

**Friday 24th June 2011**

## **Leading farmer to chair The Voluntary Initiative**

Wiltshire farmer Richard Butler has been appointed as chairman of The Voluntary Initiative (VI). He succeeds Professor Barry Dent who is retiring after successfully chairing the VI from its start ten years ago.

Mr Butler said: "I am delighted to take on this role. The VI has achieved a lot in its first decade. With new European legislation being implemented in the UK, it is vital that government, regulators and farmers make the most of existing voluntary schemes to keep red tape to a minimum.

"The VI now has an essential role to play in the next decade as British agriculture responds to the twin challenges of increasing production and reducing environmental impact."

### **Notes to editors:**

1. The Voluntary Initiative is a programme of measures which promotes responsible pesticide use.
2. The role of VI chair is Government supported and funded by Defra.
3. Richard Butler manages a family farm of 1700 acres, near Marlborough, Wiltshire. Farm enterprises include a Holstein dairy herd supplying milk to Waitrose, a Beef Cattle Fattening unit, and an extensive arable combine crop enterprise specialising in wheat grown for seed and milling as well as malting barley production. Other combine crops grown include oilseed rape, oats, and spring beans. Richard is currently treasurer of The Farmers Club in London and is also a past chairman of the NFU cereals committee, president of AICC from 2004 to 2007, and former director of the NFU Mutual Insurance company and BASIS (Registration) Ltd.

4. The sponsors of The Voluntary Initiative are the Agricultural Engineers Association, Agricultural Industries Confederation, Country Land and Business Association, Crop Protection Association, National Association of Agricultural Contractors, the NFU, NFU Scotland and the Ulster Farmers Union. Since 2001, over £86 million has been invested in the VI by the agricultural industry.
  
5. A photo of Richard Butler is available from the NFU press office

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