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NPD02 Help is at Hand

Farmers beleaguered with form-filling and paperwork will now have a helping hand, thanks to the new Love Food campaign.

It is one of the first projects funded by the campaign – full title the North Pennine Dales Enterprising Food Project - which won £300,000 from the Big Lottery Fund Local Food Scheme to support the production, promotion, use and appreciation of local grown or reared food in Teesdale, Weardale and Allendale.

The campaign is funding agricultural secretarial services based at the UTASS (Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services) office in Middleton and will offer help to farmers who may be struggling with paperwork and systems.

Hazel Coppack, Teesdale Marketing Limited Director of the Love Food campaign, said: 'It's an important part of a farmer's work, but many find the forms complicated, difficult and depressing. One of the campaign's aims is to help support farmers and this is a very practical way of doing that.'

UTASS Project Manager Diane Spark said: 'Farmers, those who have diversified and food producers often have to deal with complex paperwork.

'As well as helping with that, we will also be able to help with putting together computerised systems to help farmers and food producers stay compliant and legal, and enable them to retain subsidies.'

Although the services – mainly provided by agricultural secretary Tessa Wigham – will be based at Middleton, the campaign will also fund outreach help throughout Weardale and Allendale.



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Editors notes:

The Love Food campaign (Teesdale, Weardale and Allendale) is the adopted name of the North Pennine Dales Enterprising Food Project.

This is a three year Teesdale Marketing project which has been developed in partnership with the Teesdale and Wear Valley Enterprise Agency, the North Pennine Dales A.O.N.B. (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Partnership and other local private, community and public sector organisations which have an involvement in local food.

The purpose of the £300,000 project, which runs to the end of 2012, is to support the production, promotion, use and appreciation of local grown or reared food in Teesdale, Weardale and Allendale.

Local Food : has been developed by a consortium of 15 national environmental organisations, and is managed on their behalf by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT).supported by the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme, Local Food will distribute grants to a variety of food related projects to make locally grown food more accessible.

www.localfoodgrants.org

The Royal Society of Wildlife trusts: (RSWT): is a registered charity, incorporated by Royal Charter, to promote conservation and manage environmental programmes throughout the whole of the UK. It has established management systems for holding and distributing funds totalling more than £20 million annually to environmental projects across the UK.

The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme was launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments. The programme funds a range of activities from Local food schemes and farmers' markets, to education projects teaching people about the local environment.

The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out £2 million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk (cont)

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