

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

TOM'S SETTING OUT TO PROBE FARMING'S FUTURE WITHOUT SUBSIDIES



Farmer and land agent Tom Bishop is jetting off to New Zealand for six months so he can be better informed about farming without subsidies.

New Zealand abandoned its subsidy system overnight more than 30 years ago, with many farmers facing a tough time as a result. But many others have done well and Tom wants to find out what lies behind the different outcomes. Here in the UK, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has made no secret that the current English subsidy system will end, possibly as soon as in five years' time, with farm payments depending instead on environmental or animal welfare

improvements.

"I will be talking to a wide variety of farmers, landowners, and investors and following the trail around farming enterprises as my quest develops," explained Tom, an associate partner at BCM Rural Property Specialists at Sutton Scotney, near Winchester in Hampshire. He is also director of a business managing and farming more than 6,500 acres of arable land and a flock of 3,500 flock of ewes split between Southern England and the Welsh Hills of Carmarthenshire.

"My farming and land agency in the UK gives me an insight into a wide variety of different problems and I'm hoping that what I learn during my six month sabbatical will equip me to hold a series of small-group seminars when I return, each tailored to a particular audience type.

"I will also be blogging and tweeting as I travel and have an open mind about what I may find. I have arranged to see a range of enterprises from smallholders who went out of business to international investors and agribusiness companies. As news of my trip has spread among colleagues and clients, I'm getting even more suggestions of people I might visit and offers of introductions.

"Many of these may be useful but I want to follow my nose, depending on what I find, and see how the trip develops."

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