

Worcestershire Rural Hub becomes part of the Rural and farming networks.

Following Agriculture Minister Jim Paice announcement today we are pleased to inform you that Worcestershire Rural Hub has been selected as one of the 14 organisations within the network, to represent Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

The press release is below and this explains the role we will fulfill as point of contact for the local area. We will be providing regular updates to you on progress and issues and look forward to taking on the role on behalf of the rural communities, rural businesses and the food and farming industries.

Kind Regards

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Rural and farming networks to provide hotline to the heart of government

Rural business leaders will have a hotline to the heart of Government through the creation of new Rural and Farming Networks, Agriculture Minister Jim Paice announced today. This means that they will be able to directly shape future rural policies.

Fourteen networks representing different areas of England have been set up to identify and feed back local issues and concerns straight to the heart of Government, in order to make policies more rural-friendly.

The Networks bring together people from rural communities, rural businesses and the food and farming industries. They will make a direct link between rural areas and the Government, creating new opportunities to develop better and more targeted policy.

Each group will also be a vital point of contact in the event of local emergencies – such as flooding – giving advice and information so that the right kind of assistance can be provided to keep businesses running.

Speaking at the Oxford Farming Conference, Jim Paice said:

“For too long our rural communities have been overlooked and had too little say in decisions which affect them. We are putting that right through the Rural and Farming Networks. They will have direct access to Ministers and, just as importantly, Ministers will use them to ensure we understand the impact of our policies.

“Defra will be the ‘listening’ department that will understand and promote the interests of rural communities and businesses, based on direct contact with the people whose livelihoods we are championing.”

The Rural and Farming Network groups are:

1. Farming Food and Rural Network East
2. Rural Network East Midlands
3. Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture
4. Derbyshire Economic Partnership Rural Forum
5. Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Tees Valley
6. Farming and Rural Issues Group (covering much of the South East)
7. Essex Rural Partnership
8. The Kent Rural Network
9. Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership
10. South West Rural and Farming Network
11. Worcestershire Rural Hub (covering Worcestershire and close links with Warwickshire)
12. The Rural Hubs Partnership (covering Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffs)
13. Yorkshire Food, Farming and Rural Network
14. The North Eastern Farming and Rural Advisory Network

The new networks sit alongside a £165 million package of measures to support rural communities announced in the Rural Economy Growth Review which aims to maximise the economic potential of rural communities and businesses. The Rural Economy Growth Review included:

- £100 million to grow rural businesses through the Rural Development Programme for England;
- Grants totaling £20 million to extend superfast broadband to the remotest areas;
- New Rural Growth Networks to help rural areas overcome barriers to growth such as poor infrastructure, scarcity of business premises and lack of business networks;
- Action to cut red tape on use of farm buildings to address the shortage of rural business premises;
- £25 million to promote rural tourism and supporting its businesses; and
- Loans totaling £20 million for community-owned renewable energy schemes.

The Rural and Farming Network will meet for the first time in early 2012 and then on individual policy areas or issues of importance to rural communities.