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THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 22 April 2009

RABI and IAgSA working together to help struggling farmers

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) has linked up with the Institute of Agricultural Secretaries and Administrators (IAgSA) to develop an in-depth support service for farmers in England and Wales with severe financial problems.

RABI has traditionally provided funding to relieve domestic hardship, resulting from misfortune, such as illness, disease or disaster. More recently RABI regional welfare officers have been assisting an increasing number to claim the DWP benefits to which they were unaware that they were entitled.

There will be farmers who for various reasons, often due to circumstances beyond their control, will have allowed their records to fall behind. Unfortunately RABI officers can then be presented with difficulties getting the information they need to provide assistance.

Under the proposed scheme RABI would be able to call on the support of a regional member of IAgSA to help assess the best way to provide the maximum support for the farming family and bring the farming records up to date.

Announcing the collaboration, RABI chairman Andrew Densham said: "We see this as a way of enabling us to gain a clearer picture of a farm's true potential and establish how we can best assist those in need. While we do not provide support for the business there are a number of ways, such as through the Gateway Project, that we can help farming families gain a lasting benefit rather than the quick-fix solution of one-off grants that are not sustainable in the long-term."

The scheme is initially being piloted in the south west of England.

end

Notes for editors follows

The royal agricultural charity providing financial support to the farming community past, present and future

President: The Lord Plumb DL, Chairman: HAC Densham CBE

Notes for editors

During 2008 RABI paid out just under £2.5m in direct welfare payments, grants and support, including a total of £287,758 to help 184 working farming families. At the same time RABI regional welfare officers were successful in obtaining state benefits and other statutory grants for farming families amounting to £67,137 in lump sum payments and £291,316 in ongoing benefits.

Further information about RABI is available on its website - www.rabi.org.uk

or from

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Further information about IagSA is available on its website - www.iagsa.co.uk