

**Press Release**

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**Fast-paced changes in British agriculture prompt fresh furrow for farming firm**

Adapting quickly is the key to farms unlocking a successful future, according to the director of a major player in British agriculture.

John Barrett, Director of Sentry, says: “The next few years are crucial for British agriculture; there will be winners and losers.

“To put it bluntly those that win will be the ones that adapt quickly and read the changing market.

“With reduction of BPS to 50% of what it was four years ago and costs higher than ever, the pressure on farm business to make a profit has never been greater.”

This pace of change - described by Mr Barrett as potentially the most influential since the immediate post-war era - has prompted Sentry to relaunch its brand.

Sentry’s roots date back to 1972 and this new brand identity is targeted to reflect the complex changes currently sweeping through farming and land management.

Mr Barrett, who has been with Sentry for 26 years, says there are triggers for farming businesses signing up for the company’s services.

“Our clients range from traditional farming businesses who look to us at times of generational change - such as retirement - or when there are big costs on the horizon such as a new grain store or combine - to foreign investors who simply want to buy land and get a professional company in to sort everything,” explains Mr Barrett.

“Investments in kit and technology can be huge and there is a definite shift in opinion within the farming community towards the expertise and economies of scale that Sentry offers.”

From the buying of fuel, machinery and crop inputs to the centralisation of accounts, Sentry’s 60-strong team’s ability to reduce costs is impressive. From general farm workers through to administrative staff, specialist farm business consultants and land agents, Sentry already has the staff and skills in place.

Some farms join Sentry as an interim arrangement. Typical examples include the ill-health of a key member of staff, such as a farm manger, or because the younger generation of a family is unable to take over the reins.

“Some want to carry on growing the crops but get us in to take all the management and technical compliance stresses away,” explains Mr Barrett. “Others hand everything over. It is extremely rewarding to see the weight of worry visibly lift off our clients’ shoulders. Sentry’s role is very much to help and support.

“New branding is important because many people have heard of Sentry, but not everyone will know what a complete range of services we offer. We are hands-on farmers, looking after over 20,000 hectares, but we also bring a fresh pair of eyes to every aspect of a farming business.”

Sentry was founded in 1972 by an American insurance company, becoming an employee-owned business in 1999 through a management buy-out.

“There are plenty of new-to-farming people buying land at the moment,” reveals Mr Barrett, who adds foreign buyers are still active. “We might think land prices are high but for those from other countries, such as the Dutch, UK land is cheaper than in their own country.”

Sentry says there has been a huge shift towards people buying land with the focus of farming it from an environmental point of view.

“Our clients mindsets are changing,” concludes Mr Barrett. “Now we are just as likely to be questioned on the CO2 impact per kg of product as we are about yield.”

Paul Christian, managing director of Sentry for the past six years, says there is always a risk with agricultural businesses that they can get “too busy farming” and forget to update their message to the wider industry.

“We are on a roll which makes this brand relaunch so important.” explains Mr Christian, who has been with Sentry since he began his career in farming.

“I am immensely proud of the fact we are employee-owned and the staff loyalty that brings about has to be seen to be believed. Yes, we are now a big player in British farming and need to shout about it more. A good example is decarbonising. We have been doing this for at least the last decade and have so much experience to share with the wider farming community. It is time we started banging the drum to a wider audience.”

ENDS

**Issued by Jane Craigie Marketing. For further details or interviews, please telephone Sarah Todd on 0791 8070716 or** **sarah@janecraigie.com**

**Notes to Editors:**

* Sentry has over 50-years heritage and a rich history. The firm was founded in 1972 by an American insurance company and subject to a management buy-out in 1999, establishing itself as an employee-owned business
* Sentry’s clients now face very different challenges and opportunities which they need to identify and prioritise for the long-term growth and performance of their businesses
* Sentry delivers forward-thinking solutions that help our clients sustainably grow their businesses whilst protecting the environments in which they operate