



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

CCND

From the Minister  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

The Rt Hon Peter Rees QC MP  
Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
Parliament Street  
London SW1P 3AG

5 November 1984

Nsh

*was requested, required*

**REPORT ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISORY SERVICES**

As foreshadowed in my letter of 9 October, to which you replied on 12 October, I now enclose the draft statement which I propose to make on publication of Professor Bell's report. I envisage publishing the report on Tuesday 13 November and replying to an Arranged Question on the same day.

In my statement I have of course taken full account of our public expenditure discussions and the indication I propose to give of the Government's aim is fully consistent with the figures which will eventually appear in the Public Expenditure White Paper with the reservation which we have agreed.

In publishing the report with my reaction to it, we shall also open up a process of consultation with all the interests concerned. With regard to the administrative arrangements necessary both for the introduction of charging and the enhancement of the role of IT in the advisory services, I propose setting up a small team within the Agricultural Departments. We shall of course keep the Treasury closely informed.

If you or others to whom I am copying this letter have comments on the draft announcement I should be grateful if I could have them by close of play on 8 November.

In view of the circulation given to your letter of 12 October, I am copying this to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to the Deputy Chief Whip and Bertie Denham; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*James Eames*  
*Michael Jopling*  
MICHAEL JOPLING



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
FISHERIES AND FOOD

PLEASE PUT WITH LETTER DATED  
5 NOVEMBER FROM MICHAEL JOPLING TO  
PETER REES. APOLOGIES FOR OMISSION.  
WITH THE COMPLIMENTS

OF

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

WHITEHALL PLACE  
LONDON, S.W.1



CONFIDENTIAL

Draft Statement by the Minister of Agriculture on the Bell Report

When Professor Ronald Bell joined my department as the new Director General of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, I asked him to give particular attention during his first six months to developing his views on the future shape and direction of ADAS. I asked him in particular to consider whether present ADAS priorities needed to be revised; whether some services could satisfactorily be provided by the private sector; and whether and how far there is scope for transferring to the user the cost of the services provided.

Professor Bell has consulted widely with interested organisations and individuals in the industry as well as in the Ministry and his report, which is published to-day, provides a clear view of the way in which the Service should develop over the next decade.

He concluded that ADAS was an effective and dedicated service held in high esteem by the industry to which it had rendered valuable service, but that certain changes of approach and style of operation are now needed. In particular he recommended:

- (i) a reorientation and refocusing of the ADAS effort at present devoted to Research and Development so as particularly to concentrate on the Development end of the spectrum;



- (ii) a commitment to the use of computer-based information technology as the method by which a great deal of information and advice is provided to the industry in the late 1980s;
- (iii) consideration should be given to the possibilities of charging users for part or all of any service (including work under statutory schemes) where there is an identifiable benefit to the customer.
- (iv) greater emphasis should be given to conservation and welfare work.

I endorse Professor Bell's view of the value of the work ADAS has done and I believe he has correctly identified the direction in which ADAS should move in the future. I therefore intend to proceed to a detailed examination of what would be involved in the implementation of his recommendations. The report raises a number of substantial questions which will need careful consideration. In particular, I endorse the conclusion that in principle it seems entirely appropriate that farmers and others in the industry who avail themselves of these services should contribute to their cost, and I believe that, if Parliament approved the necessary legislation, it would be reasonable to envisage roughly 20% of the total cost of ADAS being met in this way. But the necessity for primary legislation to give effect to this emphasises the need for further work before final decisions can be taken. Adequate time will be allowed for this and for the necessary consultations with the many interests concerned.

I am having this further work put in hand immediately and will welcome the views of the interests concerned so that these can be taken into account in the final decisions on the implementation of this report. I have arranged for copies of the report to be deposited in the Library of the House.

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