

Openfield™

Cotswold Central Store Project

4th August 2009

35 farming businesses were represented at our very successful introductory meeting held at the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester on 25th June 2009. Subsequently 24 further businesses have expressed interest & information has now been issued. At this stage of a project this is the highest initial interest we have captured although we now need to progress matters to offer a solution to the obvious need for such a facility. This reflects the research work that we have undertaken throughout the UK that highlights the aging profile of farm stores together with the lack of processing capacity on many farm holdings. The current wet weather & low grain prices have certainly increased the level of enquiries across our storage network.

Expression of Interest & Sponsorship

It is now important that the level of interest is converted to sponsorship. Thank you to those growers who have already returned their expression of interest together with their cheques. These are currently being held at the office & will be cashed once sufficient tonnage has been secured. To address the cooperative principles we cannot just rely on 15 to 20% of the growers to carry all the anticipated cost for the benefit of all. If you have a short or long term interest in this project we will need further sponsorship before we can make progress. Rest assured with limited funds we will not be investing this money until such time that our confidence levels on securing planning permission on a particular site are high. In this respect we will need to take professional advice once we have done as much "in house" as possible. A further copy of the expression of interest form is enclosed for you to complete & return as appropriate.

Site Search

As indicated at our meeting we will need to secure a site of between 10 & 20 acres depending upon landscape requirements. Good access to the arterial road network would be desirable. A number of sites have been brought to our attention & it is our intention to start to review these whilst harvest is underway. Any further possibilities should be highlighted to Rob Sanderson or Martin Cook. It will be important for us to have considered a wide selection in order to justify our case for whichever site is finally selected.

Other Store Developments

Within the NetworkGrain business a further 94,000 Tonnes & associated processing capacity has been built in the last 10 months. Developments have been completed in Aberdeen, Camgrain, Weald Granary in Kent & Wiltshire Grain. Capital grant aid under the Rural Development programme was secured for all these projects but may not be available post 2012. We therefore need to act speedily. Overall central storage capacity now extends to 900,000 Tonnes & with the "double use" facility throughput will be close to 1 million tonnes. This scale is important for the supply chain & is now opening up opportunities for all the stores. A further 10% expansion of the network is already being prepared for 2010.



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Martin Cook	01242 890001
	07768 865093
Rob Sanderson	07836 538490