

STATES OF JERSEY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BLAMPIED ROOM, STATES BUILDING

<u>Present:</u>	Deputy Rob Duhamel (Review Chairman)
	Deputy Gerard Baudains
	Senator Jean Le Maistre
	Deputy Phil Rondel
	Deputy Bob Hill
<u>In attendance:</u>	Dr Janet Dwyer

EVIDENCE FROM:

The National Trust for Jersey

Mr. Charles Alluto

on

Thursday, 15th July 2004

(12:30:43 to 17:12:37)

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EVIDENCE OF CHARLES ALLUTO
(THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR JERSEY)

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Thank you for attending. I have to read you this before we start. It is important that you fully understand the conditions under which you are appearing at this hearing. You will find a printed copy of the statement I am about to read on the table in front of you.

Shadow Scrutiny Panels have been established by the States to create opportunities for training States Members and Officers in developing new skills in advance of the proposed changes of government. During the shadow period, the Panel has no statutory powers and the proceedings at public hearings are not covered by Parliamentary privilege. This means that anyone participating, whether a Panel Member or a person giving evidence, is not protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during hearings. The Panel would like you to bear this in mind when answering questions and to ensure that you understand that you are fully responsible for any comments you make.

MR ALLUTO: Okay.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: So you have been warned.

MR ALLUTO: Right.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. I would like to start the questioning, if I may.

The Agri-Environment Scheme, as you know, was not funded and, as a consequence, it means that none of the elements other than those that have some other statutory provision, like the Noxious Weed Laws or things like that, or some of the funding that is still available through Planning and Environment for roadside walls, banks and hedges, none of the monies have

been forthcoming. In that respect, bearing in mind the proposals put forward in the Agri-Environment Scheme, which of the key elements of it have given your association most cause for worry in that they haven't been able to be implemented?

MR ALLUTO: I think one of our main concerns is the degradation of the countryside and I think we consciously aware of how the landscape is not being appropriately managed and that, without a scheme such as the Agri-Environment Scheme, this is likely to continue. You talked of roadside banks and walls, but my understanding is that in fact there is very little funding available in that respect, and also the hedgerows that we see throughout the Island are not appropriately managed for the benefit of wildlife or for the benefit of landscape.

The other key issue, I think, is measures to reduce nitrates and control of nitrates in the water supply. I think that is of concern across the board. That is obviously of concern to the Trust as well. We would also like to have seen some measures to reduce the intensification of current farming practices, especially regarding grazing intensification and also we would like to see diversification as opposed to the monoculture that we currently have.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: In view of the fact that it was never intended under the scheme to actually provide 100% funding but only 10% in that respect incentives towards the various initiatives ----

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: 90%.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Sorry, 90%. Yes, well ----

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: 10% being the contribution from the scheme.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: That is right, and 90% from the farmers. I am speaking as a States Member. Does your organisation actually feel that the monies intended were sufficient in order to bring about the reforms that were called for?

MR ALLUTO: I think it is questionable. I think, in an ideal world, they would have provided 100%. It depends whether the farmer felt there would have been other benefits than purely financial by taking up parts of the scheme. There were choices available to them, so they would have had to make those judgments as to whether they wanted to contribute or otherwise. But in an ideal world 100% of course would have been covered.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. Panel Members?

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: I will probably kick off.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Senator Le Maistre?

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: I know that you are fairly well acquainted with the scheme as was proposed. You have mentioned the nitrates issue, obviously, and that kind of thing, but can you describe any of the components of the scheme which you felt were actually most important, recognising that there were many options? Were there elements which you, as an organisation, felt were of key importance to the environmental gain that would have been delivered?

MR ALLUTO: Well, I think, if we are talking about improving water quality, there is the fact of how nitrates are applied. There were measures in there to improve the application of nitrates and also the slurry storage and I think those would have had a dramatic improvement. I think one of the concerns is that slurry storage will have to be improved and, if the industry is going to be

asked to pay for that, then are we going to lose further people out of the industry, because it will require substantial investment and they will be required to do it under the Water Regulations? So I think those were important ways of achieving two aims: of supporting the industry and also of improving the environment. Also, proposals for improved storage of pesticides and such like are all extremely important. There are some parts of the scheme which are perhaps less so. If you look at the planting of apple orchards, for example, that is a nice idea, but it is not necessarily of such environmental importance as other parts of the scheme.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Would it not be important if land isn't going to be farmed, but could have actually been used for that kind of purpose? Isn't that important in that sense?

MR ALLUTO: It is, but it could also be argued, I think, that parts of the scheme looks at buffer zones and also looked at more extensive grazing. If those two elements were introduced across the board, they may well take up a lot of the surplus land that was available. If we are going to encourage people to plant apple orchards, I think we have to look at what we are actually going to do with the apples at the end of it once the orchards have become established and whether there is a market for them and also ensure that people are tied into the scheme. You really need to be very long term when you are looking at something like that, because otherwise they could be planting orchards and then grubbing them up 10 years later. So you need to tie people in for long term. So I think there are practical problems potentially with that element of the scheme.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: My understanding -- sorry to come in -- was that there were positive proposals from people like La Mare and others, and in fact they have gone into partnership with one or two established orchards with -- I do not know if it is guaranteed -- but certainly an indication that they will take the produce, but that is as an aside.

MR ALLUTO: Yes, but you have to tie those elements. Also orchards happen to have, in terms of wildlife value, considerable value. A comparison is, I think, second to oak tree woodland.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Really? Hmm.

MR ALLUTO: Yes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: What do you see as the most serious implication of not actually implementing the scheme, both as a landowner and as a trust which obviously has an environmental focus?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): It is very difficult to look into the future and see, you know ----

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Let me rephrase it actually, just to help you perhaps. What would you see as being the evidence of a scheme not being implemented, in terms of land which is not used, land which isn't farmed -- that is one element -- and, of course, on the side of the land which is farmed? Are there aspects of that which you believe would be important if the scheme was not to go ahead?

MR ALLUTO: I think, if you don't invest in the countryside, I think one important point is that there seems to be some confusion, from my general observations, that investing in agricultural is investing in the countryside and I think they are not. I think they are very distinct. Investing in agriculture is

actually helping, subsidising industry, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the care of the countryside follows through from that. But people are putting the two together and I think that's a great pity. We need to clearly separate that. You know, investing in the support of the finance industry is not going to help the fabric of St Helier, for example. Do you know what I mean? You have to separate the two. If we don't invest in the countryside, then farmers will have to look at their core business. They will have to look at where they are making money and the sort of luxury items, such as hedgerow management, looking after stone walls, having buffer zones, improving the wildlife value of the land and improving access will just be put to one side, and that is totally acceptable if you looking at it from a business point of view. There is no incentive for them to look after those elements. So I think we will get a much more corporate farming industry, which is much more economically driven and I think, as a result of that, our landscape could suffer. You know, the big boys as such here in the industry will have to cope with increased demands in terms of regulations, slurry storage and nitrate pollution etc., but they will not necessarily look after the elements which we particularly wish to see.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Okay. Thank you.

DEPUTY RONDEL: If I could come in, Chairman?

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Yes.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Over the last several days of interviews we have come across a whole host of different views on the countryside. In fact, The National Trust has come up and has been highlighted on a couple of occasions. Can you tell me actually how many associations you are actually involved with, and I am referring ... I will give a couple of ideas: shall we say the

Landowners' Association and the Environmental Forum, for instance. I am not sure if you are involved them or not, but how many of those, shall we say, are cross fertilised within your association?

MR ALLUTO: I sit on the Jersey Environment Forum. I also sit as a committee member of Men of the Trees and ... what else are we involved in? (Pause) Obviously, you know, we work closely with such associations as The Soci  t  , Heritage Trust and other key organisations where we have an interest. We also were represented on the Countryside Panel before that became defunct.

DEPUTY RONDEL: And how many acres, verges of land are you responsible for within The National Trust?

MR ALLUTO: I think we are currently managing just over 2% of the Island, which I think amounts to 2,000 verges, around that sort of figure. We have got approximately over 140 various sites, but obviously they vary in size quite dramatically.

DEPUTY RONDEL: I am sure. And how many staff would you be employing within your group, The National Trust in Jersey?

MR ALLUTO: Well, within The National Trust we employ 12 full-time staff. Of that, on the land side we have five staff -- four rangers and a lands manager -- and some part-time staff.

DEPUTY RONDEL: So , therefore, they would be involved in land management more so than in farming practices?

MR ALLUTO: Yes, pretty much, although obviously we manage certain meadowland, such as Le Noir Pr   as opposed to it being tenanted, but

obviously we strive to tenant out our farmland because obviously that keeps our costs down.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Where your land is tenanted out, what within the lease of the land ... are there any specific areas where you do not allow certain chemicals to be put on that land? Are there any ... what I am trying to say is I am trying to get out of you what conditions are put on the land when you lease it to farmers?

MR ALLUTO: It is getting increasingly difficult to put conditions on because farmers are being more reluctant to take up the land, and that would have been a value of the Agri-Environment Scheme, in that we could have promoted certain elements. But the land at St Ouen's, for example, around the pond, that is all organic and nothing, no herbicides or pesticides are allowed to be put on to that land because of its very high ecological value. On some of our other farmland which isn't of such high ecological value, then we probably would not have objections to that being planted in the normal way, although obviously we try and make recommendations about hedgerow management and also encourage field margins. But I think as an organisation we have a lot of work to do in that direction, but the Agri-Environment Scheme would have helped us in that respect.

DEPUTY RONDEL: You mentioned St Ouen's pond, which is obviously an SSI. Given the pollution from the airports, fire training ground etc, what damage has been done to the environment of the pond?

MR ALLUTO: We are not certain, to be honest. We did try and obtain quite a bit of information from the airport, but it was quite difficult to obtain

information in that respect. So I don't think I can really give a judgment on what damage may have been done to the pond by that pollution.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Thank you, Chairman.

DEPUTY HILL: Can I just extend a little bit about percentages etc? In your submission, you say also that about 70% of agricultural land is being rented on a short term lease. Are you able to give us any evidence of that fact, because I think what we are doing, as a result of our communication with people like yourself, is picking up quite a lot of anecdotal evidence. Have you actually got anything, any written evidence, to substantiate the claim that 70% is being rented, because I think there is a common perception that a lot of land is farmed by people who don't own it, they rent it, so how do you arrive at that 70%?

MR ALLUTO: I think that was derived from the OPM Report.

DEPUTY HILL: Yes.

MR ALLUTO: We don't keep figures ourselves, so the assumption is that OPM looked into it and they are the correct figures.

DEPUTY HILL: At present, we seem to be one of the few places that do a number of things the Jersey way. One is that we don't have an agri-environmental scheme and also we have conditions on our land, obviously planning conditions. Do you see any need to change those conditions, whereby it might free up the right for people to do more so what they would with the land rather than the conditions that are imposed now?

MR ALLUTO: Yes. I think you have to be careful. There is the issue of retaining the land bank. If we reduce the land bank in terms of what is available to agriculture, then we run the danger of land rentals increasing and

intensity going up because the farmers will obviously have to make their money somehow, so the farming practices will become intensive again. Whereas, I suppose, our position would be that everything should become far more extensive, and that will only occur if there is spare land available and rentals have come down. So I think that is where you have to be careful.

However, there is the other argument as to whether it should be restricted, I think, to bona fide farmers. It can create a bit of a closed feel to the industry, I think, by having that restriction. I think, in England, the Currier Report stated that 50% of the land is farmed by part-time farmers and they only produce 3% in terms of produce, but they have a key rôle to play in managing the countryside. The question is whether in fact part-time farmers in Jersey couldn't also have that rôle and whether the bona fide law gives the wrong impression in that respect.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: You mentioned woodland and orchards. I am interested to know how would your organisation, if being asked to grade or rank in terms of amenity value, biological diversity and, of course, environmental value, climax woodland as opposed to farm land?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): Well, they both have values. I think a lot of our biodiversity is based on traditional agricultural usage. So we have to take account of that. There is obviously a great deal of value in woodland, but Jersey has not had an extensive history of woodland. There has always been a scarcity of wood in the Island. So I think we would probably want to see existing woodland areas extended as opposed to perhaps creating new woodland areas without some logical plan behind it really. I think you do

have to be careful. There is scope for it, but I think you have to take account of what the Jersey landscape is about in those plans.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Can I come in on the back of that? What is your view on planting trees as a crop for the future?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): It has some potential, but I don't think a huge potential because I think the size of the Island prevents that. I think you have to be realistic. You know, when we took about hill crops and such like, I just wonder how realistic those concepts are, given the size of the Island. They are obviously worth examining, but I would be slightly cautious.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Given that we have some very wealthy landowners over here, who are in some cases not interested in turnovers, by putting down a tree crop which we could give a return in two or three generations time, would there not be merit in that?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): Potentially there is merit in it. I think I would want to examine it in a lot more detail as to what you are seeking to achieve really. I suppose, if you were looking at furniture production and you were looking at sort of niche industries and you were growing very good quality wood, then I could see a potential there, but I don't see very much potential in sort of bog standard woodland.

DEPUTY RONDEL: If I can come in again then, as one of the biggest landowners in the Island, if not the biggest, other than the States of Jersey, and you did say earlier, I think, that you were finding it difficult to put conditions on National Trust land to farmers, would your association not consider the alternative whereby you would actually put land down long term for tree planting?

MR ALLUTO: Well, we have done. We planted a hazel coppice in les Vallee des Vaux very, very recently. But, as I say, that is within a woodland environment. We are also potentially going to be gifted some land, again in les Vallee des Vaux, which is currently rough grazing land and it would be our intention to plant that up into woodland. And some of the meadow areas which are proving difficult in terms of long term management and which were probably woodland previously then obviously we will consider planting those up. But we very much see it as extending existing woodland areas as opposed to creating new woodlands. You know, the agricultural environment does have a great value and I don't think we necessarily always appreciate that value in terms of our biodiversity. It's a bit like the sail bunting has now practically disappeared from the Island and they are one of the great rarities in the south of England and great efforts are being made to increase, try and increase and safeguard the population of sail buntings, whereas we have done nothing in Jersey to stop that. I think we should also, you know, look very carefully at what we have already got and seek ways to improve that and safeguard that.

The meadows, Jersey's meadows were once covered in Jersey Orchids apparently, and we now have two meadowland areas in the Island where we find the Jersey Orchid. That is because of bad management. That is because of drainage. That is because of intensification.

DEPUTY RONDEL: In recent times there has been a move to get land released for horses and the equestrian industry. What is your view and does any of your land actually fall into this area?

MR ALLUTO: Some of it is grazed by horses. I think grazing by horses is not as good unfortunately, in terms of biodiversity, as grazing by cattle or sheep. However, if you have a sufficient land area for horse grazing where it doesn't become too intense, then there can be a value in it. What we need to ensure is that they are not restricted on that area of land and they are not grazing it too heavily or turning it over. That is the issue really. But cattle and sheep are the ideal.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Sheep having only been reintroduced in the last 30 years to the Island, apart from a little herd at Five Oaks of 20 or so, do you see that is the way forward?

MR ALLUTO: I think sheep potentially have a rôle to play as long as you have support to buy local lamb, because the wool is not really going to give you much to that extent. But we do have a lot of marginal areas which are becoming very much overrun by bracken, and I think sheep could have a key rôle improving the environmental quality of those areas, but one of the expenses of sheep grazing is appropriate fencing. So we then face the issue of who is going to invest in the fencing and how we are going to bring that about, because obviously, once again, you need extensive areas and not small areas, so you need large amounts of fencing, which is quite a substantial input for a farmer to invest in. Returns are not going to be that great, but it could have a rôle to play.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Therefore, if landowners who are currently exempt because of the purchasing law on land were to be ... if the exemptions could be lifted or raised or altered in any way, where a landowner who had 30, 40 or

50 verges of land wished to have that land grazed with sheep, you would be supportive or not, just to have the conditions altered accordingly?

MR ALLUTO: In principle, I would be supportive, but I would once again stress the need to safeguard the land bank. So if it is a marginal area it is not going to be an issue, but I think I would be very much supportive. It would also allow a new person to come into the industry and, you know, some diversification and also local produce being made available, which are all positive things.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Could we look at management of land which is not being farmed? You obviously either have or may have some experience in the future for this as a trust because of the drop in land used by farmers. What view do you take on what I see as the present situation, whereby we have the spread of docks, thistles and ragwort and so on? Do you view that as a concern or is it just part and parcel of land going back to nature, as it has been said? Does it occur on your land, or do you see land which is a threat because it is not being managed etc?

MR ALLUTO: Potentially, if you have got ... if we just take ragwort, for example, and that is growing on land which has been largely abandoned but you have got farmland adjacent to it which is being actively farmed, then you have a problem because the ragwort will end up in the field next door. So it can cause issues. We are spending a lot of time at the moment trying to control ragwort because we don't like to use herbicides, so we are trying to pull it and it takes a lot of man management to do that. So there could potentially be issues there. But there can also be a value in set aside, which is a well established principle in the UK and there could be a value in allowing

certain areas to revert back, but you have to strike some form of reasonable balance, I think. I don't think it's an issue we should panic over. I would much sooner see a few fields abandoned and we accept that, as opposed to suddenly saying "Well, these areas should be developed because they are not being used appropriately."

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: No, I am not talking about development, I am talking about managing. For example, if you go down to the end of St Ouen's Bay at the moment, you will see what I would call a dramatic change compared to five or six years ago. Now, that was land which was grazed, rough grazing, and, of course, at that time the management that was essential really for grazing cattle was to remove ragwort as an example. That clearly hasn't happened. I think I just wonder, and I ask the question, can one look in a small island, as it is done in the UK, where areas are large and vast and so if they leave the ragwort it is only going to affect that area? But surely in a small area like Jersey ragwort will overtake or take over in a short time?

MR ALLUTO: It could well do that. They have got severe problems in the UK. I think also, I suppose, one of the interesting areas where we have got comparison is Alderney, where the land there was allowed to revert back to scrub for a long period of time until someone put some money into, once again establishing a dairy herd over there. It was seen that the wildlife value would be enhanced if the dairy herd was to be established and the land was appropriately managed. So I think, in the long term, we would like to see land managed appropriately, but there are some marginal areas, such as on the north coast, for example, where if they revert to bracken it's not really going to cause a huge problem. It is a bit like at the barracks, all the land behind the

barracks was potato land. That has now completely reverted to bracken and it is not a problem. So, you know, I think you have to make judgments as to the quality of the land and what you are seeking to do really.

DEPUTY RONDEL: You have confused me. Are you saying the barracks at Les Landes?

MR ALLUTO: Sorry, no the barracks at Grève de Iecq. All the cõtils behind the barracks were potato land, but if you look at them today, they are just covered in bracken and some sycamore. So they have reverted and it's not causing any issues to anyone. I mean, there is no ragwort problem up there, but, you know, if you have got grazed land which was being quite heavily grazed and then you leave it, there is a problem that ragwort can become established quite quickly.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: And meadows, for example? I mean, we are looking at agri-environment as an aid to management. Really the question should be, do you have any concerns about the environmental issues in terms of meadowland and open land -- whether it is coastal or inland does not matter -- if the environment scheme is not brought into being and funded?

MR ALLUTO: Meadowland is deteriorating quite dramatically. One only has to look in St Peter's Valley for an example of how meadowland can deteriorate. If you look at the top meadow, just opposite The Victoria pub, you will see a well grazed meadow there that is looked after well and you will see a rich diversity of flora. If you go further up the meadow, all you will see is nettle and hemlock and totally overgrown, and the wildlife value is limited. So that can show you what difference it makes. Under the scheme, there would have been measures to assist with meadow management and that is a

great missed opportunity. Our meadows definitely could be one of the most florally rich areas in the Island if appropriate managed. You only have to see that in Le Noir Pré. It is treated as a traditional hay meadow and it has a huge variety of flowers in that meadow and wildlife value. We have started on the Sir Francis Le Sueur Field, trying to manage that in a similar way and already this year we have seen 20 orchids where there were potatoes. So it can be done and it would improve the way that the Island looks and the interest from some tourists that we get in the Island.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Do you think that element is not generally understood by the population, because there doesn't appear to be a huge public concern. There are a number of people expressing concern, but there doesn't seem to me public engagement in those sort of areas -- St Peter's Valley being a classic -- where a lot of people pass there every day, but you don't get any comments about it, so do you think it is generally not understood?

MR ALLUTO: I think that is the case. I think that if people thought that it could look like the meadows at Le Noir Pré, then they might take a different view.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Yes.

MR ALLUTO: You know, we had, I don't know, 240/300 people down on the open day in the orchid fields, so the interest is there, but I don't think people realise the potential and don't necessarily see that it is not being managed as well as it could be. It is funny, but people go round in cars, don't they, the majority of the time and what people notice is about the roadside banks being damaged and the hedgerows are poor because that is what they see of the countryside. They don't necessarily see the heart of the countryside.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: If I could come in there just to express a personal view, I think that the public lump it altogether in an overall view that the Island is in decline. They wouldn't specifically mention a meadow or something of that nature.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: Yes. With the introduction of guest birds like pheasants into the Island, do you believe that is good or bad for the environment?

MR ALLUTO: The introduction of non-native species is not a good thing. That is all I need to say really. They are here at the moment. You will have to decide how you wish to control them.

DEPUTY RONDEL: My second question is historically, as a youngster, I used to see glow worms and the like on the hedgerows in many parts of the Island. Very few of them are seen today, obviously caused because of various chemicals being put on the land has killed most of them off. This is going back to my earlier question of what controls you actually put in your leases to your tenants about what chemicals can be used on the land.

MR ALLUTO: As I say, it depends on the area. At St Ouen's no chemicals can be put on the land. At The Elms half the land is organic and currently under the remit of Ag & Fish as was and the other half is treated in a sympathetic way, but it is not organic. However, we have said that they cannot, for example, use any herbicides or pesticides along the extreme edge and along the meadows. They are not allowed to re-sow those meadows. They are just left alone.

But I think one of the values of the Agri-Environmental Scheme would have been to have introduced buffer zones and also enabled the hedgerows to

actually widen out than they are at the current time. If you look at them at the moment, they are like **this** because they are being cut on the one side because of the road and then the farmers are going as far as they can towards the other side to get their crop. So you end up with a hedgerow like **this**, which compromises its value completely and also becomes vulnerable to wind damage and such like. So margins would have been a great thing because you wouldn't have been able to spray any insecticides or pesticides along those margins. It would have provided a valuable wildlife border as such and it would have allowed hedgerows to be developed more appropriately. The other thing also is to encourage farmers not to cut hedgerows on internal land as often as they do at the current time and to actually leave them for two or three years, which the Agri-Environmental Scheme could also have promoted and achieved.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Is there bramble issues? Sorry to pick up on that, but is there a bramble issue here because what I perceive to happen is if you leave hedgerows for two or three years you actually get brambles taking over. In the rich soil that lies at the bottom, they do thrive. So is that an issue maybe? That is not management, is it, really?

MR ALLUTO: It is not. Obviously, you can cut that. The issue is not to ... you can cut the buffer zones that you have. The issue is not to turn them over or to put insecticides or pesticides, but it has to be said that brambles do actually have more ecological value in themselves, so the humble bramble can actually be of benefit. It is also a supply of food.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: And couch grass as well?

MR ALLUTO: Couch grass probably not so good. You know, I don't think ... the Agri-Environmental Scheme doesn't encourage abandonment of the land, it encourages management of the land in a different way, which I think is important. You are not going to pay a farmer simply to abandon it; you are going to pay them to manage it in a way which will increase the diversity and improve the flora and the fauna.

DEPUTY RONDEL: The reinstatement of hedges. In the sixties and seventies, we saw a lot of hedges taken out to make these larger fields. Would you encourage the reinstatement of hedges or cuts in lay hedges as historically was done by our ancestors, or not?

MR ALLUTO: Absolutely. Hedges are a chief wildlife corridor and they are essential. They also obviously provide shelter for the fields. I think what you are going to be faced with though is applications to actually remove them because the larger farms will want economy of scale and efficiency, but undoubtedly hedgerows are probably one of the key landscape features in the whole of our Island and it would be a crying shame if they got any further removed or deteriorated any further. They are in a poor way. If you look at any of the reports that have been submitted, whether it be by OPM or the Countryside Character Appraisal, all these reports highlight the poor quality of our hedgerows, so it is not just Jersey people making these judgments.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Thank you.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Dr Dwyer?

DR DWYER: Right. Very, very clear and well reasoned arguments, both in your written submission and today. I would like you direct a bit of that clear and sound reasoning to reflecting a little bit, if you don't mind, on why the

scheme has failed to get funding and where you think the failures might have been in respect of the process. Obviously I don't want to put you in a compromising position, but I would be interested in your view.

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): I think the scheme may have failed because it was tied in with the whole overview, I think, or the view of the agricultural industry in Jersey and it wasn't sufficiently separated from what was happening in the rest of the industry and the political view of the industry at that time. I think there is, as I have said earlier, confusion between investing in agricultural and investing in the countryside, and I don't think there was sufficient effort made to make that distinguishment between the two.

Also, in a sense, the farming industry does suffer from a lack of cohesion and they can argue amongst themselves, and I think this does not help the cause very much. I think if the whole farming industry had got behind the scheme and said "Yes, we want this and we want support for it", then that may well have helped it along the way, but there wasn't really that support coming from the industry, which I think is a great pity.

DR DWYER: And in some of the evidence that we have submitted there has been a suggestion that, particularly on the sort of pollution side of things, a completely alternative way of trying to tackle these issues should be by the "big stick" rather than by the "carrot". I wondered if you could advance any arguments as to what your opinion on that is?

MR ALLUTO: I think, with all these things, you want to work with an industry, you don't want to work against it. Yes, you can apply the big stick, but I think you will just get government and the industry grating against each other really. I think the whole idea, because the industry has such an

important rôle, I think, to play in managing our countryside, is that you want to work with them and see how we can achieve solutions which satisfy both parties. You know, government has always taken quite a strong rôle in agriculture. It would be nice for it to take a strong rôle in encouraging a different type of agriculture, but I think that should be done in a way which respects that people have got a business to run, they have got to make money and we have got to take account of that. We can't just sort of say to industry "You have got to do this, that and that or otherwise." I think you will get more smallholders coming out of the industry if you take that approach.

DR DWYER: Thank you very much.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: Yes. An area we haven't touched on is pond construction and also grey water. What are your views, or your association's views, on ponds, i.e., whether they are ponds or reservoir construction?

MR ALLUTO: Once again, ponds can be a very valuable wildlife habitat. However, it depends on the size of the pond. You will probably know that we objected to the creation of a large pond down at Seymour Sand, but they can have a value and also the way reservoirs are constructed, if appropriately constructed, with planting along the fringe of the pond, they can have a beneficial value. So are not against the principle of increasing the amount of ponds in the Island in that respect.

DEPUTY RONDEL: And the recycling of grey water on the land?

MR ALLUTO: That is a huge benefit. Jersey has a restricted amount of water. We have seen one valley flooded to try and meet that need, but there are very little measures, it appears to me, being put in place to safeguard our water

supply. With the proposals for an increased population, the water supply will be put under further pressure. So anywhere we can recycle it seems to me a considerable benefit as a whole.

DEPUTY RONDEL: So you could not have any concerns about any hormones that may be found in grey water?

MR ALLUTO: That is something you will need to look at, but, in principle, the idea is good, but you would obviously need to check as to the quality of the water that you were producing. We are in quite a bizarre position, where we are diluting our own water at the moment. I'm not sure it can get any worse. It can only get better perhaps. Not many islands or many places in the world dilute their water.

DR DWYER: Can you just explain that so that we have got it as evidence?

MR ALLUTO: Oh right. Well, the concept that we have to use the desalination plant to blend our water so as to reduce the nitrate levels.

DR DWYER: Because Jersey's own water is ----

MR ALLUTO: Yes, the nitrate levels are too high.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: On a slightly different issue, the States agreed a new Strategic Plan 2005-2010 just recently and, within it, under Strategic Aim Chapter 4, it does actually indicate the promotion of Jersey's environment as one of its most important assets and also within the specific aims there are things such as withdrawal of production led subsidiaries for agriculture, development of environmental impact and rural enterprise initiatives, diversified land use which ensures protection of green land and increase in the proportion of publicly accessible lands. Now, in view of those titles overlapping quite heavily with some of the aims and objectives of the previous

Agri-Environmental Scheme, to what extent do you see the failure of the States in not funding the 2002 scheme perhaps actually being not as detrimental as it might have been had the new strategic aims not been as forthcoming as they appear to be?

MR ALLUTO: The first thing I would say is that obviously the Trust is an apolitical organisation, so I am slightly reluctant to get involved in too much of the political debate. However, I thought this question might come up and I thought it was worth just looking perhaps at the policies that were already in place, but that does not seem to have had any impact on the support of an agri-environment scheme, because in the Jersey into the Millennium Sustainability Strategy an agri-environment scheme is mentioned and a biodiversity strategy and agri-environmental scheme is mentioned in the Environmental Charter 1996, which was to promote sustainable methods in agriculture and countryside management. One would have thought that entails an agri-environment scheme. In the Island Plan, policy C1, C2, C8, C10, C11, C14 and C15, all relate to an agri-environment scheme. In the Countryside Character Appraisal it is mentioned several times, in the McQueen Report it is also mentioned on the advantage of having an agri-environment scheme and throughout the OPM report there is a strong recommendation for the establishment of an agri-environment scheme. Even all three scenarios that are outlined in that report envisage the establishment of an agri-environment scheme. So my answer is I'm not certain whether the new strategy will help establish an agri-environment scheme.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Could you explain why?

MR ALLUTO: But it would appear that the previous policies haven't succeeded in that respect. I think perhaps we are very good at formulating policy, but not necessarily very good at checking that they are getting implemented.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. Thank you.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: If I can just come in there?

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Senator Le Maistre.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: If I can just raise one question which we did ask of the landowners? Have you any figures on the cost of management of land, because obviously you are in the land management business rather than in production of crops. As such, your crop production is tenanted land, you know, so the rôle of the Trust is very much to manage the land which you are usually the recipients of as the result of a bequest or something. I know that some of that land is cõtils probably and, you know, land which just needs a very light touch, if anything at all. But on the land which is in greater need of effort, do you have any costings which could be useful to us in terms of land which is not farmed which actually needs some input which you obviously have to put in yourselves? Le Noir Pré, for example, is probably an example.

MR ALLUTO: Yes. We could cost for you what we spend annually at Le Noir Pré or something for managing that area as a hay meadow. However, it is very difficult to sort of give figures as to what it costs us to manage all of our land, although approximately I can say to you that we must spend over 150,000 a year in managing our land at the current time. But, as you say, a lot of that land is marginal land, woodland and it goes across the board, so we can be, you know, cutting trees, dealing with problems when we have bad weather,

dealing with the public and all sorts of issues, so it is quite difficult to put a specific cost as to what, you know, the exact management is. But, you know, really you are looking at 2% we are managing and it is costing us 150,000, but a lot of that is marginal land, the greater majority.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: But it would be not unreasonable perhaps to have some deduction in terms of the cost and to project that if the Island was 30%, for example, not farmed. You know, one could assume certain elements that there would be a mix among farm land as well. So I think the reason I am asking the question is that you are probably the only organisation that one could look to to get some kind of steer as to what it actually is costing. Perhaps I ought to follow it up by asking whether you feel that your management level is as high -- maybe it is an obvious answer, but is as high -- as it could be.

MR ALLUTO: No, it could be higher. There are some areas that we don't deal with at the moment. They could be better managed than they are currently, but we have to make a compromise because we have got limited funding. There is no desire on our part at the moment to extend our staff, but there is definitely a lot of work out there.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Yes.

MR ALLUTO: We also suffer from the fact that, even in a small island, our battle fronts are fragmented, so this increases our costs, much as any farmer will tell you as well.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: And maybe one could, perhaps if you could obtain the figures for the land which you don't have to have a considerable input in, such as the cõtils and the coastal cõtils and so on, which require very little as a percentage of the 2% -- you know, it could be a half or it could be a third or

whatever -- that will also give us a feel. I mean, it can't be precise, can it? I mean, it is just one of those ----

MR ALLUTO: It can't be, but we could give you a number of sites which are of a different habitat type and let you know the sort of money that we spend on that each year.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Thank you.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: Yes. Are you happy with the way the farmers currently look after our countryside?

MR ALLUTO: No.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Can you enlarge on that?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): I don't like the intensification; I don't like the lack of diversity; I don't like the hedgerow management; and I don't like the way that it is slowly becoming degraded in terms of the quality of the landscape. All those things I find to be of concern, but I don't necessarily put the blame at the farmer's door. I think that is what I want to stress. I think the economic situation is a key to it. I don't believe that a rich farmer will necessarily manage his land any better than a poor farmer. I think it was argued at one stage that if farmers were all earning wonderful livings then they would manage it better, but I don't actually believe in that. I think you do need incentive and I think that is why the Agri-Environment Scheme would have helped.

DEPUTY RONDEL: "*Degrading the quality of the landscape*". What do you mean?

MR ALLUTO: Just, if you look at around, you will see that the hedgerows have been totally removed to create larger fields like for grazing or for potato growing; the fact that, you know, the entrance ways into the fields are being hammered all the time and new entrance ways are being created without looking at possibly increasing the old ones. It is not really respecting the landscape as such; it is simply going in there to grow a crop and get a profit out of it. That is not to say that all farmers are like that, but some are driven in that respect and that does have an impact. Or if you see a field that has been too heavily grazed, for example, and the cows haven't been moved on and then that is not good to see either. If we look at the meadows in St Peter's, I'm not sure, but some of those I don't think are owned at all by farmers, but it's a pity to see that meadowland, you know, looking in such a bad state.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Thank you very much.

DR DWYER: One very small point on that and that is the potential. You talked about the potential of an agri-environment scheme to benefit the environment of Jersey. I wonder, given the experience of the other National Trust over the water, whether you had any particular views on the potential that goes beyond just benefits for the environment but benefits for Jersey as a whole in relation to what would come out of the scheme?

MR ALLUTO: Well, I think one of the objectives of the scheme, for example, is improved access and that obviously can have benefits for tourism. But it also has, I think, benefits for the public as a whole. If the public are being asked to invest in the countryside, then obviously they should be allowed to see their investment, I feel. So access could have a great deal of ways of

bringing people into the countryside and giving them a greater appreciation of what the countryside is about.

What other elements were there in the scheme? Also, you know, we talked about orchards. If there is a viability for the apples, then obviously you are getting diversification. You could get new rural enterprise and you could breathe new life into the countryside and start to get away from simply these two industries of cows and potatoes. Once again, you could get that with sheep grazing, more extensive grazing. So the countryside could in fact become more interesting than it is at the moment. You know, in January the countryside particularly is not very interesting, it has to be said. You know, it is covered in plastic and this scheme could breathe new life into it and make it a much more interesting and a much more appreciated place really for the Island as a whole.

DEPUTY HILL: If I could just come in on that one? I was going to say earlier that we don't have an agri-environment scheme. We don't ... there is nothing intended for the future if we are looking at the funding. What steps do you think the Island should take to enhance or protect and enhance our countryside without any money coming in, being forthcoming?

MR ALLUTO: (After a pause): Obviously you can encourage. I think I gave a talk at the West Show and a farmer said to me "Oh but we're already doing those things", so perhaps some farmers are being encouraged to go along that line anyway. I think you can try and encourage, but the success rate of that I am not certain what it will be. It is very difficult. You know, the industry as a whole made dramatic savings recently. It seems a pity to me that those savings weren't rediverted into the Agri-Environment Scheme, but that

wasn't to be. You know, it is a bizarre situation, hence why we are all here looking at it.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Any final questions from the Panel? Right. Would you like to make a closing statement or comment?

MR ALLUTO: I just wish you luck really. I think it is very good that this topic has been particularly highlighted, in that the States have supported a policy but not come up with the funding. So I think that one would hope that this Scrutiny Committee highlights that as an issue and one would hope that perhaps greater thought was given to supporting policies and the financial implications of those policies as opposed to just supporting them and then giving little regard to what happens to them in the future.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. In that case, on behalf of the Panel, I would like to thank you for your submission and your comments and thank you for attending.

MR ALLUTO: Thank you.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Thank you.

DEPUTY RONDEL: For the record, if I may say, you gave some very clear steers and I thank you for it.

MR ALLUTO: Pleasure.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Thank you.

Mr Alluto withdrew