



**CRC 13/07**

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### **Rural Advocate visits foot and mouth affected farm as restrictions are eased**

The Commission for Rural Communities has welcomed the government's move to ease the control measures that were put in place to contain the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Dr. Stuart Burgess Chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities and the Rural Advocate last week visited Sheila and Derrick Pride, owners of one of the farms in Surrey directly affected by the outbreak.

Speaking exclusively to Dr. Burgess, Mr. and Mrs. Pride said, "We felt gutted when we discovered we had foot and mouth and it has been a very difficult time for us. However, we have been supported by so many people including one woman who phoned from Australia and we are now looking forward positively to the future. Our farm shop had to close and we have lost a lot of income but we reopen on Thursday 13 September".

From Monday 3 September, livestock markets will be allowed to resume and animals can now be taken to shows outside of the surveillance zone in Surrey. It is hoped that all remaining restrictions on livestock movements can be lifted on Friday 7 September when, all being well, the surveillance zone is due to be lifted.

Commenting after his visit to the farm Dr. Burgess said, "The easing of restrictions that were put in place as a result of incidents of foot and mouth disease in parts of Surrey will come as welcome relief to the entire farming community. It will also signal an important reminder that the vast bulk of the countryside remains open for business and provide a timely boost to rural tourism which is such a vital part of the rural economy. It is important that visitors to our countryside are made to feel welcome and know they have the opportunity to enjoy all it has to offer".

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has also welcomed the news that livestock markets can resume. The NFU's President Peter Kendall said: "This is an important step forward for the industry that desperately needs to get its marketing back to normal so as to limit the damage from the foot and mouth outbreak. It should give confidence, a much-needed boost and enable planning to go ahead for the important autumn sales of breeding livestock, and the remaining agricultural shows. The fact that we have been able to lift the restrictions at the earliest possible opportunity is testament both to the determination and speed with which farmers and Government responded to the outbreak, and to the efforts of all concerned to get the industry back to normal once it became clear that the disease had been contained".

ENDS

For further information Chris Wynne-Davies on 01242 534070 or 07900 608030

Notes to editors:

1. For a copy of Defra's news story 'Foot and Mouth Disease: control measures easing', visit: [www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2007/animal-0823.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2007/animal-0823.htm)
2. For a copy of the NFU's media release 'Important step forward says NFU as markets are set to resume', visit: [www.nfuonline.com/x22481.xml](http://www.nfuonline.com/x22481.xml)
3. The Commission for Rural Communities is an independent government body established in October 2006. Its role is to provide well-informed, independent advice to government and ensure that policies reflect the real needs of people living and working in rural England, with a particular focus on tackling disadvantage and economic under-performance.