



Emily Estates

Replacement Manor Farm Yarlington

Livestock Agricultural Needs Statement

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Introduction:

Emily Estates is situated within the heart of rural Somerset, near the towns of Castle Cary, Bruton and Wincanton as well as being on the edge of the villages of Yarlington and Galhampton. Under the guidance of the current owners, the estate is being re-developed and expanded. The estate encompasses 2500 acres of farmland, woodland, and formal gardens, all of which form pivotal roles in the successful running of this estate which provides great local community benefit as well being a highly respected tourism centre. These elements all work in harmony together and collectively form a well-balanced country estate.

Farming forms an essential core activity at the Emily Estate, as it does with very many traditional English estates, this activity brings great environmental and biodiversity benefits and it must be recognised that for the benefit of the wider environment and for the English countryside to look as spectacular as it does, farming must form a key element. It is the landowners and farmers that have always managed the landscape by farming sympathetically and successfully and it is therefore considered that the future of this traditionally farmed landscape depends on people, like the owners of the Emily Estate, who are willing to farm and invest in land management and the estates farming infrastructure, that the landscape and biodiversity of this area will be enhanced for the long term benefit.

Historically the farms this area of Somerset in which the Emily Estate is set, would have been mixed farming enterprises, where dairying would be run alongside beef and sheep production as well as cereal crops, so that each farm would have produce to sell throughout the year, as well as food for their livestock, their families, and workers. Through farming modernisation and the drive for higher production levels and higher profits, many farms became single enterprise businesses, the dairy farms centred around areas where forage crops can be grown successfully, sheep and beef reared on more marginal land and cereals grown on the down lands. Farming is an ever-developing industry and there is a move at present back towards more mixed or balanced farming, where livestock and cereals can be farmed alongside of each other as they can complement each other, and whereby for example, typically the use of animal waste is a very useful agricultural fertiliser. As part of the long-term development programme that the estate has embarked on for their farming enterprise, this is to create a mixed farm, that will include a milking herd, beef, and sheep production and the growing of cereal crops, the produce of which will be used within the estate in their tourism enterprises. This planning application sets out to provide a new core farm buildings site that provides facilities to meet the needs of the various farming elements that the estate is managing.

Within the overall area of the estate, the farming enterprise extends to a large proportion of the Estate and approximately 878.0 acres are allocated for crop production. The proposed development at Manor Farm, Yarlington, will include facilities to accommodate both the milking herd and beef cattle, as well as provide silage clamps for forage storage, grain storage, and as it will form the central operating area for the farming activities, there will also be facilities for staff welfare, farm offices, machinery workshop and storage. A new internal farm road is being provided as is the required infrastructure for storm water drainage, water supply and waste management, all of which can be seen on the accompanying plans.

The owners of the estate see this development as an opportunity to provide their farming enterprise with the optimum design of buildings and structures for the benefit of not only the livestock to be housed within them, but to provide their staff with a safe working environment and a facility that can be show cased to the estate guests and local community. The facility will be of its time and will utilise high levels of design and equipment technology to provide state of the art complex.

Geology & Soil Management:

The farmland of the estate is typical for this part of Somerset, where the fields are gently undulating and generally the Agricultural Land Classification is 3a, being assessed as “good quality and the most versatile agricultural land”. The soil type is a predominantly shallow, well drained loamy soil (Elmton 2), over lying oolitic limestone.

These Elmton soils are well suited for grass and cereal crops for grazing and harvesting. These soils can at times be moisture deficient particularly with the advance of global warming, and therefore this farmland is not particularly suited for woodland cropping. Because of this potential water deficiency, the proposals in this scheme include a new reservoir facility that will capture the roof water, so that it can be utilised throughout the estate.

These soils have naturally high pH levels and potentially low fertility levels, and the use of livestock waste will in part provide the essential nutrients that the cereal crops and grass land will need. One issue is, soils with high pH level can have is in locking up certain nutrients such as phosphates which can lead to increased levels of groundwater pollution. Parts of Somerset and many areas across the UK, do have issues with high levels of phosphates in groundwater and also water courses as is the case with the Somerset Levels, and a Phosphate Mitigation Report that sets out the estates position on and that it is at worst nutrient neutral, and this report accompanies this application.

The livestock stocking rate will be balanced to suit the production capability of the land and will be on a low input scenario. The intention is that the livestock production levels will enable the soil structures to be improved by organic waste matter, which also has the benefit of carbon sequestration.

Livestock Enterprise:

The proposed development at the New Manor Farm, will have provision for housing of the Estate’s current beef cattle, and primarily the meat is used within the Estate’s hotel and restaurant businesses. There will also be a milking herd at this site and whilst this is a new enterprise to the Estate, there have previously been well established dairy herds on farms that the Estate has acquired, and whilst those herds have been dispersed by their previous owners, the Estate have identified the benefit to its farming enterprise to have a small scale milking herd, which will amount to 100 cows and their associated young stock. Again, the produce will be used within the Estate’s businesses and the facility will include a rotary milking parlour and associated processing and storage facilities for the produce. The buildings that will be used for livestock accommodation have been designed and sized to exceed the animal welfare requirements that are detailed in the current RSPCA guidance, which will ensure that the animals are accommodated to the highest welfare standards resulting in low animal stress levels and optimum health and fertility within the animals.

Details for the livestock types and numbers are shown in the appendices, which also details the forage crop storage requirements and waste storage requirements all of which will comply with the CIRIA and SSAFO Regulations as well as the Farming Rules for Water. All animal waste will be used on the Estate as an organic fertiliser and there are also documents such as a Manure Management and Nutrient Management Plans that detail how the waste from the cattle is managed and applied to the land to the benefit of the crops grown and to the benefit of the soil structure. Documents details for Ammonia Emissions and Phosphate Mitigation have also been produced that demonstrate that the Estate’s farming enterprises meet the critical levels that are set for such matters by Natural England that they also meet the requirements as set out by Somerset Council.

Cereal Enterprise:

The proposed development at New Manor Farm, will have provision to store and dry the cereal crops that will be grown and utilised on the Estate. These facilities will also use the highest levels of technology to dry the crops and monitor the condition of them when in store so that they are stored in optimum conditions which maintains their quality and nutrient value. The equipment associated with this crop storage system will utilise low energy systems to reduce energy wastage and avoid unnecessary high level operating costs as well as operating at low noise levels. Details of the Estate cropping and storage requirements are shown in the appendices.

Conclusion:

The provision of a new farm complex within the Estate is essential to the efficient management of the estate's farming enterprise and to provide satisfactory and compliant facilities that not only provide the optimum environment for the livestock, but to provide efficient facilities for milking, forage storage, cereal storage, waste management, as well as staff safety and welfare.

It is the intention of the Estate to ensure that their farming enterprises, not only benefit their livestock, crops, the estate staff, guests, and visitors, but has a considerable and improving benefit on the wider environment and biodiversity, not only within the Estate but in the surrounding areas. It is essential that farming is championed in these times of global crisis, and it follows and is probably more important to the local population in Somerset, that local well managed farms can demonstrate that its farmers and growers can produce high quality food that can be purchased locally rather than have food that is transported across the world to be sold. It is only through efficient farm management and regular investment in farm infrastructure that this can be achieved and in turn this forms part of the Estate's desire and ability to reduce not only its carbon footprint but through good farm management and farming practices the overall biodiversity across the Estate will be enhanced.

Livestock Details:

150 breeding beef cows (up to 24 months)

180 fattening beef animals (0-13 months)

150 Fattening beef animals (13-25 months)

100 milking cows (producing up to 6,000 litres per milk per lactation)

40 dairy heifers (0-13 months)

40 dairy heifers (13 months to first calving)

Slurry/Manure:

Predominantly the livestock (cows) will be housed in louse housed accommodation buildings whereby the excreta is in part (50/50) classified as farmyard manure (waste on straw bedding) and slurry which is 'wet' excreta that is collected off covered concrete yards and passages ways. The farmyard manure will be stored/managed in line with the current Farming Rules for Water, which allows this material which is in essence a dry and stackable material to be stored in 'field heaps' until such time that it is needed to be spread on the land. Under the current Farming Rules for Water, the 'slurry' element which amounts to 30% of the collected material is required to be stored and this storage system needs to provide a minimum of six months storage capacity. In the case of the proposed development at New Manor Farm, the structure to store the slurry will be in the form of an underground sealed concrete structure that will be positioned within the milking parlour collecting yard which is where most of this material is generated and collected. This waste material will also include any wash water from the cleaning process that is required within the milking parlour complex.

Silage effluent will be collected from the proposed indoor silage clamps and again this will be stored in a separate underground GRP tank and this waste will also be managed in line with the current legislation and the silage clamps and the effluent storage tank will be designed and constructed in line with the current Farming Rules for Water as well as the various elements of the CIRIA and SSAFO Regulations.

Cropping:

The areas for each crop grown which includes both forage and arable crops will vary from year to year due to changes in the crop management this takes on board good practices for crop rotation. Einkorn (specialist Typically at wheat) this time, the cropping at the Estate includes the following crops and acreages.

Barley	63.85
Einkorn (Milling Wheat)	29.3
Emmer (Milling Wheat)	31.01
Wheat (Feed or Milling)	55.44
Huntsman Wheat (Milling Wheat)	13.41
Spring Oats	56
Spring Beans	34.16
Legume Fallow (Break Crop)	63.8
Grass for Hay	223.22
Grass: One cut for silage then graze	88.67
Permanent Pasture	307.73
Sunflower	1.7
Total Cropping (Acres)	966.59