

TOMORROW'S CLIMATE *Today's Challenge*TM

5th January 2007

Research shows farmers think climate change is an opportunity

Climate change could offer great opportunities for farmers according to a new project launched at the Oxford Farming Conference this week.

New research amongst NFU members reveals 60% of farmers believe they are already experiencing climate change, and 70% believe that they will be affected in the next ten years. Respondants expect future impacts to be similar to those they are experiencing now, but with greater intensity.

The impacts of climate change will alter geographically but the UK is likely to experience:

- more warmer, wetter winters
- fewer frosts
- more hotter, drier summers
- more spring, summer and autumn droughts
- more extreme weather events such as storms and flood
- rising sea levels
- less annual rainfall

70 per cent of farmers are already taking action to combat climate change on their land, by reassessing their fertiliser needs and costs, improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel consumption.

On a national level, 20 per cent of farmers are already investigating or have committed to grow energy crops, and 29 per cent are taking action to adapt to the impacts of climate change by changing crops, planting shelter belts, improving drainage and disposing of waste more responsibly.

Forum for the Future is working with the NFU, CLA and ARF to communicate climate change to farmers, growers and land owners across the UK to promote understanding and change from within the industry. Founder Director of Forum for the Future Jonathon Porritt hosted a fringe launch event on Wednesday January 3, with NFU President Peter Kendall, CLA President

David Fursdon, EBLEX Chairman John Cross and BPC spokesman Mike Storey to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing farmers from climate change.

Mr Porritt said: "Farming contributes seven per cent of the UK's green house gas emissions and as a result of these emissions farmers are on the front line of adapting to the impacts of climate change.

"Climate change offers one of the greatest opportunities of the 21st century. Adapting to and mitigating climate change is not just an environmental issue – it's an economic opportunity."

- ENDS -

Editors notes:

- The project launch took place at the Oxford Examinations School on Wednesday January 3
- The project is a partnership between Forum for the Future, the Country Land and Business Association, the National Farmers Union and the Applied Research Forum
- The project is funded by Defra's Climate Challenge Fund, under the umbrella title of 'Tomorrow's climate, today's challenge'
- More information can be found at: www.farmingfutures.org.uk
- Media enquiries to project manager Katie Zabel on 020 7324 3670 / 07825 204434
- Photographs attached



Jonathon Porritt



The audience



The panel