



# Broadcast

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Media Briefing – November 8th 2006

## **WANTED** – a new generation of hedgerow trees

*Today, [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com) calls on newly created Natural England to help farmers and landowners foster a new generation of hedgerow trees.*

Hedgerow trees have always played an important role in the countryside both culturally and environmentally. Hedgerow trees were probably in their heyday immediately after the Second World War. However, between 1950 and 1990 their numbers significantly reduced – a result of a combination of factors, notably changing field patterns, the mechanisation of agriculture and Dutch Elm disease. Despite their decline they remain one of the UK's most cherished landscape features.

Today, current farming practice means that managing hedges with hedgerow trees is much more time consuming and expensive than managing those hedges without. Unfortunately this discourages land managers from selecting and encouraging future generations of hedgerow trees that will benefit our countryside.

Speaking for [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com), Hampshire farmer David Uren said "the introduction of new environmental schemes in 2005 offered Defra a good opportunity to provide incentives to encourage hedgerow trees. Sadly the chance was not taken. However the arrival of Natural England provides policy makers with another opportunity to look at this issue again."

### **Living Countryside**

website: [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com)

Farming and the countryside, what's going on and why  
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4066376, Registered as a Charity No. 1116141  
Antrobus House, College Street, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 4AD  
Telephone: 02392 410000, E-mail: [info@ukagriculture.com](mailto:info@ukagriculture.com)

Welcoming the formation of a single body that would oversee rural policy delivery, David Uren commented that creating a strategy to help renew hedgerow trees offered Natural England a good way of showing its visionary credentials by thinking a century or more to the future.

A detailed paper proposing changes to the existing Entry and Higher Level Environmental Schemes is available from the [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com) website. "It's a simple task" said David, "all that is required is leadership".

Hedgerow trees are just one of the many assets that contribute to the natural wealth of our countryside. As individuals they provide firewood, habitats for wildlife, offer shade and shelter and often carry local significance marking boundaries. Collectively however, they provide the countryside with a stature and irregularity of form that visually defines its beauty – a cultural asset of unquantifiable value to our society.

### **Notes to Editors:**

High resolution images supporting this media briefing are available at [www.ukagriculture.com/campaigns](http://www.ukagriculture.com/campaigns).

The [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com) website is produced by Living Countryside, a farm grown charity that explains agriculture and works to protect and improve the countryside. In September 2006, Living Countryside was registered as a charity.

Production on the [ukagriculture.com](http://ukagriculture.com) website commenced in 1999, since when it has become one of the countryside's most prominent resources.



New hedge, young hedgerow trees