AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HIGH WELFARE DAIRY COW HOUSING

AT

UPPER FARM
CHERHILL
CALNE
WILTS
SN11 8XW

FOR

DW PICKFORD & SON LTD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to explain the need and reasoning behind the proposed development to provide new milking facilities and calving cow and freshly calved housing facilities, at Upper Farm, Cherhill. The report explains the animal welfare reasons for the development, the financial need for the development and the benefits to the long-term viability of the business, benefits to other local businesses and trades.

1.2 This report will provide detailed reasoning for the selection of the site and the proposed positioning and orientation of the buildings on this site, with particular emphasis given to the benefits to the dairy herd health and welfare and the financial implications that are connected to these benefits.

1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings & documents:

- Pickford_PLAN_1_23_001 to 004
- Pickford_PLAN_2_23_001 to 004
- Pickford_PLAN_3_23_001 to 004
- Planning Statement – JMI planning

2.0 FARM BACKGROUND

2.1 Upper Farm, is farmed by the Pickford family. The farm is a well managed dairy farm, with a herd of dairy cow of around 300 cows plus youngstock. Some investment has been made into updating and modernising the dairy unit in recent years, however much of the dairy cow housing is outdated and is in need of updating and provide the highest welfare facilities for the dairy herd.

2.2 Upper Farm comprises of approximately 467 Ha of owned/rented/contracted land. The current cropping consists of Maize and grass, with an emphasis on high quality forage production for the dairy cattle.

3.0 DW PICKFORD & SON LTD FARM BUSINESS PLAN

3.1 In order to secure a strong business for the future, the farm business has identified the need to provide new high welfare dairy cattle facilities for the existing herd. This is part of the farms long term business development and to secure a strong business model for the future. The new high welfare dairy cow housing facility is required to provide better housing facilities for the milking herd, with the existing cattle buildings being continued to be used for housing youngstock, dry cows and improving cow collection facilities for the milking parlour. The new high welfare dairy cow facilities will also help with the efficiencies of running the business and will allow more efficient daily routines, with modern farm machinery and labour saving devices, which will help the farm to maintain a profitable business into the future. Having a well designed, modern dairy housing facility both provide the most comfortable housing for the dairy herd as well as help to ensure the highest calibre of staff will be retained and employed at Upper Farm.

3.2 The farm business currently employs 3 people full time, as well as 8 part time staff. In addition, the farm also sustains 2 generations of the Pickford family.

4.0 BACKGROUND TO SITE SELECTION

4.1 The existing site at Upper Farm has already been used for agricultural practices for many years, with an established pedigree Holstein dairy herd, modern livestock buildings, feed storage, silage clamps and slurry storage.

4.2 The site selection has been selected with careful thought to providing the high welfare dairy cow housing facilities adjacent to the existing farm milking and slurry facilities. The site has been selected, as it allows good cow flow to and from the facilities, as well as machinery access for daily routines.

4.3 The site is well screened from the east and north east and fits neatly into the site, alongside the existing farm infrastructure. The position of the buildings provide good access to both the existing dairy facilities and grazing fields.

4.4 The orientation of the buildings will allow good ventilation from the prevailing SW air flow. Well ventilated buildings are essential for good cattle health.

5.0 DESIGN OF THE NEW HIGH WELFARE DAIRY COW FACILITIES

5.1 The layout will be based on the current High Welfare recommendations for housing Dairy Cows. When selecting the proposed layout, careful consideration has been given to the design features to minimise the disease and injury risk and to optimise the health and welfare and technical performance of the dairy cattle.

5.2 The new Dairy Cow Housing facility will be built to the most up to date best practice standards, with advice sought from leading industry experts, and taking into account the most up to date research and recommendations from DEFRA.

5.3 The High Welfare Dairy Cow Housing facility will house approximately 200 dairy cows, from the existing herd, replacing outdated accommodation that these 200 cows are currently housed in. The remaining 100 cows, already have up to date modern high welfare cow housing. There is no plan to increase the herd size, just to provide the best high welfare cow housing for the whole herd.

5.4 The Dairy Cattle will be housed on deep bedded sand beds, with spacious area per animal. Wide passages will be fitted, to allow the cattle free, unrestricted access, to move around the facility and access feed and water ad libitum and provide spacious loafing area. The concrete passages will be imprinted with a groove to improve grip. Feed space at the feed fence will be at over 700mm per animal, allowing all cattle to feed simultaneously.

5.5 The use of existing levels on the site has been considered during the design stage to ensure that the highest levels of animal health and welfare are achieved.

5.6 The design of the building has been carefully thought out. The building will be partially clad with timber space board on the gable ends and open sides to ensure

excellent ventilation. With the average wind speed on this site being above 1m/sec for 95% of the time, the wind provides sufficient generating force to provide the necessary air changes within the building with natural ventilation.

6.0 EFFICIENT WORKING PRACTICES

6.1 The proposed layout allows for efficient daily routines, with straight lines for tractors and feed wagons to follow and adequate turning spaces where required at the end of the buildings. This is essential to ensure an efficiently run dairy unit and future viability of the business.

7.0 SLURRY STORAGE AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

7.1 Upper Farm already has a significant infrastructure of slurry storage facilities and a slurry separator and settlement system.

7.2 A full nutrient management plan is in place to ensure that good agricultural practices are followed and the farm is compliant with farming regulations, such as SSAFO, Farming Rules for Water and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.

8.0 IMPACT ON LOCAL BUSINESSES AND TRADES

8.1 The proposed development will provide a boost to the local economy, with local tradesmen and contractors benefiting from the construction works. Local businesses such as shops, restaurants, pubs and B&B's will benefit from the increased trade from contractors employed on the development and continued staff employed within the farm business.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 There is a very strong sound business and animal welfare case to construct the new High Welfare Cow Housing facilities, to ensure the successful farming business for the future, and provide excellent facilities for both staff and the dairy herd. It is important for the dairy business to progress and adapt and utilise new technology for improved efficiency and animal welfare standards. The development would bring a welcome boost to the local economy.