



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Farmer's Name: Edward Hulme
Age: 40s
Location: Merton Farm, Canterbury
Size: 400 acres
Type: Mixed

Interviewed by: Louise Rasmussen
Date: 23 April 2015

Louise: So, could you just tell me a bit about your farm to begin with?

Edward: This is Merton Farm, as a company we're called A.C. Hulme & Sons, and we have 4 farms, farm yards, and we encompass about 5 and a half thousand acres across the entire group. The way I describe it is that it's an umbrella, A.C. Hulme & Sons is an umbrella, but we all do our own thing and then we also help each other as well. But we do our own thing, and we have our own equipment, but we do, and we try, my brother and I are trying to be more progressive and share all the equipment and the men, and you know, the workers et cetera, et cetera. But this farm, my father took over the tenancy on this farm in 1969, and it was 400 acres of cherries, cherry trees. Completely useless, all 30 foot high, the old style of growing cherries, great big trees, 30 foot ladders, you know people falling off ladders, et cetera, et cetera, you couldn't cover the cherries to keep the birds off and it was just a complete waste of time. So he went and bought a whole bunch of chain saws and cut the whole lot down, and *burned* it, which you could do back then, and then, essentially he just followed the trends of agriculture. So, when wheat was in demand and very popular, he's growing wheat, as fruit has become more popular again, well no, as *English* fruit has become more popular, he planted fruit trees, on some of it, there's about 45 acres of fruit on this farm, and then, but always our main interest on this farm has been beef cows, and the numbers have fluctuated as the grass levels have allowed. So when we found some more grass we found more cows, when the landlord's taken the grass away, we've reduced the numbers. Just a movable feast that's how we've operated. And he retired last year – completely. And emigrated to South Africa, where he hasn't retired, he's gone and bought another farm, and he's farming in South Africa, very happily because it's warm, basically. He was 70 when he retired, last year when he retired, still as fit as a fiddle and strong as a bull, but with very bad hips. He worked his entire life very hard, and his knees were bad, his hips were bad,



and the heat has cured it, basically. He had a hip operation about a month before he left, and that was terrible and now that's fine, et cetera. So I've been here, I can't actually remember the date, but I've been here for about 15 years full time working for him, but I've really only taken over, this is my second season basically of being in charge, and paying the bills, and taking all the responsibility, and all the nonsense that comes everyday with having quite a large farming enterprise. But I have some back-up in my brother and my uncle who farm over at Wingham, do you know where Wingham is?

L: Yeah.

E: And they, my brother has a four hundred and fifty acre fruit farm, which is apples, pears, plums and cherries. And my uncle has a sort of quite similar farm to this one, in that it's arable, and, but instead of cows he has sheep. So we've just kind of split everything between each other so that we can all manage. Ehm... then we rent bucket loads of grass, mainly from the MOD over at Folkstone.

L: The MOD...?

E: Ministry of Defense. All their training areas over at Folkstone. We're, we rent just about, well, a lot of it, there's about 2 and a half thousand acres of grass over there, and that's what we rent. So yeah... Background of our family; is that in 1943 my grandfather was a tenant farmer in Lancashire, and his brother was farming a farm called Bossingham Court, which is now Velcourt Farm. And my grandfather came down to see him, and said well this is the place for us, and there was a farm just down the road the other side of Wingham called Great Pedding for sale, and he went to see them, and wrote a cheque and they wouldn't accept a cheque, he was quite forceful. So he got back on the train, went back to Lancashire, and got a carpet bag, a bag and filled it up with gold coins, and came down and plonked it on their desk and said 'now take that, that'll do!' Eh, and so he then put the whole farm, all the cows, the horses, the men, their families, everything, on the train, took the train down to Addisham, which must have taken days! I don't know how they did it, but they did it, and they walked – the whole farm – down Addisham Road, through Wingham, up the other side, and in to Great Pedding, and that was a 200 acre farm, which he proceeded to make, have a very nice life - farming, for his entire life, and then my father and uncle decided that 200 acres wasn't enough, so they expanded it to about 4000 acres in their sort of heyday. And my brother and I have *so far* put another 1000, one and a half, 1200 acres on top. And we are... we're a true family farm, but in the sense that we're bigger than most other farmers, but we are a family farm. We genuinely consider ourselves to be family farmers, but we're not a little farm with just mom, dad and a son or a daughter, working on the farm, we've just grown out about but we're still a family, eh... That's, so yeah, that's pretty much how that worked out.



L: So you've hired a lot of other people to work on the farm?

E: Oh, we have a lot of staff.... I mean this, *this* farm here is really a bit of a satellite farm, and it, I have four full-time staff on this farm, but my brother employs over 200 people, just because fruit is highly labour intensive. Not all year, he has 50 full... there are 50 full-time members of staff. Male, female, so that's 50 families that we have to find a pay-check for every week. And then in the summer, from June through to really October, my brother will bring in another 150 people, mostly Eastern European, because English people are too lazy, to do that kind of work. It's just, doesn't suit them anymore, unfortunately.... But we still have 50 acres of hops, which is our... Do you know what hops are?

L: Yeah.

E: Yeah. Hops are, they are *highly* intensive, highly labour, labour hungry crop. They just *eat* man-hours, *just* frightening. But you know when they work, they work, and then when they don't...they don't. But when they work they *do* work, and they are good to have, and they provide a good, they are a good income stream. But our ethos as a company is that we have as, we're as diverse as possible, we do as many different things as we can, in the hope that one will pay; and it works, sort of, we're still here, we're still here.

L: You said you followed the main trends in farming, how do you think these have changed over time?

E: Arable has grown exponentially. We are just sticking to 50 years, well, in the last 50 years, you've gone from horses pulling ploughs, to 600 horse-power tractors. *In 50 years!* They've landed on the moon, they... everything has happened in the last 50 years, but the, probably the most important part of the whole jigsaw really has been the agrochemical and fertilizer industry, which was, they had chemicals, and they had... [something ringing]... that's just the fax machine.

L: Do you need to take that?

E: No, no, no, it's the fax machine. They had fertilizer and they had chemicals before but then it was all a bit hit-and-miss. You know, you slung a bit on and the grass got greener, or the weeds grew as quickly as the wheat grew, but we've really, and I hope that in the next 50 years that we progress as far. I struggle to see how, because we really have, we've got close to peaking the yields that are achievable, but the big trend... the trend has gone towards, and it's the same with every generation, just making things *easier* to do; bigger machines, smaller trees, less people, always less people, which is a shame, but it's just the way of life, so in the period the biggest



changes have been the agrochemicals, fertilizer, and just the genuine reduction in labour input. There are just so... I mean my grandfather had 60 people working on 200 acres. They would have worked very hard, but just kind of menial, you know, the cows were dunged out with a fork, and the potatoes were picked by hand, the hops were picked by hand, everything was done by hand, so really, I mean, you could be... Machines have got bigger, or machines have come, then they've got a lot bigger, they're much more powerful, they're much more reliable, and we just don't need the labour in... 8/10ths of what we do. The 2/10ths such as the hops and the fruit are still highly labour dependent. Eh, but...that's only just down to, if we could have a machine that would pick the apples, we'd have a machine. But you *cannot* keep the quality as high as you can by doing it by hand. But the people that is very important, the training of the people to pick the apples is just critical because you will find, you carry a picking basket on straps, and if you're not careful, whoever is picking it will just do this, they will just hit the apples with their hands and tumble them in, and then they're all bruised and then they all get thrown out, so, you know, training, keeping an eye on them, et cetera, it's all a hard, you know heavy management burden, but is there another one?... Well, the, probably the biggest thing is the difference in the value of land. Eh, that, that is... that would probably be the, you know, inflation... when grandpa bought the farm, he paid about 12,000 pounds for it. And 12,000, so that was for 200 acres, and 12,000 pounds wouldn't buy one, well, would *just* buy you one acre – today. So that was for 200 and that would *only* just buy of good dirt, one acre, I mean if it's very low grade, it would be a bit less. So probably...I expect one or two people would argue that 12,000 pounds is a lot of money 50 years ago, 60 years ago... but for what it was, it's still a lot of money today. If it's in your pocket it's a lot of money. But probably land values, I would say are... probably the biggest change. You know, they are astronomical now. They're un... unsustainable. You cannot make money out of farming with today's land value. You *cannot* do it. You *cannot* go and buy ground... you couldn't, you couldn't walk off the street and say 'I want to be a farmer, I'm going to buy that farm, I'm going to buy all the machinery, and the animals and employ the men, and pay the taxman and do everything and end up with anything other than a *humongous* deficit in your, in your budget. You just can't do it. So we really buy land as an asset: we're cash poor, but asset rich. And to us land is an asset that they're not making anymore. They're not list... (laughing) there won't ever be anymore, there's only ever less. But, eh, yeah I would say land values, are the biggest change. But it's a, it's a pretty broad question... *Everything* is different.

L: *Yeah, of course, yeah.*

E: *Everything* is different. Eh... but we still get out of bed at five o'clock in the morning, and go to work and do a day's work.

L: *That hasn't changed! (laughing)*



E: (*Laughing*) That hasn't changed. My father was absolutely *convinced* in the 70s that he would be wearing a tie to work, a suit and a tie, and would be a, just a, a, a kind of a manager, and he, he to the day he left, was still covered in grease with holes in his clothes and hands like shovels, to the day he left this country. And it will be just the same in South Africa. So, so as much as we can sort of predict how things are going to change they never quite turn out how you expect... But, yeah, land values, just...the most important thing that happened to agriculture was the Second World War. No one had any food. There was no food. Everything was incredibly expensive, so the Common Agricultural Policy through to, through, through, the European Union was a decision that came up, with wonderful intentions, and the intentions were that no one would starve. (*deep breath*) in Europe now today, I would say there are very few people that are *starving*. There are people that are living below the poverty line, that's without question, there are people that probably are hungry, almost definitely, there's, there are always cases, but as a population of Europe, as 400 million people, there are *very* few people in that, in that group who are hungry. So, in that way, this is, I have to say, the European Union is one of my bugbears...Eh, in that way the European Union has been incredibly *successful*. Everybody pays into it and then you get cheap food, cheaper food, cheaper food. Eh ... it has... like all things, gone a little awry in the last 10 years. Things have got a little out of control. Eh, we get less, but they, but, but, but the central pot of cash goes up, but the farmers and everybody who's supposed to be benefitting from it gets less, but the people in the middle who make the rules appear to get more. Eh, which is the, well yeah it's just progress, it's just the way things go and then eventually it will come to an impasse where it will be unsustain... completely unsustainable, no one will agree with it anymore and it could just be, just taken away, and then, then that, but I don't think they will do that because I tell you, if eh, if there's no support then we won't sell our produce for a low price. Or we won't grow it, I wouldn't grow it, I wouldn't grow it, I wouldn't get out of bed. I wouldn't bother. I would just find a niche that suited what we were doing, basically, but ehm... the, the, the European Union has got... has done a lot of good, and I am...(deep breath) probably 60 percent pro it, but I have some pretty serious reservations about how it's run. Eh, in particular.

L: *How about the different policies that they've introduced over the years with regards to how to farm, and what to farm, how has that affected you?*

E: Well none of it's changed and, and, and, but it all has a massive effect, none of it has changed because all they do is tell us what to do, eh, and you know this is the whole point that we know what to do but they just bring in...just...well-meaning but ill thought out regulations. One of the big bugbears today is a policy called greening, which is where, you can't on your... on, on, let's just say this farm, 400 acres, you can't grow one crop; you have to grow three crops, which is very sensible. I totally



agree with it, mixed farming, a rotational farming practice is absolutely a policy. But the reason why they brought it in, or the reason we're told why they brought it in is because of countries like Poland, Bulgaria, et cetera, I'll be careful because I get a bit confused out in the Eastern bloc who's in and who's out, but let's just take countries with lots of land and fewer farmers. So they will put say 5000 acres in one bloc into wheat or maize or just one crop. And the reason they brought in this greening policy is that, to try and reduce the monoculture; just growing one crop for as far as the eye can see, eh, incredibly bad for biodiversity, bad for the birds, bad for the bugs, you know, okay, if you're a bug that likes maize then you're in heaven, but if you don't, if you don't like the chemicals that get sprayed on maize or you don't like the way that it shades and et cetera, then it's pretty bad for you. I, we *get* that. But then you come back to England, well, Britain and there are, there are really no fields bigger than a hundred acres, there are, there are some, you know, but I bet it's one percent of the landmass will be bigger than a hundred acres, not a 1000 acres or 5000 or 10.000 acres... a hundred... So, it doesn't, it don't... One size tragically doesn't fit all. And that is the *biggest* problem they... 28 different partners cannot *ever* come up with a one size fits all, you know, and that's what they are trying to do, that's what they are trying to do and it just doesn't work. Eh, ... rules that they've brought in, I mean, it's just *endless*. But... I don't actually disagree with *any* of the rules that have been brought in, I find some of them irritating in the extreme, but you still have to do it. Eh, what, what I *dislike* about it is that ... a lot of it is nonsense, and it's just hoop jumping. It's, it's people in offices wearing ties, making up, making up, I'm sure some of it, they just pluck out of the air and say well 'that'll annoy them, that'll make them sit in their office when they've got 450 cows to calve they'll have to sit in their office filling in stupid forms, which are nonsense and mean nothing, I'll be careful because I am pro, I have to remind myself I am *pro* Europe.... I'm having a slight, mind blank on naming specific rules but I can tell you most of them are nonsense.

L: Say, now you said you focus mainly on beef cows at the moment, eh, what, is there any specific example that impacts the way you deal with the cows?

E: Well, tagging. Every animal has to have an individual number, okay. Now, that's not a problem, but in my personal opinion the, there would be much easier ways of doing, of achieving that job. There is no need for an individual number, what you should have, and we do have, it's a herd number, it's a, you have a herd number and then the individual number. Eh, but if you just had a herd number and that animal was tagged with the herd number when it left the farm, this is, it is simplistic because there are you know lots of people will sell calves, Didi calves, that go to a market somebody else buys them, they get them a little bit bigger, then they go to somebody else who gets them a little bit bigger, and then they go to somebody else who gets them bigger, bigger, bigger, and then they'll be killed. So, and then, but they might do that *twenty* times, if they're no good they'll just put 'em back on the market and somebody else will think oh, that's cheap I'll have a go. Eh, so eh, yes ...



traceability is supposedly for the consumer, the consumer's benefit. Eh, but if you go to a slaughter house, where the animal walks in and then it's killed and it has its head chopped off and it has its skin taken off and then all its guts are taken out, and then it's chopped up into little lumps and then a lot of those lumps go into a mincer, where they're minced. Uh, no one knows, NO ONE KNOWS, if you eat a burger that gives you tummy ache and you complain and they try and look it up, I mean for goodness sakes, it could be, of the 500 cattle killed that day, there could be a component in one burger, there could be 500 different animals because all the bits that nobody likes to eat as a steak or, or a joint or whatever, go in the mincer, eh, so traceability *really* in today's mass production society, mass consumption, mass production, traceability it just doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean *anything*. So that's one bit. Then, things like, so stocking densities, stocking densities; we cannot put more animals on a, in one field, then the European Union has decided that we can put into one field, because you're allowed so many units and a unit is one cow and one calf, that's it, that's a life stock unit, or one fifteen month old steer, et cetera. So you can't go have more units then necessary in a field. But it's a nonsense because the whole policy behind grazing cattle is that you work them around in a grazing rotation, so they graze a small field quickly and then they go into another field. And if, if those fields have different, every field has a reference number, so if those fields have separate numbers then you cannot, you have to just lightly stock each field you can't rotation graze. I mean it's a nonsense, I rotation graze, I just ignore them. But if they wanted to come and check on me, they won't be very happy. Eh, ... lots of the policies are, are, are good policies; we *have* to stop tuberculosis in cattle, we *have* to stop ... IBR, BVD, all these sort of invasive diseases that cattle have, foot and mouth! You know, that's just terrible. Eh, but, some of the ways of going around it are politically driven, not common sense. Because the voters like badgers. In town. Town, town based voting... I like badgers, I haven't got a problem with badgers. But the urban vote thinks that badgers and foxes are just fluffy, cosy little animals that do no harm. Whereas you know they are a major invasive pest. Badgers are the result of just tremendous destruction in the wi... in the, in the rest of the ecosystem. Because there are too many of them. When badgers, in, in, in the 50s or 60s, when badgers weren't protected, they were just a wild animal, and you could, you know kill them on the side if you wanted to. Eh, they were 50,000, now there are over a million. Because they are protected. And there are too many. As soo... I mean you, you would know much better than I cause you're younger than I am and been recently educated, the ecosystem relies on a pyramid; top predators and mice at the bottom. Eh, and if there's too many at the top, and there's not enough at the bottom everything goes down the pound. And at the moment, politics is inverting that triangle badly in my opinion, in my opinion. The ... towns and cities have become sanitized to what goes on in the natural world. I can assure you, if I was, if I was a cow or a songbird, I would much rather go to a slaughter house and be shot in the head than I would be torn apart by a fox in a field. You know, or ... well a lamb would be about one of the smaller animals that we produce. So I would much rather be



looked after for my entire life, be it a short life, be it a year, but to animals a year is quite a long time, cause they have no sense of perspective, it's just everyday. So I'd much rather be fed, and when I get worms, I'd be wormed, when I got lice in my fleece have somebody pour something on to kill the lice and be made as fat and as big as I could possibly be for my size, eh, you know that's what animals want is to eat as much as they can everyday really- that's what I think the cattle do- than I would be in nature and be free but not protected in anyway and slaughtered by, not slaughtered, that's ... killed for, you know, okay so the fox is killing to eat it but it's not a very nice way to die. And this is where people of... they think that slaughter houses are cruel places but they're not! They're ... you know, every ounce of meat that's sold, with, there's one exception, but every ounce of meat that's sold has to be killed as calmly and as efficient as possible in order that there's no lactic acid in the meat, because the lactic acid makes it tough, and then people don't eat it. So if you're a supermarket selling tough beef because you don't have any animal welfare policies and they're just, people aren't treating them properly and they're being badly managed et cetera, then, and somebody eats your beef and go "Oh! that wasn't very nice", and then they go to another supermarket that has really intensive welfare issues, erh, policies, and the beef is just tender and nice and just as it should be. Well, where would you buy your beef? You are not going to buy it from the poor relation. And it's just really the same in nature, eh, you know, things that get killed with teeth... it's probably not a very nice way to die, and the urban vote, eh the urban vote... the urban population has, has lost its connection with how the countryside works. Not all of them, there's lots of people, but lots of people don't care, as long as there's food on the shelf they don't care, they pay for it, they get it, that's fine, and I don't have a problem with that. But they really shouldn't be able to control our destiny through political voting because there's a massive difference between, between political parties on how farming, or how much money we would make. Whoever's in power will have a direct contribution to as to whether we are profitable or not. I won't go into exactly whom, eh, does what, but, eh... I've gone completely off track haven't I?

L: No that's okay.

E: Eh, ask another question, I've lost my thought process.

L: Ehm, you said you're dealing more with paperwork nowadays, I'm coming back to the EU here, so do you feel like your workload has, say the balance between working on the farm and working in the office has changed over the past 50 years? Or over the years since you took over?

E: Well, I mean, unquestionably in the, in the fact that I've become the boss. So that has changed it...when I wasn't the boss, when I just ran the cows, I probably had 5-10 percent of my time was paperwork. Eh, and now that I, I have an overall, eh,



contribution to the entire business, my paperwork versus farm work is 50, nearly 50/50, I'd say. Ehm, and a lot of it is nonsense, a lot of it isn't nonsense. A lot of it, the day to day running of the business is, you know, the, that's just paperwork that's gotta be done. But the, a lot of the... (deep breath) they can't just give us money without any form of receipt. And the paperwork is the receipt, so I, I, you know, I get that, I understand that, and I appreciate it but a lot of it is just insanely repetitive nonsense eh, that you just don't, that is not necessary. I mean, the, the, my big whinge, my big complaint about Europe is that their accounts are never signed off, because they don't, they can't make them work, whereas if we don't, if our accounts don't work, we go out of business! Eh, so that's ... a side of the paperwork, which I obviously take seriously and do as well as I can. The rest of it, any paperwork for Europe, we just get through it. As best as we can, we just get through it. I mean, I doubt that you would follow this but there's been a *disaster* this year, they've, they've changed the Single Farm Payment. The SFP, eh, came in, I think it was in 2001, I think it came in as the, the *new* way of doing our Single... well, I just keep saying Single Farm Payment, but that's what it is, our Single Farm Payment, which was, which was our subsidy from Europe and our government for keeping the price of your food cheaper...and so this year 2015, they've changed it from the SFP to the BPA, BPS, the Basic Payment Scheme, and it's a disaster, it is a *COMPLETE* disaster as it was when they brought in the SFP. When the SFP was changed from IAX to SFP, it was a disaster, and because they can't seem to just let us get on with producing food. They have to control us, if we're to be given this money, we have to be controlled, and we have to cross the 'i's and dot the 't's, eh, you know, that was a bit wrong, but anyway. It's a disaster! And we're not, and, and as much as I sound like give me, give me, give me, but our business structure, our business is structured around these payments, they are essentially our profit. Everything we do, we do for nothing and then the money we receive from the government is the profit. Because we're producing the food, essentially below cost or on a par of cost in order that everyone has as cheaper food as possible. We treat the Single Farm... the, well Single Farm Payment, the Basic Payment Scheme as our profit, and this year I am not entirely convinced that we are gonna get any money. I think they have properly... I'm trying not to swear, properly they've made a massive mistake. (man coming in) I'm sorry, I'm just gonna have to...

L: Yeah, that's fine.

...

E: (Phone ringing) We don't need that one. Eh, where were we? What was I whinging about?

L: The...



E: Payment!

L: SF...

E: The SFP (sigh), disaster!

L: *Are you sure you don't need to take that?*

E: No, no. It's only a salesman, it's only a salesman. He's trying to sell me a tractor, which I'm not gonna buy. Ehm ... they can't leave it alone, they *have* to meddle, they *have* to meddle. They have to prove their worth, they have to prove their worth in their job by making our lives miserable.

L: *This one change you referred to just now, how has it specifically impacted your business now?*

E: Well, there's not gonna be any money.

L: *Did they cut...*

E: No, no, no, they've changed it, but they can't make it work. It's a disaster, it's a complete disaster! Eh, the 15th of May is the deadline in which we have to submit all of our field records, et cetera et cetera, you know and meet all the targets, eh, they've already put it back to the 15th of June because the computer system has collapsed. Now, I am blaming Europe for this, but it's actually the British government who are... who... DEFRA, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, they ... collect the information and then essentially pass it on to Europe who's... tick it off and then give them the money and then they give it to us. Basically, and DEFRA – in their wisdom – well no the government in their wisdom, have implemented the changes badly, the change in the scheme badly, but there was no *need* to change it. Europe said change it, DEFRA have done a usual politicians disaster of running what should have been quite simple, and we are not gonna get any money but, eh, you never know, they might, might pull out and they will give us some more? I doubt it; it never seems to be more, it's always less. But the point is, without whinging, without really, not whinging, we produce our products at essentially zero. You know, or we lose, or we win a bit, there is always a win every now and again, but that's weather related, not political, politically related. So, in order that the food in the shops is as cheap as humanly possible, we have to be paid by something, something has to carry this whole, great circus on. You know, ... an interesting statistic would be that ... if you take inflation and use inflation as a comparison on the horse power of tractors. So in 1960 a tractor would have... probably just about the biggest horse power tractor would have been 40 or 50-horse power, and that would have cost you about eight or nine hundred pounds.



And then you take today's tractor, which is up to 600, I mean, there are not a lot of those, but an average size would be 150 to 200-horse power. And that will cost you a hundred thousand pounds. Okay. So, all the – unfortunately, there aren't any in the yard, but there are three tractors, *main* tractors on this farm. One of them cost a 160,000, one of them cost a 100,000 and one of them cost 70,000. And then the loader that feeds all the cattle, that are loading, the, the machine there (pointing out the window) cost 63,000 pounds. You know, and then there's, there are four trucks in order to go around and check all the cows and do all the work that needs doing and they're all 15,000 pounds. You know, so something has to pay for this job to keep going, because I can assure you producing wheat at a 115 pounds a ton is not gonna (laughing) not gonna pay. So, which ties in again into political policy is that we can get everything that we want from abroad. But when abroad has either a major weather event or, you know, drought, or a, or, mainly droughts, or floods, but floods are never quite as serious, it's normally droughts that are bad, and so when America has a drought or when South America has a drought or when China has a drought, and so, when America who are a big producer have a drought, they don't produce as much, so obviously there's less, so the price goes up. When China has a big drought, they're a major importer, but they, they're trying to produce as much at home as they can, but when they have a problem, and so they such in more, the price goes up. Eh, with South America, it's the same, they're a big exporter and when they have a problem, big drought, or, you know, that's, basically it's always a big drought, eh, when they have a big drought, the price goes up. But, without that happening there is just no win, there's no profit in the job because we are being forced, and if, the only thing that they can do. If a politician heard this, he'd say well you're complaining a lot, we'll take it away. I'd say absolutely fine: take it away. It would be golden, it would be perfect for me if they just took away, but they won't do it because it's all, a lot of it's to do with the environment now, eh, and if they took the money away, they couldn't tell us what to do. And that's all that these people like doing, is telling people what to do. I mean I like telling people what to do as well, I'm the boss. I love telling people what to do, it's one of my favourite occupations, but I still have to pay them, eh, you know, so I still have to make the money in order to pay the guys, so I get to tell 'em what to do. Ehm, but you take it away; brilliant. But then don't tell me how to do it. DON'T tell... DO NOT tell me how to do it if you take the money away. But all the time they give us the money; obviously they can do what they like. We have to just go with it. It's worked in other countries; they've taken support... New Zealand took support away, eh, and it changed a lot, you know, I have to say that the 200 acre family farms, they're all gone if they take support away. They are *done*, and it will be ... It will be big, big farming that will take over, And it, you know if you're a small family farm now you'd say that big farming has taken over, but that's only economies of scale that enable us ... us?, *that* to happen. Eh, so yeah, what do I? yeah, on Europe ... I am pro European, I am pro Europe, but I would also love the opportunity to get rid of it, because the major point that it would have, the biggest impact it would have would be on land values. Land values will



plummet. And I tell you what, I haven't got any money, but I'd find some and I'd go buy, eh, and I would just buy and buy and buy and buy whatever I could afford, whatever I could scrape together, eh, in order to you know, I sound like I'm ... no, we're talking big loads of money, still so, whatever I could get, I would buy. And I would buy and buy and buy, but the land value would have to, you know, fall away. Big style. That's what it does, it's an artificial inflation, subsidies are an artificial inflation of the land value, which doesn't help the cost of production. Because all the time land's expensive you can't afford to produce more. But, yes... that's, that's... I don't know. I don't know. I'm pro Europe, I love the money that we get, it helps... it keeps us going, but if they were going to say, right, now more subsidies, then literally, but that would have to be a level playing field, that would have to be the same for everyone, in Europe. If you're gonna stop subsidies for England, you gotta stop subsidies for France, Germany, Poland, bla bla bla bla bla bla. Because then we'd be at a major disadvantage cause they, everyone else could produce it cheaper, send it over here. Great example: Russia. However the Russian situation is, there is a situation there, where clever old Europe have stuck their finger in the, in the, in the cookie jar, and pretty much got it chopped off. And then said well, we're gonna give Russia sanctions, so Russia have turned round and said well, fair enough, if you're sanctioning us we're not buying any of your food. Eh, which is lead to ... and Poland and Germany, basically feed Russia, it's what they do! I mean they feed their own people as well but they got so much they just sell it to Russia. So, the Russians will say, we're not buying your stuff, so, A) the Russians are hungry, B) there is mount, there are mountains, MOUNTAINS, of food, there's mountains of food that was destined for Russia, floating around Europe, and that has crashed our prices. So, this is what happens when Europe fiddles. You know, our prices have gone through, well, a, just a basic example: a kilo of apples sold by us to anyone would have been last year a 138 pence, a kilo. And this year is 80, 81. The simple reason that there is a mountain of German and Polish fruit floating around that they're shipping in here and just chucking in here and just crashing our price. And they can get it in to us for 80p. So everyone else is saying well, we can buy apples for 80p. That's what we're offering. So that, you know, ... whilst... desperately trying to remain pro-European, I am talking myself out of Europe pretty swiftly. Because they have to interfere, if they didn't meddle, if they just left it to us it'd be fine, it'd be fine! But the, this, our country's policy of getting food from wherever else is one which eventually, one day, is gonna lead to a serious problem, cause we're down at 60 per cent now, of, you know, the food eaten in this country *only* 60 per cent of it is grown in this country. The rest of it, now I understand tomatoes from Spain and the peppers from Chile, and whatever, because people want peppers in January, and they want strawberries in January, eh, so I understand that. But there is gonna come a point when they run us into the ground so far that we turn round and say well, it's just not worth it anymore. We're not doing it, we're just not gonna grow it. I'm just not gonna bother. Eh, and then all of a sudden there'll be a disease which essentially in one year wipes out all the wheat in the world. That is, that, you know, wheat and rice and to a



smaller extent maize, are the staple foodstuffs of seven and a half billion people. So if you have a disease, which attacks wheat and knocks out, let's just call it 50 % of the food supply of the world, ... we're all stuffed. Not just us, cause we wouldn't have anything to sell, but you would have anything to eat! No one will have anything to eat, and that is one, that's two foodstuffs, two! that supply all the carbohydrates, essentially, okay, I know you got pulses and beans and et cetera but there aren't enough beans out there, trust me. If you just knocked out, just *one* disaster, *one* disease, which we couldn't cure took out wheat, and if it took out wheat forever, ... bloody hell, I mean it's... you got a real problem then. That's, that's the problem that, not... we, we're perfect in this country, we're an island, we're an island! you know, you can shut, you *can* if you want to shut the border, you just put people with guns, around the border, and say you're not bringing any of your diseased wheat into this country, subsequently we're still producing wheat. But because it's a global market and everything's allowed to come in and out willy nilly; people, food, whatever, car tires, tellies, everything. There will come a point, I'm afraid to, sorry to be a doom-monger, but it *will* happen. You know, potato famine, that was blight. That's only a disease. Okay we can spray for blight, but if another blight came along that affected wheat, crikey, there'll be a real problem, there'll be empty shelves, which for us as farmers is great, we wanna see some empty shelves. That's what we want, because then people will value us again. We, we, we love our, I love my li... I love my job, I love my life, eh, but I, but I get ever so slightly tired of going to – I haven't done this for a long time – of going to a foreign country, where you see a big sign on the side of the road saying eh 'the next time you see a farmer thank him for breakfast'. You know, I saw one of those signs in Australia, I worked in Australia for 3 years, and I thought that's just fantastic, you know, whereas in this country everyone thinks, all we're trying to do is poison you, because it's not all organic. Eh, which is just madness!

L: So what do you think of organic farming then? Now that you brought it up.

E: I absolutely love organic farming. I think organic farming, if they weren't such complete hypocritical zealots, organic farming is brilliant. Obviously, we don't want to chuck fertilizer all over, we don't wanna bang chemicals all over everything, we don't want to... but, organic farming will never feed the world, you *cannot* feed the world with organic farming. We achieve four tons to the acre of wheat, at 15% moisture, organic farming, if they're lucky will do 0.75 to an acre. There's the difference. That's the... and I, but I'm re... If the organic lobby would climb down off their VERY high horse, and say, okay, look, we don't really like conventional farming, but, we're not, you know, we're all farmers, let's all be friends, and let's share some of the organic knowledge into the conventional market, and let's take a little bit of the conventional market into the organic side and we could get a sort of a homogenous, real, mixing bowl and everyone with ideas coming together. I'm sure that you could really, you know, have a, I would love to see three tiers: you're



conventional, which is what we are, you're ... eh, 'con-ganic', medium, and then you're organic at the top. There's always a niche, there's always someone with more money than sense, who wants to pay a pound for an apple. That's fine! Especially if it's got a worm in it, you know, that's an organic apple, it'll have a worm in it, that's guaranteed. But if you wanna pay a pound for that bit of extra protein in your organic apple that's up to you. But then there's the conventional farmer, and you have to remember, the one thing that you have to remember is these chemicals, we don't go out there with a barrel and slosh it on, we dilute, you know we put 0.1, no well, 1 gram per 200 liters of one product, and we might put a liter with 2, with 300 liters of water of something else, you know, it is so diluted that it's, all it's doing is killing the aphids. It's not aimed at killing the people, but I *love* organic farming, I'd love to be an organic farmer, I really would. But I can tell you for nothing, you can't feed the world. Eh, or people have to eat a lot less. A *lot* less, as in nothing, in order to, you know... What I, I really... I admire organic farmers, I don't particularly admire organic farmers who have solely gone in for it because it's high price, cause that's not why you should be an organic farmer. If it's your, yeah, if your reason to get out of bed in the morning is to grow as natural a product as possible, then that's absolutely fine, but don't be rude about me. Just because you see me as the devil for using fertilizer, which is, it's only gas and nitrogen from the air that you stick on a plant and it grows! I mean, who wouldn't use it, really. But, ... what else do I? what does really stand out for me about organic farming... Not a lot apart from the fact that it doesn't really work. You know good luck to you if you give it a whirl, but it doesn't really work. You could, you know, and the only other thing is, remember about that .75 of a ton to the acre of wheat, you can do that one in four years, that's one in four, so we can do 4 tons, one in two, okay on a rotating... it should be one in three, but with fertilizers and especially dung from the cows, you know, we can do it one in two quite successfully, as long as we have a nice crop in between that uses something different and kills the bugs. But organic farming is a, I mean absolute minimum one in four, .75 of a ton to the acre, Huuh! Jesus it's gotta be worth a lot hasn't it? That's why it's gotta be 4-500 pounds a ton. You know, it's, you know, good luck to them! Full of admiration, nothing better than to see a well done organic farm, that's really good, love to see a well done one. But for every well done one, you'll see a crap one. You know, I've got enough disastrous fields this year, and that's with the ability to control it. So if you're literally, if all you're doing is ploughing a field and then sticking a seed in the ground, and then assuming that your soil has enough fertility and enough minerals and... you're gonna beat the pests and the weeds and everything else, and you're gonna grow a crop of wheat in that field, I tell... compared to ... bad old Edward over on this side with his sprayer and his fertilizer spreader and his, you know,...eh and his agronomist telling him how to do it and everything else, you don't stand a chance, you really, organic doesn't stand a chance, but there's always somebody out there that's prepared to pay. Because they think it's healthy, it's not! It's not anymore healthy, it's not, it's just a con! It doesn't taste any better, it doesn't, you know, it's no better for you, it's just a con. I mean, I you



know, I use chemicals on we have a vegetable garden for my family, and if we have an infestation or something, I kill 'em. You know. And I won't worry about feeling it's my family because it's just at such levels, which are so minuscule, that it does no harm. I think, what would be, you know you'd be in much more danger through living in London and breathing in the traffic fumes everyday. Or Canterbury! You know, in the traffic jam, than you are from eating food that conventional farmers produce. But, love the idea, can't stand the people, would really love to be able to combine a bit of both – which is what I think we do anyway! That's probably as much as what conventional farmers do: we do as much as we can with nature, and then we just give it a little bit of a help, every now and again. But you have good farmers and bad farmers. You know, that's the same as any... I hope I'm a good one, I make mistakes – we all do – and there are good farmers and bad farmers, as much as anything. Organic farming in my opinion is bit of a lazy route. Cause they sit down and think oh, we haven't got any work and it will just grow, but it doesn't. That's organic farming, in a nutshell – for me.

L: Eh, moving into something quite different: what do you think about supermarkets?

E: Necessary evil. Necessary evil. People's lives are different. There are no, there are very few housewives left, you know. Loads and loads of families now, both parents or one parent – if we wanna be really liberal about it – are at work, don't have time to trawl up and down the high street or the butcher shop or everything else everyday to provide, to have fresh food. I don't know, the French still seem to do it, but they have a different ethos. ... Necessary evil. They're a bit big, they're a bit controlling, and those who are biggest will the biggest fist and pay the least. We're lucky here, in that I've struck up a relationship with, I mean I say 'I' have struck up a relationship but, I only sell our cattle to Waitrose, because basically they pay the most. But they have the best ethos towards the farmer as well. You know they're concerned with how, with me continuing. You know, with me being there next year, and the year after and the year after, and they know that Edward Hulme is gonna send in so many cattle every year. So I have to say I won't shop there, cause it's too expensive, but I do love Waitrose, I really admire Waitrose's ethos to the farmer. Now, let's go on the other coin and look at Tesco's. I don't have anything... I don't have a personal gripe with Tesco's; very successful business, havin' a bit of a meltdown at the moment, but very successful. Terry Leahy, who was the ex CEO of Tesco's and took it from fairly small to just enormous, I mean what a legend, business master mind. He also saw that there was something deeply wrong and don't tell me he left because he was too old. He left cause he saw Tesco's was about to go bang! And they are in the process, I mean now, they'll still be here I assume, but they're in the process of having a bit of a bang at the moment internally. They're a necessary evil, if people need to eat food, if people live the modern lives that we live now of just tearing around, everywhere and you know, racing for everything and never stopping and never relaxing, you need supermarkets. You need one-stop



shops. And you know, still as well. Don't have a real problem with supermarkets, I think they're necessary, I think, you know, I would describe them as an evil, which is probably not the best word, they are necessary in order for everyone...We're not gonna go back to allotments, and everybody growing a few leeks and an onion and etc. in an allotment. Bucolic days, what a wonderful vision, just never gonna happen. It's only gonna get bigger, isn't it?

L: How has that impacted you as a farmer over the past 15 years over even during your father's time?

E: It's probably easier. It's probably made life a lot easier. You know, there's one person to sell it to. Well, there's not, there's 5. There's 5 people, there's not 5000. So it's made life a lot easier but it's probably taken a bit of competition out of it. You know, when they say that's what we're paying, well that's really what you're gonna get paid. You can't go to the man down the road and say well, what will you give me? You can really only pick...They're quite painful to deal with, we have to do audit after audit after audit. I mean I just had an audit, all those folders there are one audit. OK, that's *one* audit for *one*, that's the red tractor, which is the farm assurance, which is supposed to make me feel better about buying British food. So I...They made my life easier. I get in the car, go to the supermarket and do the shop. You know, easy-peasy, once a week, job done. Well, my wife does, but...You know, alright Margaret, once in a blue moon. But...If I was a dairy farmer, I'd probably feel completely differently. I'd probably feel completely differently, but I'm not. And I actually feel huh, this is really dangerous territory, but I actually feel the **dairy** bought a lot of the current malaise upon themselves. They've asked for it. You never hear a good dairy farmer whinging about the milk price. But you hear lots of bad ones. OK that's my view. You never hear somebody with a brain, somebody that's able to you know, plan not just take the first price they're offered, you never hear them complaining. But you do hear lots of I'm very careful not to say little, small family dairies, have to be very careful not to say that, but there's plenty of people that are whinging, but I'd like to have a look at their planning for the future, ... you know, how they buy their food in, how they organise all that kind of stuff, I'd like to see, you know, to put a good farmer with 200 cows and one who, well, a non-complaining farmer and a complaining farmer, and I'd like to look at their books, I'd like to put them side by side and I'd like to say, yeah...I bet you, there will be startling differences. ... We deal with, you know, supermarkets everyday. We have large, we're a large fruit producer, and so as a firm, as a family, we're dealing with the supermarkets daily. And yet they're a bit painful. But just deal with it, you got audit after audit after audit, you wanna sell your product, do the audit. You don't wanna do the audit, don't sell your product. Fair enough, isn't it? You won't get much of a complaint from me about supermarkets. Europe, totally different, let's go back to Europe. But supermarkets are a necessary evil and they're there, deal with it. Grow up, basically. ... People that complain about them just grow up. They're



there, so what, deal with it, get over it, get over yourself, you're not that important, they are, basically.

L: Just coming back to some of the things you said in the very beginning, because you said now, you're mainly focusing on beef cows...

E: on this farm

L: On this farm, yeah. And then your brother has fruit and, yeah. But before you had beef cows, what were you doing then?

E: Well, we've always has, we've, I mean, we've always had cows, we've got more now than we had originally. I mean, go back to the beginning, as when my father was a young man?

L: Yeah. Just mainly, say, how and why has it changed?

E: Ok ... The variety has changed completely, as in there is no variety now. When dad first started farming in his own right and before that, when he was, you know, they had chickens, turkeys, some fruit, some strawberries, sprouts, you know, cauliflower, veg, you know, you did a little bit of everything because you had these 5000 small shops that would buy. And today, you just, you don't have that option. If you were growing cauliflower, you've gotta grow 300 acres, 400 acres of cauliflower. You don't have to cause there's always a farm shop and you could grow a bit of cauli, but the investment in equipment needed, and I just, I don't know why I picked cauliflower but just take cauliflower as anything. We used to do turkeys. We used to have 10,000 black...Bronze turkeys for the organic tight person that could afford to pay for them. And then basically Tesco's came along and saw that we were absolutely, not us, but that industry, that Bronze expensive Christmas Day turkey, saw that we were setting our own price and we were essentially making an absolute fortune out of the job. But you know, we had a lot of them, so it was a lot of work but we were making really good money. And they said, oh, oh, oh, we're not gonna have that, so they came in and they sourced a whole load of Bronze turkeys for themselves, and they cut our price by two thirds. And everyone went and bought one from Tesco's, and I don't blame them. But we had to put 2000 turkeys into pies at 4 pounds each, and these are 100-pound turkeys. So you know that killed the job and nearly wrote the whole farm off, but ... yeah, so 50 years ago A) one of the big ones was that a third of your crop fed your tractor, as in a horse, you know, ok 50, it's a broad line, people still had horses but 100 years ago a third of your product fed your you know, horse power. Then tractors have come in so they only drink diesel. So you know, so a third extra could be produced. And obviously you can do a lot more. But I would say basically the scale is the biggest thing that's changed. There's no, you know, 4 men, a farm like this 50 years ago would have had 30 employees



minimum. And then, you know, they all had families, they'd all have a house, they'd all, you know, et cetera. They'd be fed, paid a lot less but that doesn't really matter, I mean, that's only inflation isn't it? So we've gone from 30 employees to 4 employees, and to keep those 30 men, when you need them, for the rest of the year when, you know, don't quite need them, you gotta do more stuff. So you have all these smaller enterprises you know, you do your 500 turkeys, you do, say 500 chickens laying eggs, then you'd have a sort of a market garden thing where you're supplying, you're milking cows and doing a milk round in the local village or the town, you would be...same with the eggs, so as you take the milk round, you're taking the eggs round and selling the eggs and the milk, you know you'd...just have loads. You'd be growing veg, potatoes, just loads of smaller, still it's all labour every day, it's all work every day, but it's just keeping it small, it was just more diverse, much more diverse. And now, this farm, we do some fruit, some arable and cows. And that's it. But as a business actually we're kind of the most diverse business in Kent, for scale. Because we do have just loads of different agricultural activities that we do.

(Phone ringing)

E: But yeah, that's the biggest difference, is the reduction in diversity and reduction of the labour force. But you only had the men there because they could all wield a shovel or a pitch fork or whatever. Basically...that's the change.

L: When you took over the farm from your father was it because you...say was it just because it was a family farm and you were supposed to take it over, or what drew you into farming?

E: Laziness. Quite literally. Couldn't be bothered at school, just the laziest child ever at school. ...My mind was drawn to other things other than education. My brother was very different and really enjoyed education, I didn't. So I sat down and looked at my life and thought pfff, I was really cocked up at school here, this isn't so good, wonder what I can do with myself, and I've always loved farming. And I thought oh well, you know, it's there, which is, I would say, if people were honest is probably the reaction of half of today's farmers. It's there, you grow up doing it, you know, we were put in tractors at 8 years old. I mean they were dinky little things back then, probably quite big to me back then, but they were dinky little things, so I grew up with it, really enjoyed it, thought to myself, well it's just, probably London is not for me, my brother went straight into London, into merchant banking for 15 years and then still ended up coming back to the farm. It is something that is very difficult; once you're in it, once it's in your blood it's very difficult to break. I tell you what: the hours that we work, the stress that we put ourselves under you know, most people wouldn't chose it, if they weren't from it. And that's where the country is really lucky, that the farmers are still having children and one or two of them every now and again are getting hook, line and sinkered. The other, obviously the really,



most important thing is that it was big enough for me to come back to. You know, it wasn't, it's not a 100 acres with one man just struggling. There's plenty, there's scope for 2 sons to come in and run separate businesses within that business. You know, cause I don't even get on with my brother, brilliantly. I like him, he's ok, but I've had a few times when I'd liked to throttle him. But, so we're not in the same house or houses next door walking past each other every day. Very lucky. So that would have had a big part of it for me. And also I mean, the biggest, a simple factor was that my A-Levels were a disaster. So I went to Australia and instead of doing the usual gap year thing where people just go and piss it up round Australia I went and worked on a cattle station, and I ended up staying there for 3 years. So I really loved it, and I wished I'd stayed there. I really do, but hmmmm...

L: You wouldn't have to deal with the EU then...

E: I wouldn't have to deal with the EU! I tell you what, it's really interesting, those old boys out there, if they make a mistake they pay for it. You know, but there's no one there to tell them no you can't do that. If they wanna do something, they do it. And they're better...they're as good farmers as we are, they just do something that's slightly different. But yeah...Ultimately privileged to be able to come back to a farm that was large enough scale for me to find my niche and to stick with it. Laziness, general laziness, yeah. Pretty much, I reckon, that's my stock response on that one.

L: What is it today that you still enjoy most about farming? Has that changed over the years or is it still, is it just because of the way of life?

E: Every day is different. Same thing season to season, you know, I know that in August, God! I pray that we'll be combining wheat, I really pray that we'll be combining wheat and that it won't be raining. I can tell you that in October we'll be cutting maize silage, I can tell you that in November we'll be weaning calves off their mothers, in December we'll be bringing cows in, but I couldn't tell you what's gonna happen tomorrow. It could be a disaster, you know, it could be anything can happen. It's the variation everyday, everything's the same, but it's basically that stuff goes wrong, that's the variation. And it's not wrong cause it hasn't gone wrong, ok it's broken, just deal with it, get it fixed, you know. Yeah, that's why I do it, it's varied. It's not sit...Ok, my one nightmare, my nightmare in life, that doesn't keep me awake, nothing keeps me awake, but me one nightmare is just sit in the factory and put lids on yoghurt pots, just to pull a lever that does that every...that is my...I think I'd kill myself. I generally think I would kill myself. But there's lots of people that do it, but you see the difference is that here, we basically live to work and in most of the, rest of the world, not in...by all means all of it, but most people work to live, basically. Whereas I, we literally, we live to work, we don't take holidays, we don't have days off, we don't do stuff with our families, which is probably bad, we don't, we just...we make this thing, this great thing work. We keep it going. And it's there for my



children, and if they don't want it, that's fine, I'll sell it. But they better, you know, be pretty definite. Cause once it's gone, it's gone. But we're guardians, we're not the owners, we're not in charge, we are the guardians of this piece of dirt that we have. And that is there for mine and my brother's children, if they want to, if they want to. I've got two sons, my brother's got a daughter and I'm sure he'll have another child, and boys and girls, they're all welcome, you know, thank God, you know. And if they don't...I can say if they don't want it we'll farm it out till we don't wanna do it anymore, which won't be ever but, we'll farm it out and we'll just sell it. And then they can have the money...They better be, I mean, they better be good kids. They better be worth it, cause if they're not worth it they won't get a penny. But we are here to protect this for our children. Basically. And with that comes just the enjoyment of having everyday is different. Basically, yeah. I'd say that's about it. ... Anything else?

(moving on to the final questions...)

L: I was thinking of asking you what's a typical working day on the farm, but it's so different, it's hard to tell, no?

E: Well, it's pretty easy; it starts at 5, well I get out of bed at 5, I start working about quarter past cause I only live there. Quarter past, I go over and check all the animals, then by half past six the men start work, half past six. Slightly different; the mechanic starts at 7, but the farm workers start at half six. So I'll basically give them a run, a shake-down of what's happening today, and then it could be anything. We could be, well at the moment it's calving, cause we're nearly finishing calving, so that's cows and calves. Then we're putting cows and calves out so they're going out to their main grazing blocks over at Folkstone and Sandwich. And it basically winds up at about 7 o'clock at night, unless we're doing a particular job, which...we start at...the farm starts work at half six, and it finishes when the work is finished. And that is normally 12 hours after that in the morning, but it's often 10 or 11 o'clock at night. It is...they are big days, it is constant, that is 7 days a week that never stops. The only difference is that the guys take some holiday every now and again. So we're man down and so we have to do more work so that means every time someone takes a day's holiday, it's probably 3 hours more work for everyone else. Because we run it tight to the bank; there's no slack time, basically.

L: And then during summer is it more?

E: Yeah, but... It is, it is, but it's not quite as crazy. You know, these arable farmers they chit chat about how they work all night and all this nonsense. They do nothing for the rest of the year, they only work for about 2 months of the year whereas we work 52 weeks of the year. And that's just non-stop. So, I actually don't ... making hay when...Anything that's weather dependent, you gotta get done. So that does



require...But basically, in good summer time, say June through to September yeah, it'll be half six in the morning till half 8, maybe 9 o'clock. But then there's plenty of times that it rains, when you can't do what you wanted to do, so the guys will go home at 5. Or they'll have the weekend off. You know...it's very much based on...we are literally 100% dependent on the weather. You probably really enjoy the fact that it hasn't rained for nearly over a month now.

L: Yeah, well you don't...

E: Yeah, we're getting a little desperate. But fortunately as of Saturday afternoon, it's supposed to absolutely shovel it down...which is gonna be fantastic. So just think how good that is when it piddles down with rain. But it does need to be warm, it doesn't wanna go cold. Cold now is not good. But, yeah, we are, we just live by the weather. And can you think of many other industries, well, house building...Wet year is bad...Well no, you see this great thing about being diverse is the one thing I'll always remember, when it rains the grass grows, cows get fat, when it rains, the wheat gets knackered, it's a disaster. So everything is a plus and a minus cause you give and take. That's why being a monoculture farmer is a bad idea. Be diverse, that's how I'd say. But it means you gotta work all the time. And your wife will end up hating you for...

L: May I ask one last thing?

E: Sure.

L: You said you sell to 5 people mainly, Waitrose was one of them...?

E: Waitrose, well, Waitrose, Lidl, Aldi...we do sell something to Tesco's and we do sell some to Sainsbury's, but I hate Sainsbury's.

L: Why is that?

E: They're the worst of all of the supermarkets, Sainsbury's are the worst. Live well for less. Live well for less?! I mean what a, what a...that's just...sets my teeth on edge. The buyers from Sainsbury's are, I'm sorry to say, but they are a grade one bastards. Their job is to treat you, the farmer, as the lowest entity out there, their job is to hammer you into the ground and pay as little as possible. Tesco's are pretty close behind them. Lidl we actually find them great, Aldi...they're the same company, I wouldn't say same family but they're different, you know, run differently. Aldi can be a bit hit-and-miss, Waitrose are demanding but they pay top whack. So in my list of preference would go Waitrose, Lidl, Aldi, Tesco's, Sainsbury's. And Morrisons we don't actually deal with because a lot of what Morrisons do is in house. They have their own land and you know...they buy obviously most of the stuff they buy from



farmers, but it's a tighter unit. It's a kind of a...it's called the Morrisons family, and they're...it's harder to crack into it, but as Morrisons are virtually a discount supermarket anyway, I'm not really interested. So yeah...

L: Has it been these 5 for the past 15 years?

E: No, well, Lidl and Aldi, I mean they've hardly been here for 15 years but it's been Waitrose...I went in to Waitrose in 2007. I shoved my foot in their door and just I've stuck it there ever since. But you have to remember the majority of stuff produced by farmers goes through a marketing desk. So you pay 5% to a marketing desk and then they sell it to the supermarkets. It's not...it's very rare to be a direct, in direct, you know, talks with the big 5. We are different, because we have the scale provided. ... (Looking out of the window) I think that man's come to look at my ... I think that's my man that I'm gonna have to go and talk to ok ...