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**Earthmill**

## **Falling farm incomes and green scheme deadlines lead to turbine 'wind rush'**

- **More than 500 planning applications submitted for farm turbines across the UK**
- **200 new farm turbines will be installed by April 2014**



A dramatic fall in income, coupled with rising energy costs, is seeing increasing number of farmers turning to wind turbines as an additional source of revenue ahead of looming energy regulator deadlines just over two months away.

All proposed new turbines need to be pre-registered with regulator Ofgem by 31<sup>st</sup> December and hundreds of farmers are now working to beat the end of year deadline and benefit from the maximum available revenues.

There are now over 500 planning applications being considered by councils across the UK and figures from the leading turbine suppliers show that over 200 farm scale turbines could be connected to the grid by the next Feed-in Tariff deadline in April next year as farmers seek to bolster incomes.



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“More and more farmers are looking beyond traditional crops to survive and the financial benefits of wind turbines for farms are becoming more widely known,” according to Steve Milner, managing director of Earthmill, one of the UK’s only specialist farm-scale wind turbine installers and suppliers.

“Over the last quarter, we have seen an increase in demand of over 150 per cent for single-turbine surveys and power generation evaluations from some of the UK’s 300,000 working farms,” he added.

“Impending reductions in the Government’s green energy incentives are also fuelling record demand for farm-scale wind turbines which we anticipate will continue for the foreseeable future as a result of the current economic malaise in the farming industry. It is giving farmers the motivation to look at renewables as an additional source of revenue, especially those in dairy, pig and poultry farming where large amounts of electricity are consumed.”

The massive fall in typical farm revenues shows no signs of letting up with Defra estimating they will be slashed by up to 50 per cent this year. After two years of poor harvests and unusually harsh weather, dramatically rising energy costs are also taking their toll on cash-strapped farmers.

“Recent innovations in turbine design have improved generation levels from turbines and lifespan. Farmers who install one or two turbines on land in the ideal weather locations, and with the right topography for a turbine site, can see the double benefits of energy savings and generation income that typically add up to well into five-figure sums and can top £100,000 a year in many cases,” added Mr Milner.

“Despite the recent upsurge in interest, currently only five per cent of UK farms have a turbine which is a fraction of those who would be suitable. As one of the windiest places in Europe, the UK and, in particular, Scotland, Wales, the West Country and the North East, have some of the most exposed farming land - whilst that isn’t great for all farming uses, it is ideal for power generation.”

Mr Milner said farmers looking at a new installation before the April reduction in the Government’s Feed-in Tariff incentives will gain the most as they will benefit from the new wave of super-efficient turbines that can generate more power than earlier models and also outlast them.



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“It is a once in a generation opportunity for farmers and landowners and one that fits with the Government’s green energy agenda,” he said. “As well as the obvious motivation protecting their business against the ever increasing cost of energy, more and more farmers are also feeling good about their role in supporting the generation of renewable energy,” he concluded.

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**Photography:** Typical farm-scale 50KW turbine

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**Notes to editors:**

- Earthmill Ltd is the leading farm-scale wind turbine supplier and specialist in the UK. Its aim is to make wind power a viable source of clean, renewable energy available to farmers and landowners across the agricultural industry.
- Onshore generation of electricity from wind power can represent a significant business opportunity, reducing costs from rising oil and gas prices, minimising carbon emissions and ensuring an additional income from a profitable but low-carbon investment.
- Based in Wetherby, Yorkshire, Earthmill is the UK’s leading supplier of 50-500 kW wind turbines and sets itself apart from other wind turbine suppliers by not only specialising in the agricultural sector, but by handling every stage from planning and supply, through to installation and maintenance.
- The company is the biggest Endurance distributor globally, and has installed and maintains a fleet of their own turbines as an investment.