

WHY FARMING IN THE BROADS MATTERS TO TOURISM

THE BROADS IS ONE OF THE UK'S LEADING TOURIST DESTINATIONS, ATTRACTING OVER 11 MILLION VISITS EACH YEAR¹. TOURISTS, CAPTIVATED BY THE AREA'S SPECTACULAR COUNTRYSIDE, CONTRIBUTE OVER £400 MILLION ANNUALLY TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

Tourism flourishes in the Broads with visitors travelling to the area for many different attractions. With 87 per cent of the area in agricultural use, the farmed landscape provides the perfect backdrop for visitors to enjoy unique wildlife habitats, historic buildings and archaeological sites.

The Broads national park is the UK's largest protected wetland and third largest inland waterway. Its 190km of lock-free rivers are utilised by 13,000 licensed boats.

There is also an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways across farmland. Farmers play a key role in maintaining public rights of way and in volunteering the creation of so-called 'permissive paths' across their fields, where legal rights of access do not exist.

To help meet tourist demand, farmers are continuing to diversify their businesses to provide accommodation and leisure activities, ranging from farm shops and pick-your-owns to adventure and farm parks for tourists to enjoy.

Tourism is critical to the Broads, as it brings people and much-needed investment to the area. This provides employment for many thousands of local people and contributes millions of pounds to the economy.

¹ Defra Consultation on English National Park and the Broads (2009)

Hannah and Ian Deane, Dairy Barns, Hickling



Hannah Deane
of Dairy Barns

Hannah and Ian Deane run Dairy Barns, a farm diversification project that provides accommodation and function space, deep in the heart of the Broads. The barn complements the 145 hectare farm enterprise, which grows peas, potatoes, wheat and grass, the latter for a second farm diversification, Hungry Horse Haylage.

Opened in December 2005, the barn complex consists of six large en-suite bedrooms and a large function room. The original idea was to concentrate on the accommodation, but Hannah gets regular bookings for meetings and events as

well because there are few locations nearby that can accommodate 12 or more people. This has led to the barn being fitted with wi-fi and the property is used by a wide range of groups and organisations from cyclists to the Harley Davidson Club, RSPB, Defra, and Shell UK.

Dairy Barns can accommodate small wedding groups to large parties of more than 100 guests. Hannah and her mother also run flower workshops from the barn, which attract people from all over the region.

Farming is an integral part of Dairy Barns. Not only has it supported and provided the foundation for the new business, but as Hannah and Ian's guests regularly point out, having the barns intrinsically linked to the working farm makes their stay even more appealing.

Guests can take walks along the many permissive access paths located on the farm and enjoy locally sourced produce including sausages, bacon and eggs.

Dairy Barns has already won several accreditations including 2008 Farmhouse Breakfast East of England Champion, 2009/10 Visit England Gold Award for Excellence and 2009 Norfolk Tourist Awards Best Bed and Breakfast in Norfolk.