

## **16/11/2004 MAJOR FOOT & MOUTH ARCHIVE IS ESTABLISHED AT STONELEIGH PARK**

The Royal Agricultural Society of England is busy sorting and cataloguing a collection of information relating to the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak – believed to be the largest of its kind in the country.

The archive, which was donated to the Society this month by Rev. Patricia Pinkerton, is being described by the Society's archivist Phillip Sheppy as 'the most significant addition that the Society has made to its Library and Archive for a number of years'.

Mr Sheppy said: "It is highly unlikely that you would repeat this collection anywhere else. It represents a major undertaking and is one of the most important things the Society has been given for many years. Rev. Pinkerton's collection will be indexed and kept at the Society's Library as a separate archive. Our collection is open to the public and it will be kept here for all to use for study and reference in future."

Rev. Patricia Pinkerton is a member of the rural clergy in the Forest of Dean where she was initially involved in the counselling of those unfortunate enough to be affected by FMD. She was soon to become a major player in the attempts to stem the tide of the effects of the disaster as it started to spread across the country.

The archive contains many hundreds of entries collected from all sources within the media and includes reports produced by various bodies after the event. Its contents come from all sides of the political, religious and moral divide and will provide what may well turn out, in years to come, to be the most complete record of what took place.

Patricia Pinkerton said: "This is a gift to the nation's farmers. After watching the cull of animals on a friend's farm, on Good Friday in 2001, I became determined that this record should be put in place. Most of my free time during the past three years has been spent collecting it and the work still continues. In years to come anyone – whether a skilled researcher or an interested member of the public – can come to the Library and read about what happened. The events of the past might help guide us in the future."

Mike Calvert, chief executive of the RASE said: "We are both honoured and pleased to have been chosen as custodian of this important collection. The industry should be very grateful to Rev. Pinkerton for the work that she has undertaken putting together this record of the events of 2001."

### **Contacts**

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### **Notes:**

1. RASE, the UK's leading agricultural charity, celebrates 164 years of supporting agriculture through science and practice in 2004. Based at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, the RASE aims to play a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science, the promotion of best practice and participation in high level debate. The encouragement of education on rural issues and the social welfare of rural communities are also key areas of activity in helping meet the Society's overall objectives.