

**STATES OF JERSEY**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**BLAMPIED ROOM, STATES BUILDING**

- - - - -

<b><u>Present:</u></b>	<b>Deputy Rob Duhamel (Chairman)</b>
	<b>Senator Ted Vibert</b>
	<b>Deputy Gerard Baudains</b>
	<b>Senator Jean Le Maistre</b>
	<b>Deputy Phil Rondel</b>
	<b>Deputy Bob Hill</b>

- - - - -

**EVIDENCE FROM:**

**Concern**

- - - - -

on

**Friday, 9th July 2004**  
**(9:14:50 to 11:01:09)**

- - - - -

(Digital Transcription by Marten Walsh Cherer Limited,  
Midway House, 27/29 Cursitor St., London, EC4A 1LT.  
Telephone: 020 7405 5010. Fax: 020 7405 5026)

- - - - -

**EVIDENCE OF MR ADRIAN WALTON**  
**(CONCERN)**

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Good morning and welcome. Now, before we start, I have got to read you the Riot Act. So it is important that you fully understand the conditions under which you are appearing at this hearing. You will find a printed copy of the statement I am about to read on the table in front of you.

Shadow Scrutiny Panels have been established by the States to create opportunities for training States Members and Officers in developing new skills in advance of the proposed changes of government. During this period, the Panel has no statutory powers and the proceedings at public hearings are not covered by Parliamentary privilege. This means that anyone participating, whether a Panel Member or a person giving evidence, is not protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during hearings. The Panel would like you to bear this in mind when answering questions and to ensure that you understand that you are fully responsible for any comments you make. Okay?

MR WALTON: Yes, okay.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. So I would like to kick off, if I may, with one question. In view of the fact that the funding for the Agri-Environmental Scheme has not been forthcoming, although there has been more than one effort to try and procure the funds as a growth bid ----

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: And bearing in mind that perhaps it could be said that there had been significant changes since 2002 in the industry and ongoing, could you perhaps outline for the Panel what you see, or what your organisation sees, as the consequences of not having implemented the scheme?

MR WALTON: Not having?

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Implemented the scheme.

MR WALTON: Well, it is a disappointment, I think. We wanted the schemes for organic farming, because it is expensive to convert, in the sense of lost income and things like that, while the ground is prepared for organic farming. I think that is a great disappointment. Also, I also personally envisage funding needed to re-establish tied farm bases, because a lot of farm bases have been redeveloped, as I said in the ... you have got a copy of ----

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: We have a copy of your submissions.

MR WALTON: Farm bases have been rapidly lost. So you are left with plenty of land, but no farm bases. So I think you will need grants for re-establishing these when people start looking for farms again to rent or something like that, but we see that as the Achilles' heel of Jersey farming, the high cost of property and the fact that no one can envisage going into farming as a tenant now because of the high cost of property. If, of course, the value of property came down and it became attractive again for letting farms and starting up guesthouses, it would be fine, but now the only thing we see ahead is larger farms, hopefully farming extensively and organically, with ... I think we will have to start doing something about more rotation, or more organic farming because of the necessity to maintain water quality, which is a strong point.

There is a difference of opinion on organisation, I have to say from the beginning. I have read this out, but I will have to chop a lot of it out, in discussions, because where some are free marketeers, I am not. I have got more the attitude of the French -- localised food production as much as possible. That is my point of view, but there are one or two others that are free marketeers, which I am not. I do not believe in globalisation for farming. Even if you have to pay more for your food, I think you should do, and we want to protect, above all, the dairy industry over here.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: We received some evidence yesterday and today that land prices have actually dropped and it is actually making it easier for people to rent at a more economic level than was available.

MR WALTON: Yes, yes. That is a very welcome development. I have some patches of land too that I let, but I can foresee one or two of them just going unlet before long if things don't change, but it is the shortage of farming bases for small operators that is the problem. So we are reliant on the bigger operators to find use for our land, you know.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: But, specifically, bearing in mind that the States actually haven't funded the particular proposals for Agri-Environment, could it actually not be stated that due to the downturn in the industry, there have been even bigger effects to the betterment of farming in the long term than if it had actually taken place?

MR WALTON: I can see that. I can see that, particularly if the bigger operators want to farm extensively. If they can get their land cheap enough, they will do that, I think. The bigger

operators, the problem with them is farming succession. What happens when the person wants to retire? He sells his assets. As I mentioned, the idea of having the ownership and the management of the larger holdings separate we think would be a good idea, and that was generally agreed.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: So if I could press you then, in view of the question I asked originally, in view of the fact that the implementation of the scheme hasn't taken place because it hasn't been funded, have there been, in your organisation's view, any serious detrimental affects within the Island's environment?

MR WALTON: I think we do, because we see farming, which is what I do, if I couldn't let some patches of land that I've got, it is just abandoned and becomes unmanaged because it costs money to manage. It will go to ... well, I have already seen some valleys which are thick with brambles because they are no longer used for grazing. I have seen that in a number of places. The coast areas will go as well. If fields are not cultivated, they will just be abandoned and, indeed, one field I have got in mind was brought back into production, I think, after the war. It had been abandoned either because of the Germans or because of whatever, and it was abandoned and had to be brought back. It was thick with brambles and things like that. This is what is going to happen to a lot of land if there isn't a ready person who wants to rent it. What you get for land now is nothing. It is pittance. It is not worth selling.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Before I put it to the rest of the Panel, is there a greater, in your view, environmental benefit to actually having land managed under some kind of agricultural scheme or management as compared to allowing nature to have its way and produce brambles?

MR WALTON: Yes, yes. We do. Whether it is for wildlife or whether it is for bird nesting sites or whether it is for growing potatoes or grazing animals, we see an advantage in it being managed and making it worthwhile for people to manage it.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Okay. Any questions from the Panel?

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Could we hopefully turn to the scheme as such without going into the detail of it?

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Did your organisation actually support the concept of the scheme, which was linked into the agricultural industry obviously?

MR WALTON: Yes, yes. Most intensive financing to organic and that kind of thing and rotation. Of course, with potatoes, I think they need to be more rotated if you are going to prevent the degradation of the soil, because if you plant potatoes every year, year in and decade out, the land loses its quality.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Do you think that it is generally understood by the public what the effects will be of the downturn in agriculture and potentially land, I think the Chairman said, “*going back to nature*”, which is a rather nice sort of romantic term almost?

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Which suggests that everything will be beautiful.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Do you think there is a widespread understanding by the public?

MR WALTON: No, I don't think. I don't think they realise that just abandoning land is necessarily a good thing.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Senator Vibert?

SENATOR VIBERT: We have had some evidence given to us yesterday that the farming industry has in fact been forced to carry out a great deal of environmental work by the marketeers in the United Kingdom, or mainly the supermarkets, who are now insisting on protocols to protect the environment. As a result of that, much of the work that could have, or some of the work that was going to be done, under the Agri-Environment Scheme is actually being done, but it is costing the farmer and he is getting no reward for that.

MR WALTON: No.

SENATOR VIBERT: And that is a point that was raised with the politicians, as to whether the UK understand that situation. But the point was also put to us that they are likely to now start insisting on crop rotation. As a result of that, it is possible that in fact we are going to need far more land than we currently have.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: And I wondered how that fitted in with your view that you felt that land was ... that the amount of land that is going to be used for farming is going to get less

and less. In fact, the evidence that we were given yesterday is that they are going to need more and more.

MR WALTON: Yes. Well, I think there is quite a lot of unused or under-utilised now. Even in an extensive rotational scheme, it is less, this potential. One of the things that would help farmers over here, and I pointed it out in the report we gave, was the scandal of lorries going back empty and also why is the Harbours and Airports Committee free to levy whatever duties they like in view of the situation? There should be perhaps a computer base for accessing free transport and this should be lower rated. That would help exports, freight and wharfage charges. We were wondering why the Harbours and Airports didn't have some of their pricing under the Industries Committee. We wondered why that was so. It seems obvious that we need to keep a watch on freight charges and make available a lot of the empty transport that goes back to England after delivering stuff here, small consignments particularly. They need something like a computer website to do it, with access for anyone so that they can get a price for freightage and wharfage and it should be as low as possible so as to facilitate any exports that might develop, because it is becoming more ... I think now that farming over here is producing more for the local market than it ever was, and some of these will prove to be quite successful and produce surpluses. I know one organic farmer who exports carrots to Guernsey, or has done in the past.

PANEL MEMBER: Well, there are a lot of donkeys in Guernsey. (Laughter, with some inaudible comments)

SENATOR VIBERT: The other question I would like to put to you is that you seem to link the price of property with the problems in farming.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: But in fact a lot of farming is done on rented land and property isn't really relevant in that respect.

MR WALTON: Well, it is in a sense, because when a farmer retires, he sometimes -- quite often and in fact more and more -- doesn't have a successor within the family. He has got now the option of having his farm base redeveloped, and the same attitude of mind is among hoteliers. If you can develop your farm or your hotel to flats, luxury flats at enormous prices, I mean, most people, if they are trying to raise money for their retirement, will do that. So

that is the problem. So if prices were to come down, I think it would aid both tourism and agriculture. In my view, the high cost of property is a problem over here, and not only that but workers need more money because the rents and prices of property are high. So if you could bring them down, it would be an advantage to tourism and agriculture. That is one factor that I see anyway.

SENATOR VIBERT: But really it is the price of the land that really is important to the farmer.

MR WALTON: For the bigger farmer, I think, yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: That appears to have levelled out now.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: The evidence we have been given is that it is now at a reasonable level.

MR WALTON: Yes, yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: Sort of compatible with the state of farming in the Island today.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: But the question that was constantly given to us, or the answers that were given to us yesterday, was that the farmers were themselves paying for environmental controls and they were getting very little back.

MR WALTON: Well, this is it. This is a problem with farm incomes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: On the submission actually, it seemed to me that you were looking at farming generally and looking into the countryside, but I think that it needs to be pointed out that the purpose of the Scrutiny Panel, rightly or wrongly (because we are learning at the moment) is to actually focus on the Agri-Environmental Scheme.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Are there any aspects of the scheme which you feel are more important than others, or do you think that it is across the board, because we need to look at it? One of the priorities in terms of what are the objectives of the Scrutiny Panel is to, first of all, look at the merit of the scheme and then the question of the funding is the other side of it.

MR WALTON: Yes. Well, we didn't actually go into the scheme itself. We had done it before, so we had looked at it, but it had gone flat. We thought there was no money for it now, so we were looking at other things. But I would say the main things were the

movement away from production levels to headage, particularly of cattle, and the conversion to organic was really the most important thing, particularly conversion to organic, which needs two years preparation.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Are you referring in particular to the milk and dairy industry?

MR WALTON: Well, to any, anything that encourages organic farming and more rotation. I'm not saying ... I mean, the critical thing is the preservation of the dairy herd at the moment. I think that it applies, a lot of the things apply, to growing, particularly local. The Jersey Marketing Scheme for buying Jersey produce, it is very, very important to support that.

SENATOR VIBERT: I know this is outside our terms of reference, but do you see any merit in a decision by the Government to actually insist that local restaurants and hotels actually do serve Jersey Royal potatoes?

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: If necessary, by law?

MR WALTON: Yes, if you could get away with it with the various international agreements, there is no reason why you shouldn't do that.

SENATOR VIBERT: It has been a pet hobbyhorse of mine.

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Hill?

DEPUTY HILL: Yes. If I could just expand on some things we discovered as a result of having yesterday? I think there was a certain feeling that the situation whereby the States had agreed to a principle and agreed to a subsidy and a funding would have some detrimental impact on those people within the industry and it has led to a reduction in numbers in the last two years. It could be argued that, if we were looking at it now, we might even look at it differently because there have been quite a number of people that have dropped out. But it would appear that some of the advantages from the drop out, and I think Senator Vibert alluded to it, were that we are now having a situation whereby we could have as many, we were told yesterday, as 9,000 verges of land that is going to be left unattended.

MR WALTON: I can see that.

DEPUTY HILL: On the other hand, we were also told that there could be some benefits



from that, because what would happen was that the price of land would drop and also, because of the protocols by the supermarkets in the UK, there may well be more and a greater need for rotation, whereby even those fields may not be cultivated every year, but they would still be kept in agriculture because they would be left for one year or two years rotation.

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY HILL: Would you accept that, even though it is almost like a contradiction in terms, a number of people went out because they may have felt they needed the Agri-Environment support, but there have also been some advantages now by that decision?

MR WALTON: Yes. There is a problem in a lack of farm bases, because I know that people have overcome it. I mean, the person who rents most of our land is working from the next parish, you know. But for some livestock it is better to have sometimes a greater presence, you know, nearby. Holdings are getting very scattered and near where we are all the farms, six or seven neighbouring farms, are no longer farms.

DEPUTY HILL: And, of course, one of the downsides would have been that, because the States didn't fulfil its promise, the money was not forthcoming and there is the possibility that we have greater nitrate problems and greater slurry problems.

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY HILL: What are your views, or what would Concern's views be about user pays? Do you think the taxpayer should be paying towards the reduction of nitrates and slurry, or do you think that should be part and parcel of the Agri-Environmental Scheme?

MR WALTON: Well, I think it should be part of Agri-Environment. Farmers should be encouraged to process the slurry into proper organic material and use less nitrates. I think this is all part of an avowal of healthy farming, particularly as regards the water, the water factor.

DEPUTY HILL: So the decision of the States not to give that money will have a detrimental affect?

MR WALTON: It will. It could do.

DEPUTY HILL: Could do?

MR WALTON: It could do if people fall back on highly intensive methods in order to overcome the price problems.

DEPUTY HILL: So has Concern any concerns about the fact that, if there is more intensive farming, with greater machinery, one is looking at greater fields? Are there any views about the fact that there are a number of small fields -- not the marginal fields which are already marginal, I am talking about the ones on the coast, which may be difficult to work -- but there are a number of what I would call good flat fields of two verges or so, where big machinery couldn't come in? I know you have got some personal land.

MR WALTON: I have got personal views about maintaining hedges, but I think there is no doubt that it is easier to let fields to big farmers if they are big. There is no question about that.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Senator Vibert?

SENATOR VIBERT: I wonder if I could just ask you about the nitrates? We were given evidence yesterday that in fact farmers today are far more responsible in the use of fertilisers and much of the blame that has been attributed to them is as a result of the activities of their forefathers who didn't actually understand, who didn't do it deliberately but who were not aware because the world wasn't aware at the time of the difficulties about this.

MR WALTON: No.

SENATOR VIBERT: I just wondered what your view was of that. Secondly, I noticed in your report that you make a point that there is an unlimited extraction of water and the water table by growers.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: Have you any evidence to support that, that there is an unlimited extraction of water?

MR WALTON: It is not just by growers. It is by domestic people that are not linked to the mains water supply. There has been a drop in the water table round our way. There is no doubt about that. It is not just through growers. Water table is dropping all the time. So it is not just growers, it is domestic users as well. The water is going down and we have noticed it particularly in our area.

SENATOR VIBERT: It is just I was a little concerned for the industry that Concern seemed to be laying the blame for unlimited extraction of water that the growers were mainly to blame.

MR WALTON: I think we feel the person who owns land or farms it has the right to draw as much ... well, my own feeling is that the person who owns and farms it has the right to draw as much water as they need for good agriculture, healthy agriculture. So if it is rotational and organic, he should have the liberty to draw as much water as he needs. But that is my own personal view. We have differences of opinion.

DEPUTY RONDEL: You mentioned that the water table has dropped. What evidence have you got on this, please?

MR WALTON: Well, wells are tending to dry up. We have never sunk a bore hole. We just use a well and there is no doubt that it has become closer to drying up. At one time it filled up quicker. Bore holes have gone dry in our neighbourhood. I personally, as a domestic user, am on the water mains now, thanks to my sister, who badgered them to bring it down to us. It took quite a long time to get the water round our way. But the water is probably too expensive for farmers to use on a commercial basis, so you need all the water locally for farming. But there are an awful lot of swimming pools and some of them are not on mains water yet by any means.

SENATOR LE MAISTRE: Do you have any views on the quality of water?

MR WALTON: Well, I think that there have been readings that have ... this is going over many years now and what they are like now I'm not sure, but there have been many readings that have shown excessive nitrates and also, which is more worrying, in my view, is pesticide residues in water, which is not very good. But there is probably also in more. It doesn't matter for agriculture, but, I mean, there is probably also potentially dangerous organic material in some local water supplies. You know, wells and so on get polluted with animal waste and things like that. That has always been the case anyway. But more serious ones are the nitrates and pesticides. We would like to see the farming methods change so that this doesn't become so apparent. Organic farming would help, although it is not the complete answer because there is still nitrates leeching with that. We would like to see a development in that way and then, when we have got the kind of farming we favour, then we would see what the problem was and if we need to build a denitrification plant, so be it.

SENATOR VIBERT: I have just got one last question on organic farming. The view was put to us yesterday that the difficulty with labelling organic farming is that France has a different

interpretation.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: And England has a different interpretation.

MR WALTON: Yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: In fact, the public has lost confidence in organic farming because of it, because there is no sort of protocol set down that organic farming means the same everywhere internationally.

MR WALTON: Yes, yes.

SENATOR VIBERT: Do you see that as a problem?

MR WALTON: Yes, I do, yes. I see that as a problem. It would be ideal to have a common standard. This is where the European Union could lay down a common standard for organic farming.

SENATOR VIBERT: That will be the day.

MR WALTON: Pardon?

SENATOR VIBERT: That will be the day.

MR WALTON: Well, they always lay down the size of sausages, but not on important things.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: Yes. Can I get back to your answer in relation to when I asked for the evidence on the water table level having dropped, and you said wells and boreholes, but you also said that you were on the water main.

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY RONDEL: So what parts of the Island are you talking about, or are you talking about a global part of the Island where the water table has dropped? Have you got any statistical evidence?

MR WALTON: I can only answer from my own experience locally in St Martin.

DEPUTY RONDEL: You should change your deputy. Perhaps it might make a difference.

MR WALTON: I don't think any deputy can change the water table. It is variable, according to whether we have a bad drought this summer, which seems unlikely.

DEPUTY RONDEL: The other thing is what is Concern's views on more land going

actually for what I call open grazing for sheep and the like?

MR WALTON: Oh, we are favourable towards sheep and even pigs. I have seen pigs in little electric fences being controlled on land some distance away from where the farmer was living. It was a small scale experimental operation, but there are quite a lot of them in England. They have their little huts, you know, pig huts. You have two or three in a field and you have a fence, electric fencing. They are much lower than cattle fencing and it seems to be effective.

DEPUTY RONDEL: And horse studs and ----

MR WALTON: Well, horses are okay, but I wouldn't like to see the Island ... I prefer to see cattle or pigs.

DEPUTY RONDEL: Is that your own preference or is that the views of Concern?

MR WALTON: It is difficult. I never really tested it out, but I think the majority probably would prefer to see Jersey cattle, but I don't know whether they would all agree with that. We have people that want to see more golf courses and more horses, but I am not in favour of that myself. I would like to see as many animals, because animals help the health of the soil and also, if we are going to maintain the slaughterhouse over here, we have to have meat animals, otherwise we may lose our slaughterhouse if they are cut back.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: That is exactly what I was going to ask you. In your submission you mentioned a slaughterhouse. What are your views on beef cattle in Jersey, because I know this matter has been raised before. The Jersey cow is not ideal for beef. Charolais was suggested at one time.

MR WALTON: No, but pigs are.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: But, regarding cattle, have you any particular views on whether we should allow another breed in to farm for beef?

MR WALTON: Well, the problem is, I believe, disease, the possibility of introducing disease, if you brought in bullocks. If there was no danger of disease, you could bring in or import young bullocks and graze them on the land, but is there any danger? Perhaps only a veterinary expert could answer this: is there any danger of disease being brought into the Island by TB and things like that which is the Island is free of at the moment? This is the main drawback to that. After all, we get derogation from the European Union for milk

because we want to keep the Island disease free for cattle. So I see a problem there. But pigs and sheep, you know, you can develop local stocks of those and we have done in the past and could do in the future. With these electric fences, you can actually use them. They could be used to ... you could put the pigs on things like turnips and you could fold them, as they do in England with sheep. But pigs with little electric fences you could.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: The only comment I would make is I know it seems some few years ago now, but there was quite a furore at Maufant about the smell coming from cattle. I don't think too many people are familiar with the smell of that comes from pig farms.

MR WALTON: If they are extensive, then ----

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: Then it is ten times worse.

MR WALTON: Only if they are concentrated for long periods.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: You will have the environmental people complaining.

MR WALTON: Farming is farming, but I think if it is done extensively and the pigs are moved on regularly, there is no problem. It may be more profitable to do it that way. This intensive ... one of the things you can ... I mean, I have seen it in the supermarket, Prince Charles's organic pig meat. I have seen that in the supermarket and it is done that way, I think, extensively. You know, also probably they grazed turnips because pigs like rooting up stuff.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Can I ask, within the Agri-Environment Scheme as proposed and although the monies weren't forthcoming, what concerns you as to the actual level of payments within the categories as scheduled?

MR WALTON: Well, it is properly targeted, and I think we said originally that it should be proactive, it should be encouraging farmers to be doing things, if it sufficiently proactive and not reactive, and it should be as large as possible.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Okay. Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: You may not be able to answer this one, but what would Concern's views be in supporting, if the States were minded to buy, a number of small farm units and let them to bona fide farmers at a reasonable rent, not the half price that they expect, whether they obtain them in this day and age, but a subsidised rent? Would Concern be in favour of that?

MR WALTON: Well, I am very much in favour. I have always advocated that in building, including in past unsuccessful election campaigns. I have always advocated that. I think it would be an excellent idea.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Hill?

DEPUTY HILL: Could I? Having done a fair bit of reading now the Agri-Environment has been under way since the about the 1970s and Jersey is one of the only places, one of the few places, in the west of Europe that does not have an Agri-Environmental Scheme, as an organisation like Concern, I know it concerns Concern, but do you think as a body, as a lobbying body, that you could be doing more to concentrate the minds of States Members about the importance of the Agri-Environmental Scheme whereby if one is coming again it may well be successful?

MR WALTON: I think we could actually. We have made this a submission. I mean, we could go public with this.

DEPUTY HILL: I enjoyed reading it. I thought it was quite illuminating, but you will accept the fact that possibly greater concentration should be given to possibly giving greater support from bodies like yourself within the industry?

MR WALTON: Yes, yes. Unfortunately, we have divisions of opinion about various things, about golf courses, about horses and things like that and about the whole idea of the globalisation of food production, which I am against. I think people should pay a bit more for their food and get it more locally. We have got some of the best land in the world. If it goes out of action, it's a scandal, because we are importing food from countries that can't feed themselves. This is a scandal.

DEPUTY BAUDAINS: Do you think there is a danger though that the public and maybe States Members also underestimate the damage to the Island generally and agriculture in particular through not having the Agri-Environmental Scheme?

MR WALTON: Yes. I think there is a great danger. There will be temptation on demands to develop more land for building and things like that and certainly I don't think you want ... I mean, I have seen in different places where farming has retreated and it goes back to a sort of wild scrub -- horrible to look at and no value to nature in fact, biodiversity and things like that. I've seen it in New Zealand and I've seen it elsewhere too. It takes thousands of years

to get back to nature.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Deputy Rondel?

DEPUTY RONDEL: Yes. The majority of farm vehicles are very, very large and they do come with some types of subsidy.

MR WALTON: Yes.

DEPUTY RONDEL: What is Concern's view on the subsidising of some of these very large farm pieces of equipment?

MR WALTON: Well, we haven't actually discussed it, but I personally think that if we could do without the very large pieces of equipment and it was still possible to ... well, with the big farms we have today, we need big machinery to get round. Hence they only want large fields. So I think that if we could do without very large machinery it would be better, but if we are going into the position of one organisation farming, you know, thousands of verges, then I can't really see how you can avoid it. Whether it is the kind of thing you need to subsidise or let market forces decide, I don't know. It has never been discussed, but I think, in a sense, the money should come for other things rather than large machinery. The farmer has to make a decision on the market and economically whether it is worth his while to pay the full price for farm machinery. I don't think it really needs subsidising actually.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: Right. Well, there don't appear to be any further questions. Have you any final comments you would like to make?

MR WALTON: Well, I think a feeling of despair personally. As for the group, I think they more or less ... well, the comments are that "farming has finished over here" and things like that. But I just regard it with despair, the trends and what has happened.

DEPUTY DUHAMEL: The Panel would like to thank you for your contribution and submission and thank you for coming.

MR WALTON: Okay, thank you.