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Agricultural Situation

New President for UK's National Farmers' Union 2006

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Report Highlights:

The UK's leading farming organization, the National Farmer's Union, has elected a new President. Peter Kendall, a cereal producer from the south of England, succeeds Welsh livestock farmer Tim Bennett in the role. The NFU President remains a high profile role as the UK agricultural sector continues to undergo strategic change.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
London [UK1]
[UK]

National Farmers' Union elect new President

Peter Kendall has been elected President of the UK's National Farmers' Union (NFU). The result was announced following a vote of council delegates at the NFU Annual Conference earlier this week. Kendall, the former Vice-President, succeeds sitting President Tim Bennett. It is the first time in the NFU's recent history that a President has been voted out of office.

As the UK's largest farming organization, the NFU remains at the forefront of farming and rural issues. The Union represents the farmers and growers of England and Wales. Its central objective is to promote successful and socially responsible agriculture and horticulture, while ensuring the long-term viability of rural communities. The NFU provides a strong and independent voice for UK agriculture at local, national and international levels.

The role of NFU President is a particularly high profile role and Kendall has pledged leadership to the whole industry. Like all elected NFU officeholders, Kendall is a farmer. He runs a 620 ha specialist arable unit and is a former member Chairman of the NFU Cereals Committee. Although a high profile position, the NFU leadership has not been immune from farmer criticism. In the past, claims have been made from its own members that the NFU has not accurately represented their interests. The failure to raise concerns about food security or to address the power of supermarket chains over farmers are two of the most commonly cited.

Kendall's manifesto highlighted the need for the whole industry to raise awareness of the importance of agriculture. In particular, consumer communications were considered essential to promote British farm produce as a premium product produced to high standards. Over regulation was another campaign issue, with UK farmers facing, "enormous competitive disadvantage after CAP reform and budget settlement."

Kendall believes that the UK farm sector is at a 'make or break' point in history and is determined to, "give farmers confidence in the future."

In the run up to the election, the NFU election process was criticized for its lack of inclusiveness. Thousands of farmer members have no vote at the biannual election.