

# Application for Agricultural Building to Roof Over Grass Silage Store

AT:

Wigglesworth Hall Farm North  
Jack Lane  
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## Planning Statement

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## Introduction

This planning statement is provided in support of a planning application to erect an agricultural building at Wigglesworth Hall North. The existing yard area has been utilised as a grass silage yard for several years. In April 2022 approval for grant funding to roof over the grass silage store was approved as part of a Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme Agreement which took effect from the 01<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

## 1 Background & Farm Holding

The applicants run Wigglesworth Hall North Farm as a productive dairy unit. The farm currently supports 330 head of milking cattle with over 150 head of homebred young stock coming through to replace the milking herd. All the infrastructure for the farm is located at this site with cattle being housed all year round and milked twice each day.

The owner-occupied farm holding extends to over 220 ha (543 acres) with additional land being rented in annually for mowing purposes. Over 100 ha (247 acres) of land is cut at least twice each year to provide the silage required to feed the dairy herd all year round.

## 2 Location

The proposed building is located to the Northwest of the farm-yard site, it is presently being used for the storage of silage under a plastic cover and weighted with tyres.

## 3 Appearance

The agricultural building will be very simple in design, having a steel portal frame, concrete panel lower walls and timber spaced board upper walls. The roof will be clad with fibre cement corrugated sheets in grey, with clear roof lights at intervals, to match the existing infrastructure.

The building will have minimal design features, being enclosed on all aspects, other than the Southeast aspect, where access to the building will be gained.

## 4 Scale & Use of the Proposed Building

The proposed building will measure 41m in length (North to South) and 24.4m in width (East to West).

The eaves height of the building will be 8.5m and the ridge height 11m.

The building will be used for the primary purpose of storing grass silage and the height of the building has been specifically designed to allow for this. Grass silage is typically stored at between 3.5m and 5m deep, this is rolled and compacted by heavy farm machinery to ensure the grass can ferment anaerobically.

Storing the grass within a building allows the covering sheet to be layered with quadrant straw bales to further compact the grass and restrict any air movement under the covering sheet. The straw bales are packed tightly together and are placed on top of the silage clamp, the straw is used for cattle bedding and feed throughout the year.

The cut grass is brought from the fields to the clamp using large tipping trailers, pulled behind tractors. These trailers have to have a large capacity to be economic, for both the contractor and the farmer.

Together with the margin for a slightly 'cambered' clamp, the height required to roll the clamp and the tipping height of the silage trailers, a minimum headroom of 8.5 m is required and justifiable.

## **5 Need for Proposed Building**

Grass silage accounts for over 80% of the daily feed provided to the milking herd, diets are strictly controlled and monitored to be as consistent, nutritious, and effective in maintaining butterfat levels, rumen health and cow fertility. Good quality silage negates the requirements for several additional supplements and bought-in feeds to be added to the diet, these can be costly and require careful monitoring on world markets to ensure a level of profitability is maintained. A good, stable quality of silage is therefore crucial for milk yields, cow health and profitability.

Rainwater is a serious issue in terms of contaminating the silage and leaving it unfit for purpose as well as leaching the goodness from the crop this produces an effluent that must be restricted from watercourses and due to its acidic nature has strongly detrimental effects on the concrete yards and existing drainage systems. DEFRA actively encourages farmers to roof-over silage storage facilities through the Countryside Stewardship Capital Grant Schemes. The applicant has applied for and received approval for grant funding under a Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme supported by the River Ribble Trust and the River Ribble catchment sensitive Farming Officer to provide a weather-proof roof over the silage store.

## **6 Landscaping & Access**

The existing access into the farmyard from the farm track and farmyard to the south of the proposed building will be maintained and utilised, no additional alterations for the proposed building are required.

## **7 Crime Prevention**

It is not envisaged that there will be any areas of concern with regards to crime.

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## 8 Summary

We believe this proposal to be well considered and practical, providing many benefits and efficiencies to the business. It allows the business to meet with environmental good practice and provide some 'future-proofing' for the sustainability of the business.

We respectfully request the proposal receive a positive response.