

Co-operative Financial Services



September 07

CO-OPERATIVE BANK HELPS ORGANIC FARMER GO THE WHOLE HOG TO BUILD ECO-FARM

Organic farmer Malcolm Breckons' dream of leaving a green legacy for his children has been realised thanks to £650,000 of funding from The Co-operative Bank.

Malcolm and his wife Barbara are using the funding to construct an eco-friendly farmhouse and working farm at Bellingham, Northumberland.

The couple wanted to create a "green" environment for themselves and their family, 22-year-old Alan and 15-year-old Rebecca – and hope that they will hand on the farm and its landmark home to their offspring.

The Breckons are living in an ecologically-sound log cabin while the farm is under construction. It is due for completion in February 2008.

When completed, the farm will boast an impressive array of eco-features to provide for the electricity, water and heating needs. These features will include water and wind turbines, ground source heating, sewage treatment plant and borehole pump.

The Breckons' farm is home to some 50 pedigree Hereford cattle and about 1,000 pedigree Texel sheep that provide organic produce.

Malcolm said: “I had a real desire to build a property that not only blended in with the surrounding infrastructure and countryside, but that also made full use of sustainable energy resources.

“The planning stages of this project have been extremely lengthy and detailed with a lot of thought being given to achieving our goal of having a farm that has zero-emissions. Thanks to the support of the Co-operative Bank my dream has become a reality.”

Martin Lee, Senior Corporate Manager at the Co-operative Bank’s North Midlands Corporate Banking Centre (CBC), provided the crucial funding.

He said: “We’re delighted to help Malcolm realise his dream of creating an eco-friendly farm for himself and his family. The plans to construct a property that produces zero Co2 emissions make the project a fascinating one to follow.

“It’s really pleasing to work with customers that have the same ethical values and beliefs as those of the bank.”

Malcolm has ensured that the power equipment blends into its rural setting.

The water turbine is submerged in a nearby stream and the wind turbine, erected on a barn, resembles the propeller of a small aircraft and is made of transparent materials. Both of these will generate sufficient electricity to power the entire farm.

The ground source heating draws warmth from the earth to heat the family home.

The farm’s water supply will come from a 100-metre deep borehole that will pump and extract water. Crucially, waste and sewage will also be disposed of in an ecologically sound manner in a sewage treatment plant that will then discharge water.

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