

# Land Business Update

Week commencing 12 December 2016

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## Farming

### House poultry to prevent avian flu spreading to England

The Government is requiring all captive birds and poultry, farmed and domestic, to be housed or appropriate steps to be taken to keep them separate from wild birds, until at least 6 January. This is a precautionary measure to help prevent potential infection from wild birds. More than 14 countries on the continent have now reported cases, including in northern France and the Netherlands.

### 'Emerging labour crisis' in horticulture

Almost 50% of labour providers say that they have not been able to fulfil the horticulture sector's staff requirements; this is a much worse situation than at the start of the year. The NFU will ask the government to trial a scheme for seasonal workers, linked to visas, but this may not be enough as only around a quarter of current overseas workers say they expect to return. 98% of horticulture's seasonal workforce are from the EU.

### Dairy crisis almost at end but sector mustn't rely on policy handouts

The EU Farm Commissioner Phil Hogan has said that he is "cautiously optimistic" that the dairy crisis is almost over, pointing to lower production (which he called supply side reaction) and higher prices. However, he did also note that the whole industry must become more market focussed.

## Rural Business 2030 Conference

### Unlocking the potential of rural businesses and estates

The CLA held this inaugural conference on 6 December, at which it launched a report and vision for how rural businesses can thrive and contribute to the economy. Strutt & Parker is delighted to be one of the main sponsors of the conference and associated research programme. [Click here](#) for our summary of the conference report.



## Brexit, food and farming

### Open letter to the PM

75 of the UK's largest food producers and grocers have called for continued access to the single market and European labour, including Sainsbury's, M&S, Arla, Dairy Crest and Weetabix, in an open letter coordinated by the NFU to the PM. They state that 75% of UK exports go to Europe. Just under a third of workers in UK food manufacturing are from Europe. The NFU also called for tariffs to be maintained on products from South America and New Zealand. The food and drink sector employs 3.9m people and is worth around £108bn pa.

### Scotland: one in five farmers considering retiring sooner due to Brexit

The SRUC survey of 720 businesses also found that farmers felt that the vote had increased business uncertainty, which could lead to lower investment.

## Forestry

### Not enough trees being planted and ancient woods still threatened

The Woodland Trust has claimed that only around 700 hectares of woodland were planted in England in 2016, well below the Government's target of 5,000 hectares, and so started a debate about the country becoming deforested. At its most basic, where will the timber for construction and higher end uses and firewood come from? It also says that many ancient woodlands are also at threat from development. The woodland creation grant in England will open for applications from 3 January 2017 to 1 March 2017. Please contact [Fenning Welstead](#) for more details.

## Economy

### BoE sees increased risks to UK economy from world political changes

The Bank of England has warned that there are more risks from around the world that could negatively affect the UK's growth, including Donald Trump's anti-trade agreement policies. It also continued to warn of the impact to the whole of the UK economy of a disorderly Brexit transition for the UK's financial services sector.

## Energy

### Drax continues change to business model

The change, away from large coal powered stations to woodfuel and smaller quick -reacting gas generators is a sign of a potentially significant change in the UK energy system – a reverse in thinking so that conventional power generation is used to fill in the periods of low production from renewables.

## Telecoms

### Ofcom to force BT to split off Openreach into a new legal entity

The split is short of Virgin and Sky's calls for Openreach to become independent. BT still has a chance of avoiding the split if it can persuade Ofcom that Openreach can operate fairly from within the firm. Please contact [Robert Paul](#) for more details.

## Residential

### UK housing market outlook highly uncertain

The outlook for the UK housing market is highly uncertain, with transactions slowing following the Brexit vote, according to the Bank of England's financial stability report. This is in contrast to what some house builders are saying; Urban & Civic thinks that stronger parts of the rest of the country will do much better than London in the second part of the [economic] cycle as London is seen as too expensive.



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