

ROUNDUP

Marine and Coastal Access Bill concerns

THE Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights has concluded that the Marine and Coastal Access Bill will be in breach of the Human Rights Act unless it is amended to give landowners a right of appeal.

Three other Parliamentary Committees, the Countryside Alliance and other rural groups have already called for such changes.

As it stands, the Bill would give Natural England the power to designate 'access corridors' and associated 'spreading room'.

Farmers and land managers, whilst they would be engaged in the designation process, would have no right of appeal to an independent body once a decision had been confirmed by the Secretary of State. Nor would they have any right of appeal against a refusal to allow temporary closure of 'spreading room'. Such rights were included in the original 'Right to Roam' legislation, but have been excluded from the new coastal access proposals.

James Legge, Countryside Alliance Head of Politics, said: "Defra must now accept that the Bill in its current form is not compliant with human rights legislation."

"Nor does it meet the Government's own commitment to strike a fair balance between the interests of the public and those of people with an interest in the land."

Consumer trust in farmers at an all time high - survey

A MAJOR Reader's Digest survey has revealed that trust in farmers is at an all time high.

Of those surveyed 82 per cent of respondents said that farmers were trusted 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' an increase of six per cent since the last survey in 2007.

According to the survey farming was one of the few professions to experience an increase in trust with some, such as financial advisers, experiencing a four point fall in confidence. Trust was higher amongst the under 40s at 83 per cent with 60 plus consumers at 79 per cent.

The survey was conducted across 16 European countries. Trust in the profession was at its highest in UK and Austria, but at its lowest in Poland and Romania with only 59 per cent and 57 per cent respectively saying that farmers were trusted 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot'.

The poll formed part of the larger Reader's Digest Trusted Brands survey which is now in its ninth year and which is internationally recognised as a benchmark measure of brand trust. Over 1,700 UK residents were surveyed.

Simmental show and sale at Carlisle

THE British Simmental Cattle Society is holding its National Spring Show and Sale at Borderway Mart, Carlisle, on Friday, April 24.

The sale will comprise of 11 bulls and 20 females. Judging commences at 11am with the sale beginning at noon.



LAUNCH: Attending the Mech-fiber launch are Keenan director James Healy (left) and Professor David Beever.

A new approach to

By RICHARD HALLERON

MECH-FIBER is a new concept in ruminant nutrition from the diet feeder manufacturer Richard Keenan and Company.

At the recent launch, which was attended by Farming Life's Richard Halleron, Executive chairman Gerard Keenan claimed that Mech-Fiber represents a new, integrated approach to dairy and beef feeding. It focuses on the physical structure of rations to optimise their utilisation in the rumen, thereby extracting more production from less feed inputs by increasing Feed Conversion Efficiency (FCE) by up to 30%.

He added: "We first became aware of this potentially new approach to nutrition courtesy of exceptional farm performance results achieved in France and the UK with Keenan feeders."

"This encouraged us to look more closely at how the fibre component of a ruminant's diet is being delivered. Through follow up research and commercial farm trials we have now honed in on the physical engineering, nutritional and IT dimensions that are required within an overall ruminant feed delivery package to deliver significantly improved animal performance. We have branded this new approach to beef and dairy feeding: Mech-fiber."

The aforementioned research was carried out by staff at the Universities of Illinois and Reading and then further developed by Keenan ruminant feeding specialists. Significantly, the new Mech-fiber approach is based on the concept of 'physical nutrition' with field results showing possible



RATION: A typical Mech-fiber ration.

margin gains of £1.41/cow per day. "We've known a lot about the importance of the physical aspects of the ration such as chop length, the importance of 'physically effective fibre' and the need for consistent mixing, but this new thinking takes this several significant strides forward," explained Professor Jim Drackley from Illinois University.

"We now know the extent to

which the combination of bulk density of the ration, uniformity of particle size distribution, physical structure and architecture of the fibre particles, affects physical consistency of the resulting rumen contents, and the importance of this on the cow's ability to utilise the ration more efficiently for milk production.

"Furthermore, we now have the knowledge of how to practically

manipulate physical ration structure to optimise FCE."

Early indications that the key to unlocking FCE was in the physical form of rations came from research at Reading University. Using identical rations in a vertical auger machine and a Keenan mixer, the Keenan-fed cows produced 1.0 litre more milk per day - 40.3 litres/cow/day as opposed to 39.3 litres/cow/day. The Keenan fed