



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY  
CIRENCESTER

To whom it may concern:

**EXPERIMENTAL PLOTS AT THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM**

We understand that there are proposals to allocate land on the Central Experimental Farm for a hospital. Clearly, provision of healthcare is an important priority and we would not want this to be compromised. We are however concerned that the proposal will lead to the loss of irreplaceable research facilities, whilst we understand that alternative parcels of land are available on the farm which could be used.

The plots have been used for soil science research over several decades leading to research findings that are a credit to the sustained commitment of the Government of Canada to research for the benefit of agriculture and our understanding of the environment. The focus of the experimental plots has been on understanding soil processes and they have been one of the key facilities leading to Canadian Government research scientists making world-leading contributions to scientific understanding and to several of them sharing in the joint award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize as members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Many soil processes operate over the period of years and decades so long-term experimental plots, such as those at the Central Experimental Farm, are invaluable and unfortunately relatively rare worldwide. The loss of the experimental plots would be a serious loss of research facilities and would be a particularly unfortunate and short-sighted decision during 2015, which has been designated as the International Year of Soils by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/en/> <http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/fr/>). History will judge.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John S Conway". It is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping line under the main name.

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