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Robinson Partners
Rudyard Hall
Rudyard
Leek
ST13 8PT

7 June 2016

To whom it may concern,

Planning Application for Farm Workers Dwelling at Rudyard Hall, ST13 8PT

Robinson Partners are members of the National Farmers Union (NFU) and have made me aware of the above planning application being submitted.

On a farm of the Robinsons' size, with cattle numbers approaching nearly 300, it is now imperative that farm labour is to hand at all times of day and night due to the dangers in the workplace. In 2010 there were 8.2 fatalities per 100,000 agricultural workers, with the National average for all industries being 0.5, meaning that farmers are 16 times more likely to die at work than any other profession. In an agricultural related accident there were 160 deaths in the last 5 years, with major injuries up 40% from 2007-2010. The most common factor in these alarming statistics is the "Lone worker" syndrome, where people are working by themselves, with no one to provide assistance where necessary, or to reduce the risk of things going wrong.

This is why it is crucial that Rudyard Hall has a farm workers dwelling, with the current house not being able to accommodate two families and as Mr Robinson senior is now fast approaching 69 years of age, he is not as nimble as he once was and needs help with such things as calving of the cows, which frequently takes place through the night and is year round. Mr Robinson's son now has a young child of his own and needs to be at home with his family at the end of the working day, which would be so much better if it was on the farm. Affordable housing is not available locally and any severe snow storms in winter would make it impossible for Mr Robinson's son to be able to get to the farm if he had been living in Stoke-on-Trent, or Leek, as the lanes can be treacherous and impassable for many days on the way up to the farm off the main road.

Any new accommodation gaining acceptance would not be to make profit on in future years, but would hopefully provide for the next generation if they too want to work on the family farm. The business will be much more productive if workers live on the farm and are available as and when, with it now globally accepted that agricultural output needs to increase to feed a growing world population. The Robinsons, like all other farm businesses in this country, are heavily regulated by Cross Compliance rules for the Basic Payment Scheme and the code of Good Agricultural Practice, which means that they have to work long hours to comply with these standards and must be "at work" even when they are at home, with substantial amounts of paperwork to keep up to date.

I hope that this planning application will be considered on its true merits and that the Robinsons will be able to provide housing on the farm for their son who wants to carry on the business and do his job as best he can.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A M Dickinson
NFU Group Secretary.