



## **PRESS RELEASE from the Countryside and Community Research Institute**

17 May 2010

### **Research shows that rural communities benefit from Government Environmental Stewardship (ES) Scheme**

A report commissioned by Defra and Natural England has shown that farmers who make the commitment to land management schemes aimed at protecting biodiversity and the natural environment also provide additional income, employment and other social benefits for their local communities, thus strengthening rural communities and sustaining local jobs.

The research was conducted by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), a team of specialist rural researchers based at the University of Gloucestershire.

The report assessed the incidental socio-economic benefits of Environmental Stewardship (ES) schemes in England in order to identify their impact on the wider local economy. In particular, it assessed the extent of local multiplier effects and employment creation as a result of agri-environment expenditure.

The key findings showed that as a direct result of the ES, 665 new full time equivalent jobs in local communities were created between 2005 and 2009, and an additional £64.7 million was generated by the local economy. The report reinforces how government funding can lead to increases in local income and employment, as well as the development of farmers' social networks and farm business skills.

Project Manager, Jane Mills (CCRI), commented:

“This research confirms for the first time on a national scale that the incidental benefits of ES have a significant impact on the local rural economy, whilst helping at the same time to protect the natural environment. Not only do farmers benefit the local community by taking part in the ES

scheme, they are also able to improve their skills and knowledge through participation and associated training.”

A direct benefit of the ES is the creation and restoration of landscape and historical features, and the protection of wildlife. The research found that without the ES scheme payments it is likely that a large proportion of the scheme work would not have been undertaken.

The Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) is a collaboration between the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Royal Agricultural College and Hartpury College.

Further information on the report can be found at [www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/economics/foodfarm/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/economics/foodfarm/)

**ENDS.**

#### **Information for Editors:**

#### **Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI)**

The Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) is a collaboration between the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Royal Agricultural College and Hartpury College. It is one of the leading specialist rural research centres in the country with programmes of research in rural community development, rural poverty, agri-environment policies, agri-tourism, local sustainability, local economic development, EU and UK rural development, and the planning system in the countryside. See [www.ccri.ac.uk](http://www.ccri.ac.uk) for more information.

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