



Rural Development Programme for England
for rural businesses and communities in South West England

News Release

September, 2009

Physio treatment down on the farm

A working farm is not the usual place to find physiotherapy services, but later this year they will be available at Pamington Court Farm in Gloucestershire – thanks to a 50 per cent grant from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

“We had some traditional farm buildings that we no longer had a use for and it was a real pity to see them empty, so the physiotherapy clinic seemed an excellent solution” said Michael Hill, who farms the 384 acre holding with his son, Richard, and wife, Judith.

The Hills will continue to focus on their farming activities which are mainly beef and sheep rearing, and arable cropping (milling wheat, winter barley and beans), while the operation of the new clinic will be handled by a chartered physiotherapist.

“The idea for a physiotherapy clinic started when we were asked by Clare Woodward, past physio for both Gloucester and Worcester Rugby Clubs, if we would convert a redundant farm building for her as she wished to have her own business,” explained Michael Hill.

“Following a successful planning application, it was suggested by Roger Smith, of Business Link, that we should apply for an RDPE grant and thanks to his help – and that of Mally Findlater, of Gloucestershire Enterprise Business Services, this was awarded.”

It is anticipated that the new clinic will eventually employ six physiotherapists and two administration/reception staff.

The development aims to achieve a very good environmental rating and will incorporate high levels of thermal insulation, include a heat recovery system, utilise natural light and ventilation, using solar panels for heating and rainwater harvesting for the use of grey water in the building.



European Agriculture Fund for Rural
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Alan Titcombe, RDPE case officer at South West RDA, said: "The funding will mean that Pamington Court Farm can increase its income. Enabling the farm to employ seasonal labour as Michael Hill wishes to do less farm work following second hip replacements of both legs."

"This proposal relates to farm diversification and fits well with the RDPE priorities of 'Improving business efficiency and enabling business transformation,'" said Alan Titcombe. "It will make good use of sound, but unused buildings and create new jobs in this rural area."

The Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013 is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union, with the aim of delivering targeted support to rural businesses and communities. It is managed in this region by the South West RDA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

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For further information, please contact Pat Murray, of the South West RDA press office, on 07733264756

Notes to editors

RDPE

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) runs from 2007 to 2013. It is the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy and aims to support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors, whilst also bringing wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities. It provides the major financial vehicle for protecting and enhancing the environment and securing a range of public benefits for society. Defra is the Managing Authority.

The RDPE has three priorities for rural development:

1. Improving competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors
2. Improving the environment and the countryside
3. Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity

In this region, the South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA) will deliver priorities 1 and 3 with a budget of £156.8 million over the seven years. The RDA is also responsible for ensuring that five per cent of the RDPE funding is spent on enabling community involvement in rural development. The delivery partners in the South West aim to ensure that investment in each of the three priorities will help support investment in the others.

The RDPE priority for improving the environment and the countryside is being delivered nationally by the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme. In addition, a minimum of 5% of the programme will be delivered through a local community-led approach.

The aims, objectives and priorities for delivering RDPE in South West England were agreed for the socio-economic investments with regional partners and these are set out in the Regional Implementation Plan. On the basis of a thorough analysis of South West England's rural characteristics and economy, the Plan sets out eight themes:

- i. Skills development



- ii. Social enterprise
- iii. Business support
- iv. Supply chain and adding value
- v. Resource management (soil, water, energy, waste)
- vi. Sustainable rural tourism
- vii. Biodiversity and landscape
- viii. Community-led development

Further more information on the RDPE and the schemes see www.sw-ruralgateway.info

Organisations involved in delivering RDPE

The South West RDA leads the development of a sustainable economy, investing to unlock the region's business potential. It works in partnership with public, private and social purpose organisations to drive up the region's productivity by giving people the skills they need, encouraging enterprise, improving infrastructure, regenerating places and promoting the strengths of the region. For more information see www.southwestrda.org.uk

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. It conserves and enhances the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings. For more information see www.naturalengland.org.uk Environmental Stewardship (ES) was launched in 2005, builds on the very best practice already evident in British farming. During the period 2007-13 the national budget for ES will be £2.9 billion. The objectives of ES are to:

- Conserve wildlife (biodiversity).
- Maintain and enhance landscape quality and character.
- Protect the historic environment and natural resources.
- Promote public access and understanding of the countryside.
- Natural resource protection.

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry in Great Britain. It supports woodland owners with grants, tree felling licences, regulation and advice; promotes the benefits of forests and forestry; and advises Government on forestry policy. For further information, visit www.forestry.gov.uk/england-swe

