

Blanc Pignon
La Ruelle es Ruaux
St Brelade
Jersey
JE3 8BB

18th April 2008

The Editor
Jersey Evening Post
P.O. Box 582
Five Oaks
St Saviour
JE4 8XQ

Dear Sir

Sadly, what Mr Bob Bonny (J.E.P. 17 April) saw in St Mary, I too saw from a country lane. It struck me as the saddest sight I had ever seen in the Jersey Countryside. By now, most of that silage should have disappeared into the mouths of some 500 cattle, which have mostly gone to England!

At least two other farms have gone out of business recently and we are now threatened with hideous slurry tanks, which will be expensive to build and the thought of the cost of which is enough to make people give up.

Please, please, no more red tape and rules to strangle the farmer. Farming for the Dairy Farmer is in crisis. All year he tries to be as self-supporting as possible, hence the silage heaps which get eaten soon enough. The cost of grain from England is expensive but living in a little island we have to import this to keep milk production up. It's a seven-day week job for the dairy farmer, starting often at 4.30 or 5.00am. The hours are long and the return far from high, so only dedicated people who love the country life and, may I say, the Jersey Cow do it! It's getting more and more difficult. Many dairy farms are struggling to keep going. The price we get for milk just does not sufficiently cover costs. I know milk is expensive in the shops, but how does that price compare with sweet fizzy drinks that mothers buy for their children?

Perhaps it all went wrong when the local farmer put all his milk in one bucket so to speak. The old mixed farms usually had one crop doing well if others failed; it was the potatoes, tomatoes etc. and some cows.

There was a vital export market for animals, which was extra cash. The BSE brought an embargo on export worldwide. Now we have been rather forgotten, and so many heifer calves are not kept.

It was an interesting letter from Guernsey. They seem to have got results there but I had heard that the Guernsey States had saved the day by subsidising milk, though I do not have details to hand.

How importation of semen, whether Jersey or beef, (which fills me with horror for the little cows sake with calving problems), will affect the ailing industry, I, for one, certainly do not know.

Opinion is divided. I have my fears but many experienced big dairy farms see a need. What, though, I think, is a certainty, is that if milk is imported then under the present payment system the Island Pedigree Jersey is finished, and we will see more empty farms. I pray this will not happen.

Yours faithfully

V C Le Cras (Mrs)