeneration of countryside economies and, whilst some tracks still remain closed, cycling is an option many walkers may be choosing as a substitute.

Cath Harris is the Media Officer for CTC and is based at 69 Meadow Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3HS. For further information about CTC visit the website at: <http://www.ctc.org.uk>

A New Role for Recreation?

Mark Ellison, Consultant

Farming and the countryside have been closely interwoven for centuries. However, the role of agriculture in the economy has steadily diminished, due largely to economic restructuring, the increasingly global society in which we live, and to a lesser extent health scares such as BSE. The industry was already in severe recession before this year's foot and mouth crisis. Yet as agriculture has declined as a major employer in rural areas, recreation and tourism have seen significant growth. Increasingly, the countryside is perceived as a place of consumption as well as production, is valued for its beauty, and forms an important recreational resource for the entire population. With the majority of countryside recreation pursuits coming to an abrupt halt for the majority of this year as a result of the Foot and Mouth disease restrictions, society is more aware than ever of how important, economically, socially and environmentally, recreational access to the countryside is. In the wake of the Foot and Mouth disaster there is an opportunity to enhance the role of countryside recreation and associated tourism in a new post-productionist countryside.

Since World War II, the UK's agricultural industry has been dependent on production subsidies. The more a farmer produces the greater his guaranteed financial return, a privilege denied all other industries. Currently approximately £20-25,000 per agricultural worker per year comes from the public (Watts, 2001), a higher level of subsidy than all other industries combined. In order to receive greater subsidies output was increased. Farmers 'industrialised' causing more negative countryside change than any other rural land use. They removed all redundant infrastructure such as, dry stone walls and traditional farm buildings; converted their production infrastructure by ploughing up rough grazing land, heather moorland, and flower rich meadows to provide arable land; and introduced new infrastructure, such as large warehouses, huge silos and 'improved' roads.

In 1992, realising that this form of landscape damaging subsidy could not continue, the EU altered the CAP subsidy system introducing a new requirement on all member states to initiate measures to encourage more sustainable farming methods. Farmers now received additional payments for environmentally friendly farming practices as well as for allowing new public access. England's response was primarily the Countryside Stewardship (CS) and the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) initiatives. However, these initiatives' effectiveness must be questioned as a recent independent report found that in a quarter of the sites studied farmers were simply taking the money whilst failing to deliver any environmental benefits, and the National Audit Office found that ESAs have been achieving very little and not improving damaged habitats (Reeves, 2001). The public access element has not been effectively introduced either, and even where it has occurred it is predominantly for foot access only (John Bentley 2001).

In 2000 the CAP was reformed once again, resulting in the introduction of England's Rural Development Plan. This was seen as the first step in bringing about a 'radical' redirection of agriculture. Yet this 'radical' reform will only account for 3.5% of total CAP spending. If the EU wanted to be truly radical, why didn't it abolish production subsidies all together? In Britain, even with massive subsidy support (£3 billion per year) (CPRE, 2000), the estimated total income from farming in 2000 fell to its lowest level in 25 years (Countryside Agency, 2001a), and there was an 80% increase in farming bankruptcy. The Government now estimates that more than £1,100 million compensation will be paid out and almost a quarter of farms will disappear in the wake of foot and mouth (Countryside Agency, 2001b). All this public funding for an industry that is barely surviving, over producing, and not creating the countryside that an increasingly environmentally aware society wants. Is this a wise investment of taxpayers money?

The idea of stopping production subsidies may sound harsh, yet it has happened to other 'traditional' industries in the recent past, such as mining and ship building. The communities affected have in many cases proved remarkably robust in adapting and finding new areas of employment more relevant to contemporary society. Why shouldn't this happen with the agricultural industry? Lessons could be learnt and adapted from New Zealand where the agriculture industry was deregulated in the mid 1980s, resulting in a leaner, more competitive industry.

So what would happen if farmers did leave the countryside 'en masse'? Already after only 7-8 months of large tracts of the countryside being dispossessed of livestock there has been an almost riotous variety of re-growth. If areas of the countryside were left unfarmed, within 5-10 years there would be dozens of species successfully regenerating, eventually resulting in more woodland and a richer variety of wildflowers, creating a more suitable habitat for small mammals and insects, which in turn would lead to a richer birdlife, thus enhancing biodiversity. However, despite this society may not want, or be prepared for, this 'untidy' semi-wild countryside after being used to generations of a 'tidy', 'traditional' managed one, nor would it necessarily help the rural communities. Thus what industry can replace agriculture in the countryside yet produce the countryside that society desires? I suggest the recreation and associated tourism industry.

Historically, countryside recreation and its associated tourism have been misunderstood and undervalued, politically and socially, resulting in it having to fit in and around the edges of other rural land uses. However, this outdated stance appears to be changing, and due to the recent Foot and Mouth situation countryside recreation and associated tourism have been given greater political prominence. The Government's recent Rural White Paper (*Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000*) states that tourism is seen as a key industry to support the rural economy, and boasts a

strong commitment to creating enhanced access to the countryside. The Government's draft Planning Policy Guidance PPG 17 states its intention of not only protecting existing recreational sites, but creating new ones. The Countryside Agency's latest strategy document 'Towards Tomorrow's Countryside' (*Countryside Agency, 2001c*) seeks to widen the welcome the countryside can offer for recreation and establish more areas for visitors to enjoy, whilst the English Tourism Council has as a priority improving access for all visitors and making more of activity-based tourism (*Countryside Agency and English Tourism Council, 2001*).

So where is all this new access land to come from? It is well documented that traditionally countryside landowners have not been over enthusiastic in welcoming the public onto their land, and current fiscal policies are not providing a significant increase in strategic, diverse access provision. It may be argued that the 1.6 million hectares of access land that will be created as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 is sufficient enough. Yet this new access excludes by definition, most lowland countryside (which is predominantly located closer to urban areas of population and often less visitor sensitive), and only caters for walkers. It is increasingly clear that traditional countryside recreation is changing. Research carried out by the former Countryside Commission (CoCo) in 1998 (*Countryside Commission, 1998*) found that there is a strong demand from society to cater for a variety of needs and users: frequent and infrequent; sporty and non-sporty; the energetic and the easy going; the elderly, teenagers and young; the less affluent; and those in wheelchairs. In addition, over the past 30 years, British society has become more pluralised with growing numbers of people forming informal networks for recreation, with increasingly varied meanings and values they want from the countryside. Many, including a growing proportion of society's young, are choosing leisure activities that sit uneasily alongside the traditional, thus the potential for both inter-activity and environmental conflict is ever growing, particularly with motorised or 'noisy' activities.

So let's take a hypothetical visit to the countryside of the future where agricultural subsidies have been abolished. Large amounts of agricultural land have become available as a result of unsubsidised farmers having decided to leave, and as society's desire to access that land for a diversity of recreational needs increased, the Government decided it was logical to change the use of that land to recreation/tourism. By so doing the rural economy has been given a much needed boost as new, alternative jobs to agriculture have been created, due to the fact that if the countryside is to be attractive to the money spending visitors, (who pre-Foot and Mouth were spending £12 billion per annum in the English countryside and supporting 380,000 jobs (*Countryside Agency and English Tourism Council, 2001*)), it needs to be high quality, diverse, and well serviced and managed. The annual £3 billion agricultural industry subsidy has been re-directed to the countryside recreation/tourism industry and the embryonic, rapidly growing conservation industry. Grant aid is now provided to help amenity organisations purchase land, as well as to farmers prepared to diversify into countryside conservation and enhancement, in addition to providing strategically planned recreational access. As well as traditional field boundaries being replaced, conservation grazing being introduced, and lost habitats re-created, a major broadleaved re-forestation of the English countryside is resulting in increased woodland cover. The subsidies are also being used to employ the landmanagers, countryside recreational/tourism strategists and conservation workers needed to create the countryside and access that society wants. In addition, the indirect rural economic and social benefits are substantial in terms of: accommodation and food providers; activity and conservation holiday providers; the producers of interpretation material and access 'furniture'; local shops and services; suppliers of outdoor clothing; recreational equipment hire centres, etc.

This new accessible countryside is being used to provide a range of strategically planned recreational provision: sites suitable for short walks, informal

games, picnicking, circular walks near settlements etc; sites with a particular attraction which are appropriate for people to visit or to stop when passing (historic remains, a particularly fine view or a riverside walk); sites catering for local community use and events such as fetes and fairs; sites used by visitors to the area, particularly in popular tourist areas, next to or joining into other linear or open spaces; sites catering for hobby use (wildlife, history, the arts etc.); sites catering for specialist sole use thus reducing inter-activity conflicts (mountain biking, horseriding, motorsports, shooting, air sports, access to water resources etc.); and sites providing educational access.

This new access is helping to reduce the recreational vs environmental conflicts as the increased level of access is reducing pressures on the more remote sensitive areas of the countryside which can now be more acceptably reserved for forms of recreation which enjoy and respect those areas' special qualities. The increased provision is also acting as a vehicle for delivering a number of wider Governmental policies such as: health promotion; creating a better understanding of the interdependence of rural and urban life; and engendering a greater support for the protection of the countryside, its landscape, economy, and communities.

Unfortunately, the above visionary idyll is unlikely. At present users are frustrated by a lack of opportunities. Landowners are reluctant to provide more access than they legally have to, and local authorities are unwilling or unable to secure the necessary resources. However, the time has come for a broader more strategic approach to countryside recreation and the opportunities it offers for public enjoyment. The pragmatic, partnership-led solution will be to find mechanisms that encourage appropriate changes in land use and landscape character, which more correctly reflect the function that society wants the countryside to have in the 21st century. This is likely to be a restructured combination of production subsidies, conservation subsidies, and more effective, monitored forms of

grant aid to create more strategically diverse recreational access to the countryside, similar to the Countryside Agency's recent proposed Integrated Rural Development Policy (*Countryside Agency, 2001d*).

Landowners, farmers and landmanagers have the capacity, if not the mindset, to develop and promote recreational opportunities as part of a viable operating business. However, after years of being 'spoilt' they will require some form of fiscal encouragement if they are to offer such increased opportunities for a wider range of uses. Appropriate countryside recreation management provides benefits for visitors whilst maintaining landscape character and ensuring that competing land uses are managed compatibly. Opportunities should be sought for all legitimate countryside recreational activities to be enjoyed within reasonable reach of the potential participants. However, this does not mean that all areas should be available for all uses. The countryside recreation puritans, who may dread a rise in general countryside recreation participation and diversity, need to realise that there will always be places that are not easy to discover that will still provide a sense of solitude.

The British countryside is complex and dynamic. It is a kaleidoscope of shifting patterns which change continually over time according to economic, social, and political impetus. Post Foot and Mouth a new consensus needs to be forged on the role and type of countryside that society wants. Countryside recreation and associated tourism can become the shapers of that countryside rather than having to fit in or around other uses. The emerging Local Access Forums (a requisite of the CROW Act) could be fundamental in facilitating this change, as could the results of the Countryside Agency's six Integrated Access Demonstration Projects, which aim to discover what people want from a visit to the countryside and how the countryside can be made more accessible and generate economic and social benefits. Recreational NGOs need to form a single alliance rather than fighting their individual causes if they are to apply significant pressure on the

Government and make countryside recreation a political priority.

In the 1960s and 70s the public 'invasion' of the countryside was interpreted as a threat. Today, with the agricultural industry in turmoil, the increasing public interest in the enjoyment of the countryside becomes an opportunity. Recreation and its associated tourism must be seen as an important land use and an important contributor to an integrated social, economic, and conservation strategy for the countryside. Human needs must be kept to the fore, yet not to the detriment of the natural environment, but as the prime *raison d'être* for wishing to conserve it.

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The views expressed within this article are the views of the author and not those of CRN.

News

NEW GRANT FUND - YOUR HERITAGE

On 18th June the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) launched its small capital and/or revenue grants scheme 'Your Heritage' which will provide grants of between £5,000 to £50,000.

'Your Heritage' was introduced to London and the North West as a pilot scheme in 2000 and the success of this has meant that HLF has now opened the scheme to the rest of the country. It differs from the HLF main grant scheme in various ways:

- Simpler application procedures
- Shorter turnaround time for decisions - three months
- Simpler payment procedure

For more information on this and other HLF grant schemes visit the website at: <http://www.hlf.org.uk>

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE: CYCLE CARRIAGE BY BUS AND COACH

The Cyclist Touring Club (CTC) has published 3 new leaflets in response to the Government's 1998 Integrated Transport Strategy:

- 'Bus and Coach Services that Carry Cycles 2001 (CTC)' - lists all known bus and coach services in the British Isles that carry cycles. It provides contact details for all existing operators and is aimed at those using or planning to introduce a cycle-carrying service.
- 'Combined Bicycle and Bus or Coach Journeys (National Cycling Forum)' - highlights good practice and provides guidance on access to stations, cycle parking, cycle carriage on buses and coaches, cycle hire, public information for inter-modal schemes and funding for the above initiatives. It can act as a starting point to find out about the different ways cycling can be combined with bus/coach journeys.
- 'Model Conditions of Carriage for Accommodating Cycles on Buses and Coaches (National Cycling Forum)' - explains the legalities and technicalities of carrying cycles by bus/coach and sets out recommended text for inclusion in an operator's 'conditions of carriage'.

CTC is keen to promote the carriage of cycles on buses and coaches. For more information about CTC visit their website: www.ctc.org.uk or tel: 01483 417217.

For copies of the leaflets published by the National Cycling Forum tel: 020 7944 2478.

A copy of the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) is available on their website: <http://www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk>

CREATE A GREEN ON YOUR DOORSTEP

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities' Scheme has provided £12.8 million for the Countryside Agency run 'Doorstop Greens' initiative.

The 'Doorstep Greens' initiative will run for six years and provide grants for urban and rural communities to create an area of greenspace. This could be either regenerating a derelict piece of land or creating new green space as an area for community use; from a grassy area for community events and ball games to a nature garden, small orchard or tranquil place to sit and relax. The idea behind the scheme is that the community decides what type of greenspace it wants to create.

Applications are now being invited for projects that have strong local community support, and will provide a safe, accessible area that is open during the day. Projects must also have given consideration to the ways in which the wider community can be involved in the design, creation and long term care of the greenspace. Start up grants of up to £3,500 are also available to facilitate community consultation, planning and project development. Successful plans will enable a community to apply for a main grant to carry out their 'Doorstep Green' project.

A leaflet containing further details of the 'Doorstep Greens' initiative (ref: CAX 52) is available from the New Opportunities Fund, tel: 0845 000 0121 or via their website: <http://www.nof.org.uk>. Information is also available on the Countryside Agency website: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk> More information on other Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiatives is also available from NOF.

NEW SUSTAINABLE WOODLAND SOFTWARE DEVELOPED

The Forestry Commission and English Partnerships have been working together to develop a decision-making software package, designed for use in establishing sustainable woodlands and greenspace on former colliery sites.

It is expected that the software will significantly increase efficiency in the preparation and approval of the Forestry Commission's reclamation specifications. By establishing a knowledge database, the software will also encourage and develop industry best practice in the restoration of derelict land for woodland end use.

The software is currently being piloted and following this research period it will be distributed in CD format, with a view to creating a web download version in later months.

For more information about the Forestry Commission visit the Commission's website: www.forestry.gov.uk

£18 MILLION FOR AONBS

On 4th July the Countryside Agency announced new funding support of £18 million for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) over the next three years. It is intended to provide local authorities with the resources they need to secure first class land management for these protected areas.

Richard Wakefield, Chief Executive of the Countryside Agency, said that "The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created a framework to bring AONB conservation up to the same high standards as National Parks. AONBs should be living, working landscapes for rural businesses and communities".

The Countryside Agency will:

- Offer grants of up to 75% of the cost of ensuring an appropriate management structure, including high quality local authority staff, is in place so that new statutory plans can be prepared and put into practice
- Provide grants which will cover up to 50% of the costs of demonstration projects to conserve and enhance AONBs
- Publish guidance for producing the new statutory management plans and for AONB management
- Support AONBs in bids for external sources of grant aid to assist their areas, such as the England Rural Development Plan, European Community funds and the National Lottery distributors

For more information on the Countryside Agency and AONBs visit the Countryside Agency's website at: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>

PAYING FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE COUNTRYSIDE: A GREENPRINT FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEMES IN ENGLAND

On 25th July the Wildlife and Countryside Link (LINK) launched its vision: 'Paying for the Stewardship of the Countryside: A Greenprint for the future of agri-environment schemes in England'.

Alastair Rutherford, Chair of Link's Farming Group said: "The outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and the measures to control it, have graphically demonstrated that the future of farming and the countryside are important, not just to farmers, but also to every one of us. The countryside is not just a factory for food production. More than ever before, an attractive diverse countryside is a major economic and environmental resource as well as a vital asset for everyone to enjoy".

The report 'Paying for the Stewardship of the Countryside: A Greenprint for the future of agri-environment schemes in England' is available from the Wildlife and Countryside Link 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP Tel: 020 7820 8600, Fax: 020 7820 8620, Email: enquiry@wcl.org.uk or as a downloadable pdf file on the LINK website: <http://www.wcl.org.uk/home.shtml>

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE RURAL ECONOMY

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) published their new policy statement "Climate Change and the Rural Economy" in July 2001.

The CLA believes that rural businesses are fundamental to reducing the negative impacts of climate change, cut emissions, complemented and reinforced by managing and developing carbon sinks in soil and forests, as envisaged by the Kyoto Protocol. The report illustrates the role that land managers and rural businesses can play in helping to mitigate the effects of world climate change, adapt to face the challenges of climate change to ensure that the countryside remains vibrant economically and socially, e.g. flood control management, renewable energy and wildlife conservation.

The report contains policy recommendations for the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Some of the key recommendations in the report are:

- Support for soil management practices that store carbon to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide and at the same time improve biodiversity
- Develop an on-farm carbon accounting system

for farmers and other land managers to increase awareness of their emissions and highlight areas where they may be captured

- Expand carbon neutral renewable energy sources by growing products such as elephant grass and willow (biomass) to take the place of non-renewable fossil fuels
- Provide support for foresters to sequester carbon in timber within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol and promote the growing of quality timber as a substitute for other more energy intensive materials
- Develop incentives for managed realignment of the coast and managed re-creation of floodplains, as tools to control flooding
- Increase the land area under conservation agreements (designated and agri-environment areas) to the whole countryside to provide better opportunities for localised species to adapt to change

Copies of this report are available from the Country Land and Business Association, 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PQ, tel: 020 7235 0511, e-mail: mail@cla.org.uk or from the CLA website: <http://www.cla.org.uk/climatechange>

PATHS WITHOUT PREJUDICE

On 24th July the Countryside Agency launched its best practice guidance publication, "Paths Without Prejudice" that covers providing improved information for countryside paths, trails and routes that is suitable for users of all ages and abilities.

The publication was produced on behalf of the Countryside Agency as part of a project to improve access for those with mobility impairments on the National Trails of South East England. The report builds upon recommendations in the previously produced publication 'Sense and Accessibility' which highlighted the need for the provision of clear, honest, accurate and objective information.

The report outlines a proposed audit system, a carefully designed methodology for symbols on maps/leaflets and explores the possibilities for web based information provision. The key principle behind both publications is to provide people with mobility impairments with adequate information to make up their own mind about whether they visit a site or route. 'Paths Without Prejudice' is intended to assist Highways Authorities when deciding upon what steps they will be taking to comply with the duties of service providers within the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).

For copies of 'Paths Without Prejudice' (ref CAX 57) or 'Sense and Accessibility' (ref CAX 26) contact the Countryside Agency Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7EP. Tel. 0870 120 6466 Fax 0870 120 6467 Minicom 0870 120 7405 (for the hard of hearing) E-mail: countryside@twoten.press.net

ENJOY FISHING WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST

On 31st July the National Trust published the fishing directory 'Enjoy Fishing with the National Trust' which includes the Trust's new code of practice to encourage anglers to enjoy fishing while making sure they follow a few basic rules to conserve habitats and help wildlife.

The directory is aimed at anglers and includes information on waters suitable for fishing and lists of fishing club contacts, and outlines basic 'dos and don'ts' for all game and coarse anglers. The Trust cares for 600,000 acres of land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and over 400 of these Trust properties have rivers running through or beside them. The Trust hopes that the recommendations in the directory, along with fishery management plans looking at improving water quality, controlling sediment and fostering aquatic vegetation, will help to develop healthy wild fish stocks in NT waters.

Fiona Reynolds, Director-General for the National Trust, said that "fishing is important as it combines two of the Trust's main objectives - public access and wildlife conservation, but most importantly, it provides thousands of people the opportunity to enjoy a popular sport".

'Enjoy Fishing with the National Trust' is available at many Trust properties, available online as a PDF file on the National Trust website: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/things/todo/fishing.html> or you can order a copy from the Membership Department, PO Box 39, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3XL. Tel: 0870 458 4000

VITAL VILLAGES GRANT INITIATIVE

In July 2001 Margaret Beckett, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs launched the Countryside Agency 'Vital Villages' initiative, based on a set of four grant aid programmes designed to rejuvenate rural villages.

The four schemes are:

- Parish Plan Grants: funding for action plans which

examine and tackle the social, economic and environmental issues facing a village;

- Community Service Grants: helping communities maintain or introduce services which are local priorities, such as village shop or child care scheme;
- Parish Transport Plans: grants of up to £10,000 to help parishes develop tailor-made community-based solutions to meet their transport needs; and
- Rural Transport Partnerships: promoting innovative schemes such as car clubs, car sharing, dial-a-ride, taxi and minibus schemes through Rural Transport Partnerships.

For more information on the scheme visit the Countryside Agency website: www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages

To register an interest in applying for a Vital Villages grant scheme or for an information pack tel: 0870 333 0170.

TRADITIONAL FARMING IN THE MODERN ENVIRONMENT

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched a new booklet about the Countryside Stewardship Scheme 'Traditional Farming in the Modern Environment' at the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July 2001.

The booklet was launched to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the scheme and is aimed primarily at the general public to explain about the scheme and how it works. It includes an introduction to Stewardship and general information on history and development, landscape types and access.

For copies of the report contact the Conservation Management Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Room G15, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. Tel: 020 7238 6907 or visit the website: www.defra.gov.uk

DRAFT MAPS OF OPEN COUNTRYSIDE AND REGISTERED COMMON LAND

On 12th November the Countryside Agency completed the draft maps of open countryside and registered common land for the South East, and the Lower North West of England. These maps are currently displayed on the Agency's website and the consultation period runs until 11th February 2002. The mapping exercise is an integral part of the process initiated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to establish a legal right for people wishing to walk across 'open country' – these maps, once 'conclusive' will define where the legal right

exists in England. The Countryside Council for Wales has responsibility for the mapping process in Wales.

For more information on the mapping process or to view the draft maps visit the Countryside Agency website at: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND SUPPORT FOR AREAS HIT BY FOOT AND MOUTH

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced on 9th August that it was providing money to help the rural tourism economy of areas badly hit by the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

The Fund awarded £97,586 to the Lake District National Park Authority in partnership with the National Trust and English Nature to help with vital repairs to the network of footpaths in the area to speed up the reopening of the region to visitors. This money is part of a £1.46 million HLF Stage One Pass that was awarded in March towards the footpath repair and restoration plan.

For more information about the Heritage Lottery Fund visit their website: <http://www.hlg.org.uk>.

For information about the Lake District NPA visit their website: <http://www.lake-district.gov.uk>

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES HIT BY FOOT AND MOUTH

NFU Countryside, a membership organisation for anyone with an interest in countryside issues, has joined up with Paul Chessum Roses to help those rural communities that have been hit by the Foot and Mouth crisis. The rose 'Countryside' has been specifically grown and is being sold, with a donation of £1 per plant to ARC Addington Fund.

Jan Rogers, representative from NFU Countryside, said: "The Countryside Rose provides a very visual way of reminding us how important our rural heritage is to us, and is therefore an excellent way for anyone who cares about the countryside to make a small contribution to its renaissance".

The rose is being sold by NFU Countryside through their website: www.nfucountryside.org.uk or tel: 0870 8402030.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE: THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

On 29th August the Countryside Agency launched its report 'Foot and Mouth Disease: the state of the

English Countryside' which outlines the immediate impact that Foot and Mouth has had on the English Countryside, affecting tourism and other areas as well as farming.

The report shows that the impact on the national economy is estimated at £4 billion and that much of that loss is due to the reduction in visitors from overseas. The rural economy has suffered further from the switch in spending by British people from the countryside to urban and seaside breaks, the High Street and DIY. Many of the worst hit areas are those that were already suffering from a depression in agriculture and rely heavily on tourism, such as Cumbria, Devon, parts of Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire and the North East.

Ewen Cameron, Chairman of the Countryside Agency, said that "this crisis has underlined the vulnerability of rural economies - how closely related agriculture is to rural tourism and tourism is to the provision of local services."

In light of this report the Countryside Agency has called for:

- Sustained action to ensure that the level of rural visitors and the income they bring to the countryside is maintained next spring;
- More urgent implementation of rural diversification and help with training, so that more economic value can be added to farm and countryside products;
- Acceleration of the Rural White Paper measures designed to secure rural services standards and healthy communities, especially in the hardest hit areas; and
- In the longer term, a fundamental shift towards sustainable land management encouraged by a reformed Common Agricultural Policy.

The report 'Foot and Mouth Disease: the state of the English Countryside' is available on the Countryside Agency website: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk> or from Countryside Agency Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7EP. Tel: 0870 120 6466 Ref: CAX63 price £2.00. The findings of this report will be revisited in future national and regional 'State of the Countryside' reports.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP TO CONSERVE COASTAL WETLANDS

On 4th September the Environment Agency, The Wildlife Trusts and the World-Wide Fund for Nature

(WWF) signed a new agreement to conserve England's coastal wetland habitats.

Ecologically important coastal habitats, such as saltmarshes, are eroding at an alarming rate and action is needed to conserve these areas. The new partnership will combine the overall role of the Environment Agency in flood defence and protecting the wider environment with the specialist skills and expertise of The Wildlife Trusts and WWF in managing natural habitats and the wildlife that depend on them.

The Essex Wildlife Trust recently purchased Abbott's Hall Farm with assistance from WWF and National Lottery funding. The site is one of the UK's most important habitat restoration projects where a working coastal farm will embrace sustainable agriculture and coastal management including the recreation of more than 200 acres of saltmarsh. This project illustrates the kind of improvement to the environment and coastal defences that the new collaboration will help realise throughout the country. Other ideas to be tested in the area include the beneficial use of dredgings from navigational channels in partnership with Harwich Haven Authority rather than disposal at sea.

For more information about the organisations involved in this partnership visit their websites; Environment Agency website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk, The Wildlife Trusts website: <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/>, and WWF website: www.wwf.org.uk

TRANSATLANTIC COUNTRYSIDE EXCHANGE - A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The North America/UK Countryside Exchange offers an opportunity to spend up to ten days in the UK, the USA or Canada, working with and learning from seven fellow team members as they formulate and present practical responses to issues faced by local people in a rural or urban fringe community.

Each team is put together according to the requirements of the specific location. Generally half of each team are from the UK and half from North America. There is a regular need for skills and experience in disciplines including agriculture, community development, conservation, countryside and land management, cultural heritage, economic development, interpretation, landscape, planning, recreation and access, rural enterprise, services provision, social and community enterprises, social exclusion, sustainable tourism, and transport.

Application is to the programme, not to specific locations. Selection is on the basis of the match of skills. Successful applicants pay a registration fee of £90 and are responsible for their own transport costs to a central meeting-point in the country of the case study. Accommodation, meals and transport at the site will be provided.

Anybody interested in making a real contribution to a rural area and at the same time developing their own skills through some intensive action learning should contact CEI Associates Ltd., Progress Centre, Charlton Place, Ardwick Green, Manchester M12 6HS, or phone 0161 274 3337 or e-mail cei@cei-associates.org.

GREEN LANES - 'BIODIVERSITY RESERVOIRS' RESEARCH

Researchers at Staffordshire University are studying the biodiversity of ancient greenlanes across Cheshire, Trafford, Yorkshire Dales, Hampshire, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. They believe that these lanes could be as rich in birds, bees and other wildlife as hedgerows based on findings from their research including the fact that green lanes contain more than 25% more species of plant than hedgerows.

Ecologist, John Dover from Stafford University's School of Plant Sciences hopes that this research will help to gain official recognition for green lanes so that they can be protected from development and enable them to be properly managed. Some of the lanes are more than 2,000 years old and also have cultural and historical value. There are believed to be around 5,000 miles of green lanes in England.

The report was presented to the International Association for Landscape Ecology at its conference "Hedgerows of the World" in Birmingham on 6th September 2001.

The report has not yet been published, but for further information contact Dr John Dover at the Department of Biological Sciences, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 2DE or email j.w.dover@staffs.ac.uk

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES IN WALES

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has been looking into its grant aid programme for 2002 and 2005 and hoping to attract innovative new schemes/projects that support sustainable development, combat social exclusion and promote

equal opportunities, in line with National Assembly for Wales priorities.

CCW's priorities for grant aid are:

- The fragile state of rural communities after foot and mouth and the need for recovery;
- The new rights and responsibilities that have come into force under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act;
- The National Assembly's clear desire to work through the voluntary sector and through local communities, and to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- The need to reflect the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme; and
- The need to take into full account the Disability Discrimination Act.

CCW has around £4 million each year to offer as grants to partners in Wales, and is hoping to attract new partners and projects, whilst continuing to support those projects that have already been awarded funding. CCW grants can also be used as match funding for other grants, such as European Union funds, for larger projects.

For further information visit the CCW website: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk>

SUSSEX DOWNS CONSERVATION BOARD ANNUAL REVIEW 2000/2001

The Sussex Downs Conservation Board has published their Annual Review 2000/2001. The report highlights the broad range of issues affecting the Downs, the work of the Conservation Board in tackling them and future issues and practical work.

The Sussex Downs Conservation Board is involved in the Countryside Agency's work on National Park designation of the Downs through practical ground work and participating in the consultation process.

For a copy of the report "The Sussex Downs Conservation Board Annual Review 2000/2001" contact The Sussex Downs Conservation Board, Chanctonbury House, Church Street, Storrington, West Sussex RH20 4LT. Tel: 01903 741234 or e-mail info@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk

GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICE IN SEASCAPE ASSESSMENT

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has been working with the University College Dublin and

Brady Shipman Martin environment consultancy, Dublin, on a project to devise a method of assessing the value and quality of Wales and Ireland's coast and sea or 'seascapes'. On 25th September it published the project report 'Guide to Best Practice in Seascape Assessment'.

The publication is intended to act as a guide to ensure that developments along coastlines are appropriately sited, including 'green energy' developments e.g. coastline developments, marinas, coastal defences and windfarms, and do not conflict with landscape values and tourism. It has been seen by CCW as an opportunity to put the sustainable development priorities of the National Assembly for Wales into practice.

Seven pilot studies were undertaken to find the best way of assessing seascapes, including north Anglesey, the Pembrokeshire Coast, Swansea bay, Ireland's Eye to Skerries, Arklow to Morristcastle and Dun Laoghaire to Greystones. These were then evaluated on the following to come up with the best seascape assessment method. The studies looked at:

- Physical forms in the areas - such as geological coastal features, the nature of the shore and settlements
- Human activity - such as recreation, shipping, fishing etc
- Views from the land to sea and from sea to land

For an on-line copy of the report and more information on the work of the Countryside Council for Wales visit their website at: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk>

'WTHR 4 YOU' FOR WEATHER FORECASTS SENT STRAIGHT TO YOUR MOBILE

The Met Office with Vodafone UK and BT Cellnet have worked together to set up a service that allows mobile phone users to find out the weather forecast anywhere in the UK.

This service is being aimed at people who like to go out and about in the countryside and help them to prepare for their trip. To receive a weather forecast for a specific location the user just sends a text message 'WTHR4' then space before entering the postcode, city, town or village name to either Vodafone or Cellnet. The forecast for that area will then be sent back to the phone covering the next six hours weather.

For further information on this service visit the Met Office website at: www.metoffice.com or contact Customer Centre on 0845 300 0300.

FOOT AND MOUTH RECOVERY - ENQUIRIES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government announced on 9th August that there would be two independent inquiries, one into the lessons to be learned from the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak of 2001, and a Scientific Review by the Royal Society. In addition, there would be a Policy Commission on the future of farming. These inquiries will report to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

POLICY COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF FARMING AND FOOD

On 25th September the Government Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food launched a short (one month) consultation document to determine views on farming and food policy in England.

The Commission is due to publish its report, based on the consultation and associated regional stakeholder meetings around the country, on 31st December 2001.

For more details about the Commission visit the website: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/farming>.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY SETS OUT MEASURES TO REBUILD AGRICULTURE

On 2nd October at a fringe meeting "The future of the rural economy; making the environment work" of the Labour Party Conference the Environment Agency's Chief Executive, Barbara Young, outlined a series of measures to promote rural development and sustainable agriculture.

These measures are:

- Immediate expansion of funding for agri-environment schemes up to the 20% national discretionary limit under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). The matching funding from the Treasury would save other public funding.
- New whole-farm agri-environment measures to promote management of soil, water and air quality, with greater recognition of protection of natural resources in Rural Development Plans following their mid-term review in 2003.
- A simple but inclusive scheme under the Rural Development Regulations that supports development of environmental management plans for all farms, backed by advice.

- At least 50% of CAP funds going to Rural Development Regulations following the next round of CAP reform in 2007.
- An industry-led whole-farm environmental management standard supported by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), with the progressive integration of existing and new regulations into a single framework to simplify environmental regulations for farmers.
- A government-sponsored environmental manager accreditation scheme for farm managers, to foster new land management expertise to meet future environmental challenges.
- More low-input, precision farming systems that can deliver high quality food with good yields with low environmental costs.
- Planning guidance, Rural Development Plans and legislation for the countryside which ensure sustainable growth of rural populations, balanced land use and sustainable access to the countryside.
- A post Foot and Mouth disease recovery package that supports sustainable farm management (e.g. no re-stocking above land capacity).

For more information the Environment Agencies proposals are set out in the Agency's position statement 'Rebuilding Agriculture' which is available on the Agency's website: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk> in the 'About Us' section. Hard copy can also be acquired free of charge from Public Enquiries Unit, Environment Agency, Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD. Tel: 01454 624411 or e-mail: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

HASKINS REPORT 'RURAL RECOVERY AFTER FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE' PROMPTS INCREASED GRANT FOR THE BUSINESS RECOVERY FUND

On 18th October Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), announced a £24 million extension to the Business Recovery Fund following the publication of Lord Haskins' report on 'Rural Recovery after Foot and Mouth Disease'. The Fund was set up to help rural communities and small rural businesses damaged by Foot and Mouth disease and this extension takes the total of the fund to £74 million.

Lord Haskins was appointed Rural Recovery Co-ordinator by the Prime Minister and began work on the 14th August with a remit to report by the end of

September 2001. The report focused on the state of the Cumbrian rural economy, which was the area hardest hit by Foot and Mouth disease and highlights the measures needed to promote the recovery of the tourism and small business economy in Cumbria. Lord Haskins' recommendations to help the short term survival of businesses include:

- Continued support and a sympathetic line by the banks supported by the Government especially the Revenue departments and an assurance from the Government that the countryside will be back in business by April 2002.
- Reinforce the message the 'countryside is open for business' by providing financial help to support generic advertising aimed at the domestic market.
- Consider providing further assistance to distressed businesses by the injection of an extra £40 million into the Business Recovery Fund.
- Ensure sufficient funding for the Business Links Service so that they can continue to offer good advice to all farmers and businesses who need help on how to work through the crisis and to make businesses and farmers more aware of what they are entitled to.
- Looking to the Regional Development Agencies to be the catalyst for overseeing and targeting support for all sections of the rural economy.

Lord Haskins said that these recommendations would "enable those farmers and businesses who deserve to fight another day, to do just that. But in order to do so, they in turn will need to be resourceful and enterprising in tackling their problems."

Medium term priorities were highlighted as:

- Supporting the concept of a Cumbria Rural Action Zone, business-like local market initiatives and upgrading the tourism proposition.
- Providing a co-ordinated flexible approach to rural planning and other rural regulations.
- Getting rural businesses and farmers on the internet to make use of technology available.
- Providing a co-ordinated approach to the reform of agricultural smart structures, and developing ideas for CAP reform that move away from a system of subsidies and dependence to one which promotes environmental sustainability, rural diversification and enterprise.
- Increasing flexibility of operation of the England Rural Development Programme.
- Developing more skills among the rural workforce.

Margaret Beckett welcomed the report and stated that DEFRA would respond to all recommendations made by Lord Hoskins within the near future.

For further information and a copy of Lord Hoskins' report visit the DEFRA website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth/rural/taskforce/haskins.pdf>

RURAL TASK FORCE REPORT 'TACKLING THE IMPACT OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ON THE RURAL ECONOMY' PUBLISHED

On 18th October the Rural Task Force published its report 'Tackling the Impact of Foot and Mouth Disease on the Rural Economy'. The Rural Task Force was set up by the Prime Minister in March to advise the Government on the impact of Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) on the rural economy. The Task Force comprises representatives from a range of government departments and agencies together with stakeholder bodies including representatives of farming, tourism, small business, conservation and local government.

The Task Force's recommendations focus on five areas, covering both short term help to ensure the survival of rural businesses through the winter months, and the longer term revival of the rural economy.

Short term measures:

- The Government should review the effectiveness of the measures currently in place to assist rural businesses and whether more can be done to encourage take up of advice and help available.
- The Government should continue to provide assistance in the forms currently available until it is clear that the impact of the crisis is over - the report highlights the fact that the pace and extent of recovery will vary between areas - including extending tax deferral and rate relief until March 2002.
- The Government should urgently provide the resources for the continuation and expansion of the Business Recovery Fund and review the current criteria for the fund.

Sustaining rural businesses:

- The Government and agencies should work with farmers to prepare farm reinvestment strategies, focused initially on the areas where stock has been culled, to include increased take-up of agri-environment schemes, renovation of pollution control equipment, restoration of landscape features, and staff retraining.

- Publicly funded advisory services should be provided; the Small Business Service and Regional Tourist Boards should establish a specialised support service to help tourism businesses, and the Small Business Service and DEFRA should further extend the capacity of farm business advisors to provide advice on development and diversification in the context of the whole farm, local economy and environment.

Expanding markets and increasing added value:

- Rural businesses and business organisations should develop local supply chains and marketing networks, promote local distinctiveness, encourage local enterprises to buy food and services locally and promote this, and develop partnerships with major retailers to promote local produce.
- DEFRA and stakeholders should provide a new impetus for farmers markets through promotional campaigns and advice, with an aim to increasing markets by 33% by the end of 2002 and a long term aim of weekly markets in most towns.

Revitalising rural communities:

- The Government should support local strategic partnerships in rural areas in promoting market town regeneration programmes - with some badly hit areas needing extra resources.
- The Government should recognise the impact of FMD on the rural voluntary and community sector and offer additional help to affected communities.
- A special, time limited, gift aid scheme should be introduced, to include environmental and recreational charities, directed principally at activities and areas affected by FMD.

Relaunching the countryside:

- A co-ordinated and user-friendly information initiative should be developed to provide visitors with the facts they need and the confidence that they are welcome in the countryside. This should include a web-based database, to which all Tourist Information Centres should have access, providing information on access to footpaths, national trails and other attractions.
- A major promotional campaign should be developed to relaunch the countryside, based on a distinctive 'brand' and theme which would need national co-ordination but regional and local branding and delivery. It would use the theme of recovery post-FMD to promote growth in sectors which were already fragile, seek to revitalise communities, engage with businesses not traditionally connected

with tourism and engage urban communities in 'joining up' town and country.

- Tourism publicity and media campaigns should be co-ordinated nationally, in conjunction with regions and the private sector, to include themed breaks based on specific leisure activities; countryside events and festivals; special offers for travel and attractions running through 2002; and a place for local communities, products and services.
- DEFRA and DCMS should support the "Welcome to the Countryside" initiative being established by farm tourism operators to co-ordinate activity between businesses and improve the marketing and quality of farm visits, education and accommodation.
- Local authorities, and conservation and access organisations, should develop proposals to enhance access to the countryside. In particular authorities should identify those footpaths and trails that generate significant income within local economies and draw up programmes for their improvement. Conservation bodies and land managers should encourage access to wildlife sites, based on good conservation, visitor management and interpretation.

Other recommendations include:

- In anticipation of any future outbreak of FMD (and other animal diseases), a protocol should be developed, based on a veterinary risk assessment, as to how widely, and for how long, footpath closures and restrictions on access are likely to be justified, and what conditions should be placed on closure powers. This should take account of the impact of walkers and the businesses that cater for them besides the requirements of disease control. Clear guidance on where closure is justified should be issued at the same time as the powers are conferred.
- A review should be carried out of the media and public information strategy during the course of the outbreak.
- The Government should review the data sources - national, regional and local - available to monitor the impact of a crisis such as FMD on businesses such as farming and tourism, in particular on incomes from self-employment.
- The Government should keep the health of the rural economy at large, including farming and countryside tourism, and the impact of the measures already taken and those recommended in this report, under close review over the coming winter, spring and summer. It should be willing to take further measures if the impact of the FMD

outbreak turns out to be even deeper and more lasting than now appears.

Copies of the Rural Task Force Report are available from the DEFRA Press Office or the report can be accessed on the DEFRA website at www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth/rural/taskforce/rtf.pdf

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL FMD INQUIRY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Devon County Council have launched the preliminary findings from their own inquiry into the Foot and Mouth outbreak and its effects, looking in particular at the handling of the crisis, the recovery and sustaining of Devon's countryside, and reducing/removing the risk of future similar outbreaks.

The Inquiry Committee was set up of County and District Councillors under an independent Chairman and Terms of Reference were adopted to guide the Committee and anyone submitting evidence. Over 360 submissions were received split roughly between farmers (28%), businesses and members of the public (34%), and interested bodies and organisations (38%).

Recommendations include:

- More research is needed into the transport of the FMD virus by boots, clothing, tyres, hooves and any other passive agent so that the degree of selection, which might be applied to the closure of rights of way, and the type of access may be determined. Until that is done, those managing access should be trusted to apply restrictions in line with veterinary advice in a pragmatic way.
- A national contingency plan should be developed and should identify the organisations that will be involved in response to FMD in a County or Unitary Authority area, explain their responsibilities and the way they will work together.
- Government spending and support patterns should reflect two things; the development and sustaining of a quality livestock produce industry; and an adequate labour force for more sophisticated stock management and more detailed environmental quality.
- Developing the marketing of quality Devon produce (within the 'Devon Brand') should be pursued locally with regional and national extension, building upon existing successful enterprises.
- Government funding (and customer prices)

should cover the cost of a larger labour force in the farming sector to develop both a quality livestock produce industry and maintain the detail of the farmed landscape through environmental and biodiversity improvements. This will carry with it the increased need for training and recruitment of staff and require new approaches to the integration of agricultural and environmental skills in further and higher education.

- Integration of quality food production with recognised environmental outputs should be the ambition of a new universal farmer culture - a culture shift that is best begun at the educational level where new courses should be devised to achieve this integration.
- An opportunity now exists to improve the network of footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, byways and unclassified roads in the interest of farm and livestock management and enjoyment of the countryside. The management of access for leisure, exercise and the welfare of animals must be enhanced. That demands increases in the application of money and manpower to it by all relevant authorities.
- Tourist industry representatives should be included in local and national contingency plan preparation and especially its access management instructions. They should be recipients from Day One in communications planning.
- Tourist operators and accommodation providers across the spectrum should have access to timely and accurate information to help prepare their own advice for visitors.

For further information about this Inquiry visit Devon County Council's website: www.devon.gov.uk

DEFRA was not represented at the Inquiry, but Ministers had agreed to provide written answers to the Inquiry's questions and a response from the Minister for Rural Affairs, the Rt. Hon Alun Michael, can be found on Devon County Council's website: www.devon.gov.uk as an appendix to the preliminary findings and also on DEFRA's website: www.defra.gov.uk/devonletter

Countryside Recreation and Training Events

CRN EVENTS FOR 2002

Workshop titles planned:

- **Visitor Payback Schemes**
Date: to be announced
Venue: to be announced
Cost: to be announced
- **Rural White Paper**
– opening up access in and around towns
- **Rights of Way Improvement Plans**
- **Visitor Liability**

For more information on any of the above events please contact CRN at: crn@cf.ac.uk or tel: 029 2087 4970.

You can also find out more about CRN events via the web:
<http://www.CountrysideRecreation.org.uk>

For more details about each of the events listed below see the contact details section at the end of the events list.

December 2001

1 -2 December
Woodland Management
(BTCV)
Venue: Lancashire Area
Cost: please telephone

3-5 December
Education for Sustainable Development * New directions in environmental education
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

3 - 7 December
Access and Public Rights of Way Law and Management
(Plas Tan y Bwlch)
Venue: Snowdonia
Cost: £302

4 December
Environmental Issues and Sustainability
(Environmental Trainers Network)
Venue: Birmingham
Cost: £120 + VAT

4 December
Practical Solutions for Visitor Safety in the Countryside
(Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group)
Venue: Royal York Hotel, York
Cost: £95 including VAT

January 2002

16 - 18 January
Project Management
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

23 January
Visitor Survey and Monitoring Techniques
(Environmental Trainers Network)
Venue: Birmingham
Cost: £120 + VAT

30 January - 1 February
Contract Documentation
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

February 2002

6 - 8 February
Working with Communities - Tools and Techniques
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

13 - 15 February
Advanced Ranger Training
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

18 - 20 February
Countryside and Rights of Way Act
(Plas Tan y Bwlch)
Venue: Snowdonia
Cost: £185

20 February
Introduction to Raising Funds from Companies and Trusts
(Environmental Trainers Network)
Venue: Birmingham
Cost: £120 + VAT

25 - 27 February
Fundraising
(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

March 2002

5 March

Involving Cultural Minority Groups

(Environmental Trainers Network)
Venue: London
Cost: £120 + VAT

6 March

Naturally Accessible - opening the environment to disabled people

(Environmental Trainers Network)
Venue: Bristol
Cost: £120 + VAT

11 - 13 March

Breaking Down the Barriers

(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £425

18 - 22 March

Education in the Countryside

(Losehill Hall)
Venue: Castleton
Cost: £519

23 - 24 March

Access - The Ins and Outs

(BTCV)
Venue: Broxburn, nr. Edinburgh
Cost: £55

Contact Details for Training/Events organisers

**Andean Mountain Association
Luis D Lambi**

Organising Cttee, AMA-200,
Univ. of York, Biology Dept, York
YO10 5YA
E-mail: ldlc102@york.ac.uk

BTCV Training

Tel: 0121 358 2155
E-mail: A.Groves@btcv.org.uk
www.btcv.org/frameadd.html

Council for Environmental Education

Tel: 0118 950 2550 ext223
E-mail: awhite@cee.org.uk

Environmental Trainers Network

Tel: 0121 358 2155
E-mail: ETN@ukgateway.net
www.btcv.org/etn

Forestry Commission - Policy and Practice Division

Betty Cowan
Forest Operations Training Centre
Tel: 01387 860271

IEEM (Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management)

Dr Jim Thompson
Tel: 01962 868626
E-mail:
enquiries@ieem.demon.co.uk

Losehill Hall

Tel: 01433 620373
E-mail:
training.losehill@peakdistrict_npa.gov.uk
www.losehill-training.org.uk

Plas Tan y Bwlch

Tel: 01766 590324
E-mail: plas@eryri-npa.gov.uk

The Wilderness Trust

Tel/Fax: 01245 227606
E-mail: joroberts@freenet.co.uk

Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group

Jacqui Christodoulo, The Safety and Reliability Society
Tel: 0161 228 7824
E-mail: secretary@sars.u-net.com

CRN is keeping advance information of training events, conferences and workshops, in order to act as a clearing house for those who are planning events and wish to avoid clashes. A listing in these pages is free. If your organisation has event details please forward them to CRN.



Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
REPORTS		
Social Exclusion in Countryside Leisure in the United Kingdom - the role of the countryside in addressing social exclusion (2001)	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS		
Removing Barriers; Creating Opportunities: Social Inclusion in the Countryside (2001)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the Challenge of Access (2000)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing? (1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS		
Local Access Forums (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising and the Lottery (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are We Getting There? Delivering Sustainable Transport in the Countryside (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking New Ground in Sustainable Tourism (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Countryside Management - Theory and Application (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to Water - Sharing Access on Reservoirs and Rivers (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do Visitor Surveys Count? - Making use of Surveys of Countryside Recreation (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside I - Reaching Shared agreement in policy, planning and management (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside I (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing Safe? Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Access to the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport in the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Drive in the Country? - Examining the Problems of Recreational Travel (1994)	£7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Economics, Sustainable Management and the Countryside (1994)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRN RESEARCH DIRECTORY An annual directory of the research work carried out by the CRN agencies during the year		
Research Directory 1998	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1997	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1996	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1995	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Since 1998 we have been developing a searchable database on the CRN website. This has replaced the 'traditional' hard copy of the 'Research Directory'.		
UK Day Visits Survey 1994 (1996)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
UK Day Visits Survey 1993 (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

E-Mail: _____ Tel: _____

Please photocopy this page and send it with a cheque made payable to 'University of Wales Cardiff' at the following address:
Countryside Recreation Network, Department of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building,
King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WA.

