



RARE BREEDS INTERNATIONAL

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For the attention of Sean Flesher
Head of Parks and Countryside
Leeds City Council

30 January 2011

Please see below the response from Rare Breeds International to the
Consultation on the Farming Operations at Home Farm, Temple Newsam.

Before responding directly to the consultation, I must declare a long-standing
interest in Home Farm at Temple Newsam. During the past thirty years or more
I not only have watched the development of the admirable work carried out
there by David Bradley and his staff, but also from time to time have been able
to lend assistance and advice.

I submit this response for the attention of Leeds City Council, and particularly
for your attention as Head of Parks and Countryside, and John Proctor and
Adam Ogilvie as Councillors with responsibility for Parks and Countryside.

G L H Alderson
Founder President/Trustee

Response to Consultation
Farming Operations at Home Farm, Temple Newsam

1. Home Farm has an enviable reputation, both at home and abroad, which reflects with great credit on Leeds City Council. That reputation revolves around the programmes of genetic conservation built on the units of native endangered breeds.
2. The breeding units of native livestock make a major contribution to the conservation of farm animal genetic resources (FAnGR) in Britain and this is an integral part of our national responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to which our government was a signatory in 1992.
3. As an officer of Rare Breeds International I deal with organisations such as FAO, EAAP and ERFP. Consequently, I am invited to make presentations to national, regional and international meetings, and I regularly illustrate ‘success stories’ of rare breeds with examples from the work at Home Farm. The unique success with Vaynol cattle is notable, but the Home Farm prefixes for other breeds are found in herds and flocks throughout Britain.
4. These breeds also heighten the profile of Leeds City Council by exposure at agricultural shows, either in show classes or on display demonstrations.
5. The display units of breeds also perform a valuable complementary function by creating a rural/urban interface for the citizens of Leeds and other visitors, and the number of visitors to Home Farm far exceeds that of any other ‘rare breeds’ centre in Britain.
6. I am aware of the ‘cost-cutting’ requirements in the current economic climate but I do not agree with the proposal. It does not take into account the factors mentioned above. A unit of 45 hectares restricted to display units would lose the essential value of Home Farm and its benefits to Leeds City Council and the community.
7. I note with surprise the statement that “Stock management in the public areas currently does not match expectations of the visitor - -” as it does not fit my assessment.
8. I note the target of a saving of £100K on farming activities compared with a proposed saving of £132.5K. I would recommend that the proposal is revised to utilise the difference of £32.5K, together with the value of the benefits from the AnGR conservations activities which would be lost under the current proposal.
9. The loss of direct management of the cattle and sheep would indicate that the role of Home Farm as a centre for the conservation of AnGR is being abandoned. I believe this not only would reflect negatively on Leeds City Council, but also would be severely damaging to the status of several rare breeds in Britain.