

*You'll remember me when the west wind moves
Upon the fields of barley – Sting*

Let us know what you think, email us at edu@swale.gov.uk



Recent research conducted by The Prince's Countryside Fund for National Countryside Week (from July 14 to 16) reveals that a significant number of people undervalue the contribution and worth of the British countryside.

Rural and “opportunity” are words not often associated together, but with 5.5 million people employed in the rural economy, and domestic food and drink contributing £22 billion to the UK economy, The Prince's Countryside Fund says it's time to rethink how we view the value of the countryside.

Britain is more reliant on food imports than at any stage over the last 40 years. Official statistics on Britain's self-sufficiency—the measure of how much food eaten in Britain is grown here - is just 58.9 per cent.

It comes as an increasing number of sheep and dairy farmers have abandoned the industry in recent years, with 60,000 new entrants needed to enter farming in the next decade to keep the industry at a similar level as it is today.

The Prince's Countryside Fund, which has given over £3.8 million in grants in the four years since its inception, was set up by HRH The Prince of Wales to provide support to the multitude of remarkable organisations and individuals working tirelessly to keep farmers farming and our rural communities alive.

To find out more about the Princes Countryside Fund, visit their website www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk

Original article from The Smallholder – www.smallholder.co.uk



Road accidents involving farm machinery increase by about 60% at harvest time, new figures show.

As harvest gets under way, rural insurer NFU Mutual is urging motorists to take care on rural roads and resist overtaking farm vehicles to avoid accidents. Rural roads are generally three times more dangerous than urban roads, according to research by Roadsafes.com

But this risk is increased further during harvest time when tractors are more active on roads and often travelling at lower speeds, turning in and out of fields. Last year, NFU Mutual dealt with 1,200 claims from July to September relating to road accidents involving farm machinery, with the most common type of accident involving a tractor or tractor and trailer turning right across a road into a field and colliding with a car or van driver who is overtaking a line of traffic in front.

NFU Mutual motor insurance specialist Victoria Walton said: "On average we see a 60% increase in third-party accidents involving tractors during harvest time compared to other months of the year. Accidents often occur when tractors slow down before turning right and impatient drivers try to overtake without realising the tractor is about to move across the road, or that another car is coming towards them. Our claims data reveals that one-third of serious accidents involved one party turning right."

Six tips to prevent road accidents during harvest

- Ensure tractor lights and flashing beacons are switched on and working
- Place indicator lights on top of tractor cab and trailer tailgate
- Clean residue off lights and check daily
- Make sure drivers, especially casuals, are aware of road risks
- Ensure tractor's mirrors are correctly set up and clean
- Consider putting a sign on roadside verge 200 yards before field – "Caution tractors turning right"

Original Article from Farmers Weekly – www.fwi.co.uk



Farmers Weekly have reported recently about an American farmer who lost his phone and was reunited with it - via Japan nine months later.

The phone, containing beloved photos of his family, was dropped by the Oklahoma farmer into a grain bin while he was working last October.

The phone disappeared into the grain store and from there was loaded with the grain into a truck and off to a grain facility in another part of Oklahoma. From there, it sailed down the Arkansas River in a barge and was then shipped to Japan among with 2m bushels of grain sorghum.

Then at the beginning of July, the farmer received a phone call from a kindly grain worker in Japan who had found the phone and wanted to return it to him and, finally, phone and farmer were reunited.

So Farmers Weekly are looking to find some more farm phone stories, be it strange, hilarious or heart-warming. You can comment on the bottom of the original article (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/07/07/2014/145421/amazing-and-heart-warming-story-of-a-farmer39s-lost.htm>) or you can tweet your story to @farmersweekly.



With the abundance of food and drink produced in the borough, August will be a bumper month for various festivals and celebrations showcasing the wonderful produce grown here in Swale. If you want to see what's on near you, don't forget to check out www.visit-swale.co.uk/whats-on for full event listings.

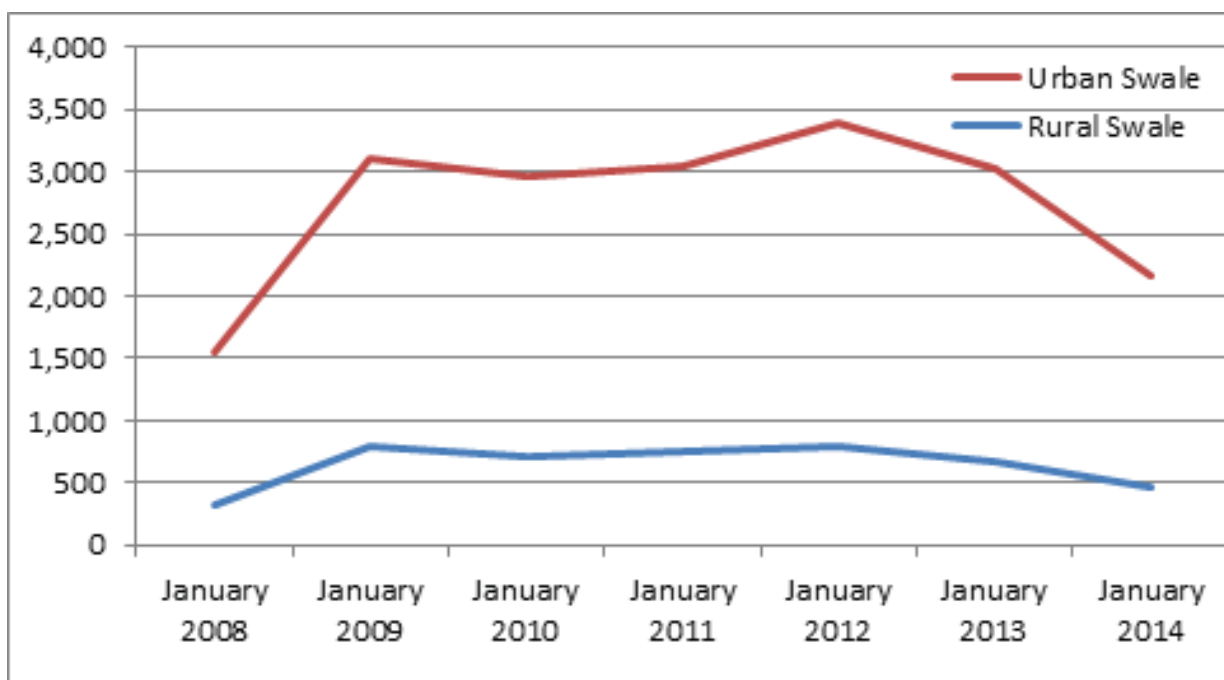


Central Government has issued its latest quarterly rural economic report. The bulletin is a 'dashboard' of indicators presenting a range of statistics, designed to provide evidence of the effects of the economic changes in rural areas.

This latest report gives an overview of the modest upturn in the UK's rural areas from January to March 2014.

Whilst access to similar data at the more local level, to reflect the position in rural Swale can be limited, we will look to bring some of what is available to future bulletins. As a 'starter for 10' the graph below shows the relative position in rural and urban Swale in terms of the numbers of people claiming jobseekers allowance.

Claimant Count





In England 9.3 million people (18% of the population) live in rural areas; 43.7 million (82%) live in urban areas.

Below is a selection of economic indicators on aspects of the rural economy for January to March (Quarter 1 / Q1) in 2014, compared with October to December (Quarter 4 / Q4) in 2013, and overleaf annual change.

- Rural house prices up in Q1**
(average sale price of properties)

Rural areas: £266,500 (0.3% higher than in Q4)
Urban areas: £252,100 (1.8% higher than in Q4)

- Rural unemployment rate down in Q1**

Rural areas: 4.2% (down from 4.6% in Q4)
Urban areas: 7.3% (down from 7.6% in Q4)

- Rural claimant count unchanged in Q1**
(% of working age population claiming unemployment benefits)

Rural areas: 1.4% (the same as in Q4)
Urban areas: 3.2% (down from 3.3% in Q4)

- Rural redundancies up in Q1**
(Redundancies per 1,000 workers)

Rural areas: 4.3 (up from 3.1 in Q4)
Urban areas: 5.2 (up from 4.6 in Q4)

- Rural business insolvencies unchanged in Q1**
(insolvencies per 1,000 businesses)

Rural areas: 0.7 (the same as in Q4)
Urban areas: 0.8 (the same as in Q4)

*If printed this can be folded along the dotted lines
into three to form a leaflet*

House prices (annual change)

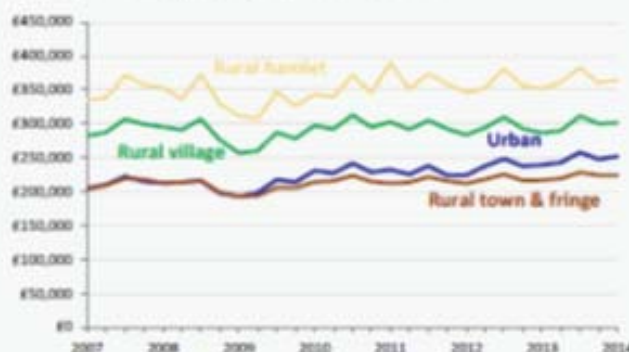
Average house prices, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Average sale price		
	Q1/2013	Q1/2014	change ¹
Urban	£239,300	£252,100	5.3%
Rural	£255,500	£266,500	4.3%
Rural town & fringe	£217,000	£223,900	3.2%
Rural village	£286,700	£301,500	5.2%
Rural hamlet	£352,000	£365,300	3.8%
England	£242,200	£254,700	5.1%

¹ data covers the transactions received at Land Registry, change is calculated using unrounded figures whereas prices are shown rounded to the nearest £100.
Source: Land Registry © Crown copyright 2013, Price Paid Data / Delta

- Between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014 the average rural house sale price increased by 4.3%; the average urban house sale price increased by 5.3%.

Average house prices, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Land Registry © Crown copyright 2013, Price Paid Data / Delta

- Average prices in *rural hamlets* and *rural villages* have been consistently above the average found in urban areas (by 45% and 20% in Q1/2014 respectively).
- Since 2009, average house prices in *rural town & fringe* areas have been lower than the average found in urban areas (and were lower by 11% in Q1/2014).

Economic activity (annual change)

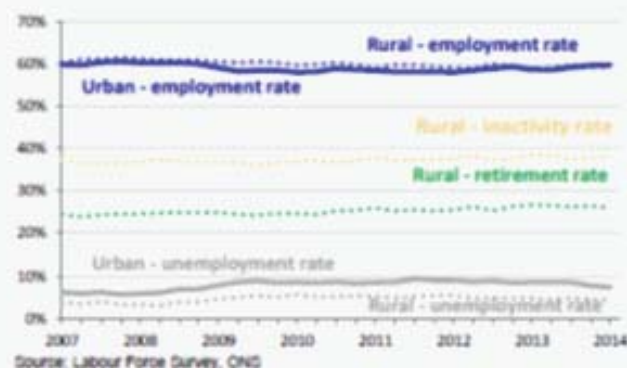
Economic activity, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Rate as % of people aged 16 & over	Urban		Rural	
	Q1 2013	Q1 2014	Q1 2013	Q1 2014
Employment ¹	58.6%	59.6%	58.4%	59.3%
Unemployment ²	8.5%	7.3%	4.8%	4.2%
Inactivity	36.0%	35.7%	38.7%	38.1%
Retired	19.0%	19.2%	26.7%	26.1%

¹ Employment rate is expressed as % of people aged 16 & over. It is not comparable with other publications where employment rate is shown as % of people aged 16 – 64.
² rate as % of people aged 16 & over who are economically active (in work or seeking work).
Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS. (Not seasonally adjusted.)

- In Q1/2014 those employed as percentage of people aged 16 & over in rural areas was 59.3%, an increase on Q1/2013, whilst in urban areas it had increased to 59.6%.
- The unemployment rate¹ in rural areas decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 4.2%, 3.1 percentage points lower than in urban areas.
- The inactivity rate (not in employment or unemployed) in rural areas decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 38.1 between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014, and is 2.4 percentage points higher than in urban areas.
- Within inactivity, the retirement rate decreased by 0.6 percentage points in rural areas, to 26.1%, whereas in urban areas it increased to 19.2% of people.

Economic activity percentage rates, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

Note: some figures are liable to revision in subsequent quarters and so comparisons with previous bulletins should be treated with caution. This is particularly the case for house prices, for which previous quarters may be revised significantly.

House prices and Business insolvencies sections: The Rural Urban Classification (RUC) 2001 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010 to distinguish rural and urban areas. From 2011 onwards the RUC2011 has been applied. Some areas will have changed categories between 2001 and 2011.

Claimant count (annual change)

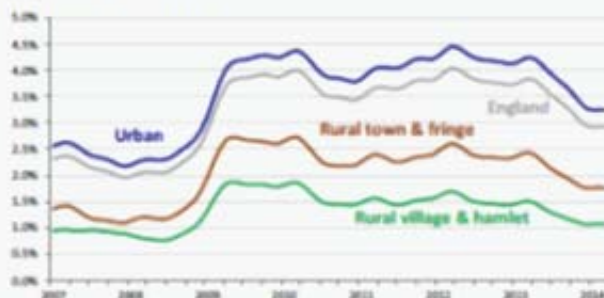
Claimant count as % of working age population, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013		Q1/2014		% pt change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Urban	1,182,500	4.3%	902,600	3.2%	-1.0%
Rural	119,600	2.0%	85,600	1.4%	-0.6%
Rural town & fringe	73,800	2.4%	53,200	1.8%	-0.7%
Rural village & hamlet	45,800	1.5%	32,500	1.1%	-0.4%
England	1,302,100	3.8%	988,200	2.9%	-0.9%

Source: ONS/Defra

- Between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014, the percentage of the working age population claiming unemployment-related benefits decreased by 0.6 percentage points in rural areas and by 1.0 percentage points in urban areas.

Claimant count (people claiming unemployment-related benefits) as % of working age population, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: ONS/Defra

Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 are urban, while the remainder are defined as rural town & fringe, village or hamlet & isolated dwellings.

For more information about the rural urban classification visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/rural-urban-definition>

Produced by Defra's Rural Statistics Unit: rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk (telephone 01904 455407).

Comments on the content and format would be welcome.

Published on 12 June 2014

Redundancies (annual change)

Number of redundancies & rates, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013		Q1/2014	
	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers
Urban	99,000	5.8	91,000	5.2
Rural	23,000	6.0	16,000	4.3
England	122,000	5.8	107,000	5.1

¹ ratio of the number of workers made redundant for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter multiplied by 1,000, based on location of residence rather than workplace

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

- In Q1/2014 16,000 people living in rural areas were made redundant, 7,000 fewer than a year earlier in Q1/2013.
- The redundancy rate in rural areas decreased from 6.0 redundancies per 1,000 workers in Q1/2013 to 4.3 in Q1/2014, whilst the redundancy rate in urban areas decreased from 5.8 to 5.2.

Redundancies in each industry, Q1/2014

Industry	Urban		Rural	
	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers
Agriculture, Fishing, Energy & Water	3,000	13.6	*	*
Manufacturing industries	15,000	7.7	3,000	7.1
Construction	8,000	10.1	3,000	12.9
Distribution, Hotels & Restaurants	23,000	6.6	2,000	2.8
Transport & Communication	5,000	4.2	*	*
Finance & Business services	17,000	5.2	*	*
Education, Health & Public Admin	16,000	2.8	4,000	3.3
Other services	4,000	3.9	*	*
All industries	91,000	5.2	16,000	4.3

¹ ratio of the number of workers made redundant for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter multiplied by 1,000, based on location of residence rather than workplace

* data suppressed to prevent disclosure.

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

- In Q1/2014, the highest redundancy rate for people living in rural areas was in the Construction sector, with 12.9 per 1,000 workers, followed by 7.1 in Manufacturing industries.

Redundancy rate per 1,000 employees, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

Business insolvencies (annual change)

Business insolvencies per 1,000 businesses, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013	Q1/2014
Urban	0.8	0.8
Rural	0.7	0.7
Rural town & fringe	0.7	0.7
Rural village	0.6	0.7
Rural hamlet	0.7	0.6
England	0.8	0.8

Source: pH Group/Defra

- In Q1/2014 the insolvencies rate per 1,000 businesses remained unchanged in both rural and urban areas compared with Q4/2013.

Insolvencies rate per 1,000 businesses (smoothed quarterly average), Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: pH Group/Defra