



ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL NEED

FOR AN

Temporary agricultural workers accommodation

AT

**The Groves Farm
Sontley
Wrexham
LL13 0YB**

On Behalf of:

**J H & R Morris
The Groves Farm
Sontley
Wrexham
LL13 0YB**

Report Prepared by:

**Richard J Corbett
Roger Parry & Partners LLP
The Estates Office
20 Salop Road
Oswestry
SY11 2NU
Tel: 01691 655 334**

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. BUSINESS OVERVIEW	3
3. LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISE	4
4. LABOUR	4
6. THE PROPOSAL	7
7. EVALUATION OF THE BUSINESS IN TERMS OF TAN (WALES) 6 AND PLANNING	5
POLICY WALES.....	5
8. POLICY CONTEXT	8
9. CONCLUSION	12

1. INTRODUCTION

The report has been commissioned by J H & R Morris, The Groves Farm, Sontley LL13 0YB

The purpose of this report is to provide an objective evaluation of the agricultural business operated by J H & R Morris, in connection with a planning application for an agricultural workers temporary accommodation on land at The Groves Farm, Sontley LL13 0YB.

This report is based on the information obtained during a farm meeting and inspection. The author has inspected the previous three years trading accounts for J H & R Morris.

This report has been prepared, having regard to Technical Advice Note (Wales) 6 – ‘Agriculture’ (abbreviated as TAN (Wales) 6 in the following report). Particular regard has been given to the development for a temporary rural enterprise dwelling.

This report has been prepared by Richard James Corbett. Richard Corbett is a specialist agricultural and rural planning consultant. He holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours Degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management and is a Rural Faculty Chartered Surveyor (Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) and a member of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers.

2. BUSINESS OVERVIEW

The trading name of the business is J H & R Morris, being a family business based at The Groves Farm, Sontley, land has operated in the locality for a number of generations.

In total, the business farms approximately 95.32 hectares of land.

The business’ main enterprise is a cattle enterprise, comprising of 360 dairy cows and 200 followers including calves.

The Morris family see a positive future for the efficient producer and they do recognise that they need to successfully manage the enterprise in order to operate to their full potential and remain successful in delivering high quality food and products to the consumer.

The investment into the business is a continual process.

The business is managed from The Groves Farm, which has an excellent range of farm buildings available.

The report is intended to appraise the farming enterprise of the business for an application for a residential dwelling at The Groves, in terms of TAN (Wales) 6.

3. LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISE

Dairy

There are 360 dairy cows present at The Groves Farm. The farm's dairy enterprise includes milking and managing the dairy herd daily.

Followers including calf rearing

The business rears up to 200 followers from birth to dairy. Rearing a new-born calf can be extremely challenging and requires much patience and commitment. The key to success is keeping the calf in a comfortable environment, well fed and free of sickness. Calves must be kept in a clean environment with access to a dry and draught free shed area. Calf rearing is intensive as they must be closely monitored and fed frequently.

4. LABOUR

The labour for the business is provided by J H & R Morris. No contracting work is used on the farm. The business owns all of the farm machinery required to run all the enterprises, and all operations are carried out by the applicant.

All workers on the farm are skilled and trained workers. A high standard of both business and practical managements skills are demonstrated by the Morris family. Their ability to combine successful farming and diversification enterprises, business skills and administration aspects of these farming enterprises, demonstrates a high level of skill and commitment from the family business.

Farm work which is carried out on the farm's dairy enterprise include milking and managing the dairy herd and followers, feeding and general husbandry, calving and calf rearing and monitoring calves, providing veterinary assistance when required, crop management, silage and grass production.

The standard labour requirement for the whole agricultural business is summarised below:

Standard labour requirement for the whole
J H & R Morris Farming Business

Enterprise (Head/Hectare)	Standard Man Days per (Head/Hectare)	Total Standard Man Days
48.46 Ha Silage / Hay Cut	2.8	135
33 Ha Wheat/Maize	1.74	57
200 Rearing Cattle	1.2	240
300 Dairy Cattle	4.0	1200
SUBTOTAL		1632
Add 10% Maintenance		163.2
Add 15% Management		244.8
<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>2040</u>

Standard labour data has been taken from the Farm Management Pocketbook by John Nix.

It is generally accepted that 275 standard man days are provided by agricultural workers. Therefore, the standard labour requirement for the whole business is 7.4 full time workers.

7. EVALUATION OF THE BUSINESS IN TERMS OF TAN (WALES) 6 AND PLANNING POLICY WALES

4.4 New accommodation on established rural enterprises

4.4.1 New temporary accommodation should only be allowed to support established rural enterprises providing:

- a. there is a clearly established existing functional need;
- b. the need relates to a full-time worker, and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- c. the enterprise concerned has been established for at least three years, profitable for at

least one of them and both the enterprise and the business need for the job, is currently financially sound, and has a clear prospect of remaining so;

d. the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling or by converting an existing suitable building already on the land holding comprising the enterprise, or any other existing accommodation in the locality which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker concerned; and

e. other normal planning requirements, for example siting and access, are satisfied.

4.5 Second place of accommodation on established farms

4.5.1 The Assembly Government wishes to encourage younger people to manage farm businesses and promote the diversification of established farms. To support this policy objective it may be appropriate to allow a second dwelling on established farms that are financially sustainable where the criteria set out in paragraph 4.4.1 cannot be fully satisfied. The two exceptions to the policy are:

- Where there are secure and legally binding arrangements in place to demonstrate that management of the farm business has been transferred to a person younger than the person currently responsible for management, or, that transfer of management is only conditional upon grant of planning permission for the accommodation. The younger person should demonstrate majority

control over the farm business and be the decision maker for the farm business; or,

- There is an existing functional need for an additional 0.5 or more of a full time worker and that person obtains at least 50% of a Grade 2 Standard Worker salary, (as defined by the latest version of the Agricultural Wages Order), from the farm business.

9.3.7 The Welsh Government wishes to encourage younger people to manage farm businesses and promote the diversification of established farms. To support this policy objective it may be appropriate to allow a second place of accommodation on established farms that are financially sustainable in the following situations:

- Where there are secure and legally binding arrangements in place to demonstrate that management of the farm business has been transferred to a person younger than the person currently responsible for management, or, that transfer of management is only conditional upon grant of planning permission for the accommodation. The younger person should demonstrate majority control over the farm business and be the decision maker for the farm business partnership; or

- Where there is an existing functional need for an additional 0.5 or more of a full-time worker and that person obtains at least 50% of a Grade 2 Standard Worker salary (as defined by the latest version of the Agricultural Wages Order), from the farm business.

In these circumstances a rural enterprise accommodation may be considered favourably provided the criteria set out above and in TAN 6 paragraph 4.4.1 (c) - (e) are met. These special policy exceptions will only apply to the first additional accommodation to be attached to an established farm after TAN 6 comes into force and not to subsequent accommodation

TAN 6 gives two examples of where accommodation in the open countryside can be justified. Firstly, a second place of accommodation on an established farm which is financially sustainable, to facilitate the handover of the management of the farm business to a younger farmer. Secondly, a second place of accommodation on an established farm which is financially sustainable, where there is a functional need for a further 0.5 or more of a full time worker and at least 50% of a Grade 2 Standard Worker salary, as defined by the latest version of the Agricultural Wages Order, is obtained from the farm business. (See paragraphs 4.5.1 - 4.5.3).

We feel that the proposed development meets the requirements of TAN6 paragraph 4.4.1 and as such the development for a rural enterprise accommodation should be approved.

Furthermore, there is a functional need for a further 3.03 or more of a full time worker within the farm business.

We feel that the business justifies this, and more particularly the farming enterprises at The Groves Farm would more than satisfy either of the policy objectives.

5. THE PROPOSAL

J H & R Morris proposes providing a residential accommodation at The Groves Farm to support the overall farming business and to enable it to be managed effectively, taking into account animal welfare, farm security and farm safety.

The applicants consider it essential for an agricultural worker to reside at The Groves Farm in order to provide constant supervision of the livestock, both within and out of normal working hours and to attend to emergencies associated with calf rearing and milking.

It can be clearly seen that due to future farm expansions or even unforeseen circumstances which include the 'cross-compliance' restrictions associated with the Single Farm Payment Scheme, increasing farm management will be required in the future and thus more pressure on the labour force.

The mobile home is located on the owner-occupied land to the south of the existing farmstead. This allows a trained stockperson to be within sight and sound of the agricultural buildings. The land is well sheltered and is a well-established route which provides easy access to the farm

buildings. Accommodation in this location would allow the stockperson to have a general overview of the buildings, resulting in enhanced facilities for animal welfare and an improvement in monitoring the cows and the followers and the care and supervision of young calves. The mobile home is also sited very close to calf rearing sheds providing constant supervision of the livestock, both within and out of normal working hours and to attend to emergencies associated with calf rearing.

In order to fulfil the functional need the siting of the accommodation is within the sight and sound of the farm buildings. There is a continual need for a full time skilled worker to carry out important checks and monitor the breeding process.

The site will not only offer the ability for a member of the farm business to live on site which would mean there would be instant cover during periods of illness, injury or holiday but it would increase farm security and bio security measures and most importantly attend to stock.

Time test

If a functional requirement is established, it will then be necessary to consider the number of workers needed to meet it, for which the scale and nature of the enterprise will be relevant. Where there is currently no dwelling associated with the rural enterprise the worker for whom there is a functional need for new accommodation must be a full-time worker. With the exception of second dwellings on established farms, it must not relate to a part-time requirement, or a requirement that does not relate to the enterprise. If this is a second (or further) dwelling, all existing dwellings must also be occupied by full-time workers for whom it is essential that they also remain on site for functional reasons, or by workers and their dependents last employed in a rural enterprise.

Each enterprise requires different management operations at different times of the day and year, every day involving effective management and supervision and the need for the essential care of the animals. A summary of some of the managerial requirements which are carried out by the applicant over a 12 months period (24 hours per day) are as follows.

Cattle

Vaccinate cattle on a regular basis.

Observing the general health of the cattle every day.

Sort out the thinner stock to bring up the body score.

Feed twice daily over a 12 month period.

Cleaning/scraping the yards twice a day over a 12 month period.

Treat for internal parasites.

Calves all year round. Numerous occasions calves need constant help 4 times (day and night) to aid the milk consumption from their mothers.

Lice control.

Castration of the male cattle.

Creep feeding.

Weaning cattle.

Marketing the cattle. Regular inspection and grading/weighing the cattle

De-horning the cattle.

De-worming the cattle.

Blood testing for TB.

Milking twice daily.

It must be noted that the activities required to manage the livestock are exhaustive and the above described activities are only a few. In addition, each activity requires the collection of the stock from the land, penning the stock, and returning the livestock on completion of the activity. It must also be noted that the level of work in managing the livestock is dependant on a number of uncontrolled factors, the main being weather conditions. Examples include a hard winter which can put tremendous strain on the workforce, and variable summers which can affect the harvesting plans on a daily basis.

It must also be noted that a large amount of time is utilised off the farm by transporting the livestock to and from the markets, transporting the livestock to the other land, and transporting casualties to the vet etc.

Time is also taken up by hay making and silaging which can take up a number of weeks in the summer months, weather dependant.

The above described activities are only part of the essential work required to function the business to allow it to operate. Other operations include machinery operations on the land to produce good grass production to accommodate the livestock. These include rolling, chain harrowing, control of weeds (cutting), spreading manure, mowing, turning the cut grass, silaging, hay making (small bales being labour intensive), reseeding/ploughing and other operations.

Other operations carried out by the business include the annual draining of the land, boundary maintenance, building maintenance and machinery maintenance.

It must also be noted that farmers are being increasingly affected by government legislation, the main legislation being cross-compliance and the ever increasing farm assurance schemes. In order to claim the government support (known as single farm payment) farmers have to comply with the ever-increasing European directives, this is resulting in extra work being required on the farm which demand ever increasing standards of animal welfare.

Farmers have a required duty to be custodians to the countryside, and thereby are required to preserve the land and maintain it for the benefit of conservation. Therefore, this requires further work over and above the normal farming operations.

In order to carry out the demands of all the farming operations by the applicants business, then it is absolutely vital to have a full time worker present on the farm every hour of each day and night throughout the year, both within and out of normal working hours, and to attend to the never ending care of the livestock at short notice, including livestock emergencies that would otherwise cause serious mortality. It must be noted that a farmer's working hours is not '9 to 5' but every hour of each day and night with no one hour being alike. There is a duty under European Directive to protect the livestock from theft or injury by intruders under animal welfare grounds, and by having a worker present this would very much help the applicant to control these measures. The emphasis for continued animal welfare is based on preventative management and good husbandry, and the aim through good stockmanship and attention to detail is to minimise the risk of infection. Care has been taken to site the accommodation in a position to guard the land at the same time and provide essential supervision to the lambing land. This is critical in this case given the secluded location and it's proximity to the public highway.

It must also be realised that in order to provide the care and attention needed then it is absolutely necessary to live on the farm. Living on the farm allows the farm workers to be pro-active and to be available every hour of the day and night to carry out the necessary activities.

It is therefore essential that a full time farm worker is required to be living on site on the farm (24/7) in order for the farm to continue as a working farm and to achieve and maintain the high levels of husbandry and farm management needed.



Time test

The agricultural assessment clearly highlights that for the size and scale of the current farm enterprise an agricultural workers dwelling is required for the farm business. The Standard Man Days calculation in the assessment specifies the need for there to be at least 7.4 full time workers for a farm enterprise of this scale.

In order to meet the functional needs of the business we feel a dwelling should be located at The Groves Farm and the proposed accommodation site indicated would satisfy the criteria.

1.0 New Temporary Accommodation on Site

- The business is an established business and therefore temporary accommodation can be justified.
- The accommodation would provide security to the farm and to the applicant's investment.
- The location is within sight, sound and easy access and close proximity of existing dwellings.
- The location overlooks the agricultural buildings and therefore persons would be able to monitor stock and be able to deal with veterinary emergencies as soon as they arise

This is therefore the most suitable option for the farm business

9. CONCLUSION

Having assessed the agricultural business, I consider the nature and scale of the livestock enterprises makes it essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for an agricultural workers accommodation to be erected on the farm holding, to be located at The Groves Farm.

The holding and agricultural activities concerned have been established for many years and are profitable and financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so.

The siting of the proposed accommodation will enable the functional needs of the business to be met and the security of the holding to be improved.

Having assessed the whole business against the criteria for agricultural workers, accommodation as highlighted in Technical Advice Note (Wales) 6, I consider that the business satisfies the criteria.

These are covered in paragraphs 4.5.1-4.5.3 of TAN 6. They set out exceptions where a second place of accommodation may be approved without the need to pass the functional tests for new accommodation set out elsewhere in TAN. One of these exceptions which may be relevant in this case is:

Where there are secure and legally binding arrangements in place to demonstrate that management of the farm business has been transferred to a person younger than the person currently responsible for management, or, that transfer of management is only conditional upon grant of planning permission for the accommodation. The younger person should demonstrate majority control over the farm business and be the decision maker for the farm business;

The above also appears in Planning Policy Wales (paragraph 9.3.7).

Richard J. Corbett *BSc (Hons) M.R.I.C.S F.A.A.V*

On behalf of Roger Parry Partners LLP
The Estates Office
20 Salop Road
Oswestry
SY11 2NU

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