

NIGEL JOHNSON-HILL, PARK FARM, MILLAND, LIPHOOK GU30 7JT

Rt Hon David Miliband MP  
Secretary of State,  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA),  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

16 May 2007

Dear Secretary of State,

My friend, who is in farming at the moment, recently received a cheque for £3,000 from the Rural Payments Agency for not rearing pigs. I would now like to join the "not rearing pigs" business.

In your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to rear pigs on, and which is the best breed of pigs not to rear? I want to be sure I approach this endeavour in keeping with all government policies, as dictated by the EU under the Common Agricultural Policy. I would prefer not to rear bacon pigs, but if this is not the type you want not rearing, I will just as gladly not rear porkers. Are there any advantages in not rearing rare breeds such as Saddlebacks or Gloucester Old Spots, or are there too many people already not rearing these?

As I see it, the hardest part of this programme will be keeping an accurate record of how many pigs I haven't reared. Are there any Government or Local Authority courses on this?

My friend is very satisfied with this business. He has been rearing pigs for forty years or so, and the best he ever made on them was £1,422 in 1968. That is - until this year, when he received a cheque for not rearing any.

If I get £3,000 for not rearing 50 pigs, will I get £6,000 for not rearing 100?

I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 pigs not raised, which will mean about £240,000 for the first year. As I become more expert in not rearing pigs, I plan to be more ambitious, perhaps increasing to, say, 40,000 pigs not reared in my second year, for which I should expect about £2.4 million from your department. Incidentally, I wonder if I would be eligible to receive tradable carbon credits for all these pigs not producing harmful and polluting methane gases?

Another point: These pigs that I plan not to rear will not eat 2,000 tonnes of cereals. I understand that you also pay farmers for not growing crops. Will I qualify for payments for not growing cereals to not feed the pigs I don't rear?

I am also considering the "not milking cows" business, so please send any information you have on that too. Please could you also include the current Defra advice on set aside fields? Can this be done on an e-commerce basis with virtual fields (of which I seem to have several thousand hectares)?

In view of the above you will realise that I will be totally unemployed, and will therefore qualify for unemployment benefits.

I shall of course be voting for your party at the next general election.

Yours faithfully,

Nigel Johnson-Hill