

Appeal by Haygrove Limited
APP/W1850/W16/3148136
Appellant's Rebuttal Statement

Annex 5

Letters from the Soil Association & Riverford Organic Farmers

20th June 2016



South Plaza
Marlborough Street
Bristol BS1 3NX

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@SoilAssociation

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J Waltham
Managing Director
Haygrove Limited
Redbank
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 2JL

Dear James,

In support of your application for developing your organic land for further berry growing we write to support you and note that:

Haygrove are one of the only a few remaining UK grower of organic berries, providing 100% of supply to leading retailers Tesco, Waitrose & Sainsbury's, as well as to box schemes for Riverford & Abel & Cole; and also to Yeo Valley. Organic berries are supplied as ingredients for their products. It's estimated that you are responsible for more than 90% of UK organic berry production.

Organic berry demand initially dropped in 2008 (in-line with the broader economy during the financial crisis), causing many growers to come out of organic growing and over subsequent years has remained fairly stable. However, the market has now been in strong growth over the past three years very much meeting a strong consumer demand for healthy, environmentally friendly, pesticide free and British sourced ingredients. It's encouraging that you now have confidence in the market and wish to make significant investment in further growing capacity, using the additional land adjacent to one of your main sites. This represents very much a long term and deliberate strategic commitment to the future of organics in the UK. The market data also supports this view, and year on year data shows that the organic market has grown at around 5%, whilst non organic food is in ongoing deflation.

Organic berry production is not for the faint-hearted and the use of polytunnels is often considered essential to the viability of organic berry production within the UK. Organic food growing has many strong environmental benefits with no use of pesticides and an emphasis on building a resilient and sustainable organic soil structure.

The value to the organic market, by supporting UK businesses in a growing market is a key element in this matter and we ask that the importance of Haygrove to organic berry production, and the current resurgence in the organic market in general should not be dismissed. It would be a shame if this opportunity to support British organic growing wasn't able to be taken forward.

If you require any further info, please let me know.

Best regards,

Martin Sawyer
CEO Soil Association Certification





Wash Barn
Buckfastleigh
Devon
TQ11 0JU

17th June 2016

Dear James,

Award-winning and market-leading, Riverford is the UK's largest organic delivery company; supplying 47,000 organic food boxes a week to homes across the country.

Haygrove has been a vital part of our growth and success, as our organic berry partner for over seven years; and now our sole organic berry grower and supplier. There is no other UK grower of organic berries who can meet our requirements, and Haygrove plays an essential part in fulfilling our customers with organic berries.

I understand you are currently seeking permission to erect polytunnels on 14ha of organic land acquired in 2014, in which to grow organic strawberries. As organic farmers ourselves, we know that polytunnel coverage is fundamental to the growing of top quality organic produce; which we require and rely on to delight our customers.

Haygrove's enduring commitment to organic berry production is unmatched in the UK, and as our long-standing organic berry partner Haygrove has played a crucial role in Riverford's own growth and success. We ardently support the 14ha expansion in your organic berry production, and entreat the Authorities concerned to grant permission for the polytunnels which are essential to its success.

Regards

James MacGregor

General Manager