

**RESPONSE TO INSPECTORS QUESTIONS 1**

**ExQ Ag.1.28**

**Please expand on your concerns that the development would result in uncertain viability of the pig enterprise with farm rotation.**

1 The business operates a balanced cropping rotation, with sequential rotation of different arable and livestock including spring and winter cereal crops as well as peas, winter oilseed rape, stubble turnips and pigs as cropping breaks to maintain the health and structure of the soil.

2 Within the scheme area, the pigs have the dual role of adding extra organic matter to the soil to aid fertility as well as providing a break for cereal disease and weed burdens.

3 Being the furthest end of the farm from the main farm entrance, the pigs deposit the organic matter straight onto the land without the need to bring organic matter through from the opposite end of the farm. Although byway 12 does link to the A303 it is not appropriate for the delivery of heavy lorries of organic matter as the byway surface has a number of scheduled monuments that would be at risk of damage, the area is also too deeply rutted and the byway surface will not sustain such traffic.

4 Although the percentage of land take of our holding is only a small percentage, it represent a 20% reduction in the block of land that the pig unit rotates around. This would have a significant impact on this viability of the enterprise. The pig unit operates at an optimal efficiency of 750 sows spread over approximately 29 ha being supported by 3 members of staff.

5 The reduction in the size of the block of land would either require a reduction in pig numbers, or for the pig enterprise to locate to a different part of the farm every 4 years. Whilst this is possible, it will have considerable impact upon the economies of scale of the enterprise and the profitability. Even moving from field to field in close proximity is a considerable investment, but the costs would increase with a greater distance of moving.

6 The unit has had a high health status with the A303 providing a natural barrier between the pigs and potential biohazards in this location. Our concern is that the new proposed byway along the existing A303 and A360, along with the anticipated heavier use of the existing byway 12, when combined with the scheme objective to bring more people into the area, will increase the risk of trespass onto the pig unit. Pig diseases are known to be carried on peoples clothing, so there is an increased risk of health to the pigs with the proximity of the new byway in this area. There is also the pressures from livestock worrying from dogs off leads wandering into the pig field causing stress or even injury to animals.

7 The flexibility to move the pig unit within the farm is limited by field topography, size and location of scheduled monuments, as such there are limited areas within the farm that the enterprise can use to relocate.

8 Added to this the risk that our borehole water supply has the potential to be compromised for water quality and quantity with no firm commitment for HE to reinstate water supplies. Animal welfare for an outdoor breeding enterprise is extremely high, with requirements legislated within

the buyer's assurance contracts. The worst case scenario would be, that should 750 sows and followers be without water for any length of time, an emergency slaughter plan would be required to prevent breach of animal welfare.

9 For all the following reasons, the seeming small reduction of area will have a significant impact on the viability of the pig enterprise on the farm as well as having consequences to farm profitability.

- Being a mixed farm there are a lot of "unseen" benefits from enterprises, each enterprise in a symbiotic relationship with the other. The removal of pigs in the rotation will remove benefits from organic matter and plant health and weed burden.
- There would also be a reduction to farm security as there is always someone from the pig enterprise within the area for the greater part of each day, which has slight benefit in reducing incidence of poaching.
- There would be a loss to biodiversity within the area as beetles associated with the pig enterprise feed the Stone curlews, bats and other species within this area. The pig, beetle relationship may be drawing the bats to this area, so removing the pigs from this area of the landscape there will be less to attract bats into this exposed area.