

PRESS RELEASE
19TH November 2011.

The Thame and Oxfordshire County Agricultural Association has decided not to hold a Show in 2012. There are two main reasons for this decision:-

Firstly, although many judged this year's Show to be a great success with a good turnout of exhibitors and improved Showground layout, sadly we were substantially down on gate takings and income from traders. These factors combined with a poor economic climate and an increase in overheads, resulted in a substantial overall trading loss, compared to a small profit in 2010. The two years are directly comparable as both Shows were held on the last Saturday in July and on both occasions the weather was good.

Secondly, the proposed date of next year's Show conflicts with the opening of the London Olympics. I wouldn't suggest there is any comparison between the two events but many people will be at home watching the Games on television.

The General Committee considered that the holding of a Show using the same format as in previous years posed a very substantial financial risk and could have spelt the end of the Show altogether, particularly if the weather is poor.

I am acutely aware that this decision will cause disappointment in many quarters but if the Show is to continue then there has to be re-appraisal of every aspect of the running of the Show to ensure that everything possible is done to create a realistic business plan for the long term future. Through not holding a Show next year we will have a golden opportunity to draw breath and properly plan for the successful future of the Show.

I have received letters and also note from the Press that there seems to be quite a large body of opinion that we should move the date of the Show back to the third Thursday in September. The decision to move the date to July was made following the 2009 show, when, for the third time running, a loss was sustained, the overall loss incurred over those three years was nearly £80,000, clearly not sustainable. The perceived advantages of moving the Show to a Saturday in July were to take advantage of the longer

daylight hours, hopefully better weather, and to attract families who could not normally attend on a Thursday. Our decision was backed by professional market research undertaken at the time. Our intention is to hold a Show during the summer of 2013 and once the details have been finalised I will inform the Press.

One other major factor which influenced this decision is the lack of younger people coming forward to fill the shoes of our older volunteers – most of the active volunteers are 60 plus. We not only need volunteers in the immediate run up to the Show (200 or so!) but we also need people who are prepared to help the Association throughout the year. In the past the Association has relied very heavily on the goodwill of local farmers, contractors, and people from other walks of life to give of their time and expertise free of charge. Without this help it is almost impossible to run a Show which breaks even, let alone make a profit. I do appeal to the local community to come forward to offer their help to the Association, which does have charitable status. You can email me at info@thameshow.co.uk or call our offices on 01844-212737.

Whilst writing I would remind readers that the Showground is available for Hire to maintain cash flow for office overheads etc. pending the next Show. Please contact as above for details.

Martin Hector

Chairman.