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Mr D Housego
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14th May 2009

Dear Mr Housego

Review of the Rural Strategy (RES) 2005

Thank you for your letter of 9 April requesting our views on the above. I have taken some time to think this through, and have outlined my views below.

Whilst, as a grower, I appreciate the offer of support from Government, I do feel that the Rural Strategy, as it is, is aimed fairly and squarely at any environmental proposals, and the farmers and growers of the Island are virtually ignored, unless they want to plant a wood, or make footpath trails across their land.

There is no assistance to help with actual growing and food production and this leaves Jersey growers disadvantaged in comparison with all other growers in Europe. Jersey growers are not seeking handouts, but need a level playing field if they are to compete with foreign (and even British) products and this has not been provided for a number of years now.

Jersey farmers and growers are the guardians of the countryside, that your Department is so eager to protect from the developers, but if the grower can no longer make a living from his land, what options is he left with when he still has bills to pay and a family to keep?

Is the Department aware of the benefits of local produce, not only shipped to the UK, but also sold locally? There are negligible food miles, the product is fresher and more nutritious as a result, and the money stays in the Island. If there is no support (and not just financial) to keep local growers growing, the island will lose its growing community, we will be at the mercy of the supermarkets that will bring in foreign produce (priced to take account of freight and the lack of local competition) and Jersey consumers will have no choice but to accept it.

Schemes such as the RIS and CRS are worthy, but offer no real help to Jersey growers that want to continue growing, but only offer help with 'environmental' alternatives. I certainly think schemes worthy, but would appreciate a more rounded approach with more assistance and support given to growers for actual growing.

Horticulture, which was the bed rock of the economy in the past, is now at an all time low. The export of hot house salad crops ie tomatoes and peppers terminated last year due to low returns and extortionate energy costs together with the withdrawal of any Government assistance. The same can be said for the flower industry where again there is now a

very limited selection of flower varieties being grown. For those still growing for local trade ie Genuine Jersey the market again is becoming increasingly difficult for a number of reasons.

The major influence is the increase in floorspace of British Multiples, ie Marks and Spencers who source no produce locally at all, with the exception of Jersey milk and butter. The more units that are opened the less opportunity there is to sell locally. There is little point in being asked to grow when that market share is reducing annually. We are also seeing a large reduction in the local wholesale arena with less tourists coming to the Island and therefore a drop in consumption of produce through less meals being served. Any crop that is grown for local consumption also needs to be available on a regular basis, be of consistent quality and available to customers day in day out thus ensuring reliability and continuity. Therefore any crop has to be grown on a large enough scale to fulfil these criteria.

It would appear though that there is little incentive from government to maintain a horticultural industry other than the potato crop. The Dairy industry is heavily subsidised and if I recall rightly when Government closed down the Glasshouse Industry with the last Review, the Dairy Industry was supposed to become more efficient and the price of milk was targeted to drop to 78p a litre from 92p—the exact opposite has materialised. There also appears to be support for livestock or the meat industry but again the last Review, which pushed for a larger meat industry still remains largely unviable and sporadic even with Government assistance.

We here at Fauvic Nurseries have evolved from a business based more or less entirely on export to a diverse production unit with a retail arm through our FarmShop, 'HolmeGrown'.

The business over the last five years has been rationalised and we are now producers of a large salad, herb and plant range (please see enclosed Appendix), together with our own Bakery producing an extensive range of products for consumption through the shop or our own Café, direct to on site customers, whom are for the most part local, and very loyal.

We have future development plans presently with Planning and have also been working with Jersey Enterprise with expansion ideas to incorporate eco friendly green projects on more of the site which at present is covered by 40 year old un economic glass. These are all contained in what is collectively known as the Jonathan Rounce Report.

The question I am posing with regard to the Rural Strategy Review is really quite simple:

Does Government want an Industry that is alive and active, creating employment together with retaining horticultural skills and utilising redundant assets in a manner and direction that is in tune with 2010 and beyond?

If so I wait with bated breath for the Department's updated Strategy

Yours faithfully,

W. Stanley Payn