

of Burrow Hill Cider  
*The Somerset  
Cider Brandy*  
COMPANY LIMITED

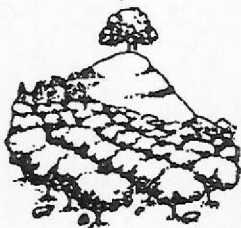
31<sup>st</sup> Dec, 2012

I am the cider maker constituent of [REDACTED] who has in the past discussed with him the disaster MUP could cause for traditional farm cider industry in the South West much to [REDACTED]

The UK cider industry is split into two. The industrial sector, which the coalition decided two years ago, had to use at least 35% apples or Chinese apple concentrate in their products to be classified as cider for excise purposes, and the artisan/farm/traditional farm makers who use 100% local fruit. The industrial makers are not part of my concern. They produce pear and endless fruit flavoured ciders as well as the very cheap unbranded ciders to be found on the bottom shelves of Tesco etc and excellent products such as Strongbow.

My farm makes traditional cider, some of which we sell at the farm gate direct from the barrel and this market will be destroyed if we do not get some sort of exemption. In size we are like at least 20 other Somerset farms and stand to lose in income around £100k a year as our unprocessed cider will have to double in price and our older customers will depart. There are also far greater number of smaller producers. I suspect that most of these will have to stop production or join the criminal fraternity.

We also sell bottled cider to places like Fortnum and Mason and distill cider to produce Somerset Cider Brandy which, with the help of Defra, now has an EU PGI (Appellation Controlle). An important part in the granting of this PGI was Brussels acceptance of the cider making history in the South West. We export to 6 countries including the USA, Japan and New Zealand, and shortly Germany and employ 20 people. The farm has 170 acres of vintage cider orchards, with 40 varieties of specialist cider apples.



THE SOMERSET DISTILLERY AND BURROW HILL CIDER



We are credited to be at the forefront of improving the image and market position of cider which has to happen if cider is to be part of rural growth. I can also claim to know a little about the importance of a product's history and provenance and the role that plays in the marketing. When we sell our Cider Brandy at up to £85 a bottle in Fortnum's we are also selling the story of a thousand years of cider making in the UK and to lose that as a living tradition would be a disaster.

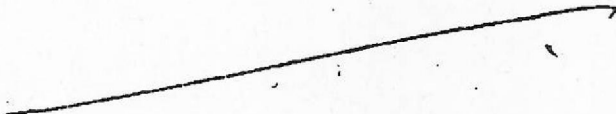
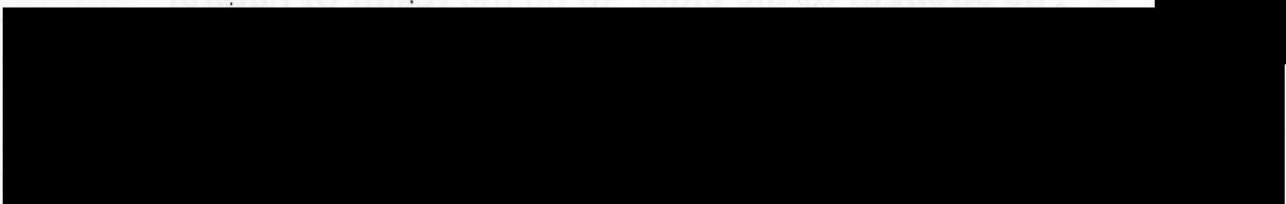
The MUP legislation has been designed to hit the lower end of the market favoured by binge drinkers. I agree with the principle. Unfortunately the unforeseen side effect is to destroy an English tradition and something the South West is particularly known for. Cider from the barrel is not expensive as it is unpasteurised, has not been bottled, labelled etc. It is not a "cheap" product as such, but a simple, pure, unadulterated one, and normally can only be found in out of the way places.

The mystique of the South West region lies in the cider orchards and small farms where you can buy from the barrel. It is worth noting that our customers are generally older than 35 and draught cider is not a drink of choice for hooligans. Artisan cider farms are also a places of pilgrimage for many tourists from Europe and the US.

My view is absolutely certain that the current MUP plans if left unamended would be a disaster to the West's rural economy as well as wiping out acres of cider orchards which will no longer serve a purpose. The wild life haven aspect of small orchards, whose apples are not wanted by the industrial concerns, was recognized some time ago by Natural England who campaigned successfully to include small traditional orchards in the Single Farm Payment scheme.

The principle of exemptions has also been accepted with the HMG statement that supermarket 'meal deals' would be exempt.

If you have got this far, thank you.



Some ideas about an exemption from MUP for small scale farm cider makers

- An exemption to only apply to Customs and Excise registered or de registered cider facilities on or before 1 Jan. 2013.
- The cider to be sold direct from the barrel or similar container into customers containers. ie no pre filled containers.
- The cider to be made from apples either grown by the cider maker or supplied from orchards within 5 miles.
- The total volume to be exempt from MUP to be restricted to 12,000 gallons. ( this figure is average of what cider makers have requested. The highest figure is 20,000 gallons.)
- The strength of the cider to be the result of natural fermentation. ie no added sugar.
- This measure to be seen to enable cider makers to adapt to changed circumstances and should last for 10 or 15 years . ( This should avoid problems if the EU has issues)

