



Commercial Shoots

Commercial shoots affected by recession, say rural watchdogs

Many commercial shoots are putting down fewer birds, expecting to sell fewer let days and predicting income to fall. That is according to a survey of shoots by Country Land and Business Association (CLA) member, Smiths Gore.

David Steel, Head of Sporting at Smiths Gore said: "Commercial shoots are less optimistic about this shooting season than those run on a non-commercial basis, and this fall in optimism has fed through into what they are doing on the ground.

"We found that just under half expected to sell fewer let days and they reported having fewer confirmed bookings than last year. Given this, almost six out of ten shoots expect their income to fall."

Rural watchdog body, the CLA, which has a regional base near Market Harborough in Leicestershire, believes Smith Gore's findings are a worry for the rural economy.

Director of CLA East Midlands, Helen Woolley, said: "The survey reinforces our view that the recession is still affecting most parts of the country and lots of different business sectors.

"There may also be a secondary effect on wildlife. Most shoots think that there would be less wildlife without the habitat management that shoots presently carry out."

CLA member, Freddie de Lisle, of Quenby Hall in Leicestershire, added: "As a judge of the annual UK Gamekeeper of the Year Competition, sponsored by the CLA and Farmer's Weekly, I am very aware of the intimate link between shoots and the environment.

"Gamekeepers provide a crucial link in the management of wildlife on a farm, culling excess vermin and managing woods and habitats so that bio-diversity can flourish. The income that shoots bring onto farms helps environmentally and economically."

The survey of eighty-eight upland and lowland shoots was carried out by Smiths Gore's research team in August 2009 and includes shoots from England, Scotland and Wales.

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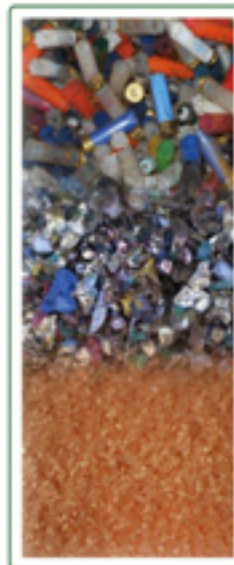
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