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# **GREENSHIELDS AGRI HOLDINGS PLC**

("Greenshields", the "Group" or the "Company")

# INTENTION TO FLOAT ON AIM

## Established agricultural business and owner of farmland

Greenshields, the farmer, owner and contractor of arable farmland in the northern grain belt, announces that it is seeking admission to AIM.

The northern grain belt is a phrase used by the Group to describe the strip of arable farm land stretching up the east coast of the UK from the Humber estuary in England to the river Tay in Scotland ("Northern Grain Belt").

Greenshields is principally engaged in the production of grain and currently farms over 3,500 acres of farmland in the Northern Grain Belt, of which over 2,850 acres are owned by the Group. Upon Admission, the Group would be the only UK publically traded company providing investors with access to UK farmland ownership and an established arable farming business.

The Group's growth strategy is to expand its farming operations and to acquire further arable land at favourable prices in order to benefit from expected appreciation in land values.

The Group is seeking the Admission of its ordinary shares to trading on AIM in conjunction with a placing to raise approximately £3.0m ("Placing"). It is intended that the proceeds of the Placing will be used to acquire additional farmland in the Northern Grain Belt, commencing with 220 acres in Northumberland which will be acquired upon Admission in addition to investing in:

• crop production, entitlement purchase, storage and transportation;

- farm equipment; and
- related agricultural businesses.

# Well-placed to benefit from continued increase in the value of farmland

Historically, arable land has out-performed other traditional asset classes over the longer term. For example, Savills Market Survey of UK Agricultural Land 2015 stated that the average value of prime arable farmland across the UK strengthened by 14 per cent. to £10,000 per acre in 2014 following a 12 per cent. rise in 2013 and a 10-year cumulative average growth of 277 per cent. In comparison, prime London property prices grew 135 per cent. over the 10 years to February 2014. This land appreciation trend is expected to continue, with forecasts anticipating an increase in value of UK farmland of between 6-8% per annum over the next five years<sup>1</sup>.

The Directors believe that the Group is well placed to benefit from continued forecast farmland value appreciation over the long term, underpinned by a number of factors including increasing global demand for grain; potential to generate diversified income from the land; demand from investors for low-risk, tax-efficient investments; and the finite supply of land.

# Benefitting from some of the world's highest wheat yields

In addition to having some of the highest wheat yields in the world thanks to fertile soil and longer daylight hours during the summer, the Northern Grain Belt benefits from land that is typically cheaper than that which is found further south. Using precision farming techniques, Greenshields employs a farming strategy that seeks to enhance the quality and productivity of the soil to secure year on year increases in yields. In 2014 Greenshields produced yields of 9.1 tonnes of wheat per hectare, ahead of the UK's national average of 8.6 tonnes per hectare.

# **Business Property Relief**

The Company has been advised that its Ordinary Shares will qualify for Business Property Relief at a rate of up to 100% which provides Inheritance Tax Relief for investors holding them for more than two years.

# **Land for Equity**

It is also envisaged that the Company may use its Ordinary Shares, in whole or in part, as consideration for further acquisitions of land.

# Outlook

The Group will continue to review acquisition opportunities and new contract farming opportunities as and when they arise. The Directors believe prospects for the 2015 harvest look positive.

**Bill Boase, Chief Executive Officer of Greenshields, commented:** "Admission to trading on AIM would give Greenshields an excellent currency with which to expand its operations through acquisition of additional farmland and investment in equipment, crop production and income diversification.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Source: Savills, February 2015

"Greenshields is a proven and professional farming business managed by experienced operators. It is well positioned to benefit from expected increasing global grain demand, as well as anticipated continued increases in value of UK arable land.

"The Board is very excited about this opportunity, which would make Greenshields the only UK publicly traded company which gives investors access to UK farmland ownership and an established arable farming business.

"We are committed to growing the business and delivering value to our shareholders."

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

# **About the Company**

Established in 2010, Greenshields Agri Holdings plc farms over 3,500 acres of good quality arable farmland in the UK's northern grain belt, of which it owns 2,850 acres. The Group is principally engaged in the production of grain.

The farming operations of the Group are managed by the Farming Director, Peter Jackson, who has an established farming track record of over 30 years. The Group's farming operations target high production output of grain, employing high tech "precision farming" techniques within a commitment to a long term soil improvement program. The Group also seeks to benefit from economies of scale through the use of large modern equipment and operating through a series of strategically located "hubs" which allow farming services and equipment to be readily provided to surrounding areas using the equipment held at each hub.

Commercial operations including marketing of the grain are managed by the Group's Chief Executive Officer, Bill Boase, with 35 years of trading and management experience including 16 years at Cargill International.

The Group is a member of Grainco, the leading farmer-owned grain trading and marketing business in the North East of England and Scotland, which provides access to competitive input contracts for fertilisers, seed and sprays and premium price output contracts for the grain with Grainco's local big brand customers such as Quaker, Tennent Caledonian Breweries and Diageo.

The Group has grain storage capacity of 12,000 tonnes (10,000 tonnes of capacity being owned by the Group, with the remainder being contracted) which affords the Group a 22 month window in which to sell the grain so as to target optimal selling prices.

The Group seeks to source high yielding arable farmland at the best price, typically off market through George F White, one of the leading land agents in the Northern Grain Belt.

For further information, please go to www.greenshieldsagri.com

#### **Board of Directors**

# Patrick Rupert Cottrell (Age 69), Non-Executive Chairman

Rupert Cottrell has extensive experience both of AIM companies and of agriculture, having been non-executive chairman of several AIM companies and one Official List company, and being involved in owning a family farming operation in East Anglia. He is currently non-executive chairman of Arricano Real Estate PLC, an AIM-listed Eastern European real estate developer. In addition he was formerly non-executive chairman of Carpathian plc, an AIM-listed Eastern European commercial property fund, and a non-executive director of the PFI Infrastructure Company plc, an AIM-listed infrastructure fund which was taken private in 2007. He was also non-executive chairman of Infrastructure India plc, an AIM-listed infrastructure fund, and of Diamond Circle Capital plc, listed on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange. His background in financial services includes executive director positions at a number of London investment management firms and four years as a director of the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association (FIMBRA), a regulator which is now part of the FCA. He is a fellow of the Chartered Securities Institute. Rupert was appointed as a Director of the Company on 9 October 2014.

# William (Bill) Henry Boase (Age 57), Chief Executive Officer

Bill Boase spent 16 years with Cargill International, including positions as Head Corn Trader, Head Soybean Trader and Head of Ocean Transportation. He co-founded Greenshields Shipping, a successful shipping, trading and investment business in 1997, taking delivery of a newly built panamax bulk carrier in 1999. In 2010 Greenshields Shipping took the decision to alter its investment focus from mineral shipping to agriculture. Bill co-founded the Group in that year, and has been a Director of the Company since its incorporation.

# Jay Charles Goodgal (Age 59), Vice Chairman

Jay Goodgal has over 29 years' experience investing in securities with a focus on the maritime transportation, logistics and commodity industries. He is Managing Director of Castalia Partners Limited and Managing Member of Castalia Advisors LLC investment management companies and founding shareholder of Greenshields Shipping, and in conjunction with Mr. Boase redirected that company's investment focus from mineral shipping to agriculture. He co-founded the Group and has been a Director of the Company since its incorporation. In addition to his role as Vice Chairman, he is responsible for business strategy and development.

# Peter Alan Jackson (Age 55), Farming Director

Peter Jackson has built up a farming business in the Northern Grain Belt covering 5,000 acres in various locations up to 40 miles from his base in Ponteland. He has been contract farming for over 20 years. He was also a founding director of Tynegrain/GrainCo in 1983, becoming Vice Chair in 2003 and Chairman in 2011. Between 1998 and 2011 he was responsible for the operations of farms near Gdansk in Poland. He was a board member of the UK Government's Regional Development Agency from 2006 to 2012 with annual budget of £280 million, comprising European and UK funding, where he was a member of both the Regeneration Project and General Finance Committees. He is currently a member of the Policy Board of Northumberland County Council and a member of the national Local Government Association's Improvement and Innovation Board. Peter was appointed as a Director of the Company on 9 October 2014.

# James David McKenna (Age 49), Finance Director

James McKenna has over 23 years' experience as a Chartered Accountant, working with KPMG before moving to Ethicon, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. He has been involved in the shipping, investment and trading business since 1996 and since 1998 he has been the Finance Director of Greenshields Shipping and affiliated companies. James also became the Finance Director of the Group when it was founded in 2010, and has been a Director of the Company since its incorporation.

# David Campbell (Age 63), Non – Executive

David Campbell was formerly Chairman and Chief Executive of DSG Insurance Services, a subsidiary of Dixons plc. Prior to that he was head of Willis plc's European captive management operations. He has previously been a director of a Managing Agency of Lloyds and Royal Skandia Life Assurance Ltd. As well as GAH, he is also non-executive director of a number of Isle of Man regulated insurance companies. David has been a Director of the Company since its incorporation.

# Robert Richard Jones (Age 66), Non – Executive

Robert Jones is a director of Douglas Aviation (Isle of Man) Limited, a corporate services provider licensed by the Isle of Man FSC. Robert is currently director to a number of companies in the aviation and transport sector. He is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Robert has been a Director of the Company since its incorporation.

# **Portfolio Overview**

Property	Acreage	Status
Eshott, Northumberland	69	Owned and farmed
Harlow Hill, Northumberland	539	Owned and farmed
Spott Farm, East Lothian	1,512	Owned and farmed
Lemington, Berwickshire	739	Owned and farmed
Total Owned	2,859	
East Lothian	678	Farmed only
Total	3,537	

#### **Forward-looking statements**

This announcement may include forward-looking statements regarding the Group's financial position, business strategy, plans and objectives of management for future operations or statements relating to expectations in relation to dividends. Forward-looking statements are sometimes identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "targets", "believes", "expects", "aims", "intends", "plans", "will", "may", "anticipates",

"would", "could" or similar expressions or the negative thereof, are forward-looking statements. Such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other important factors beyond the Group's control that could cause the actual results, performance, achievements of or dividends paid by the Group to be materially different from actual results, performance or achievements, or dividend payments expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such forward-looking statements are based on numerous assumptions regarding the Group's net asset value, present and future business strategies and income flows and the environment in which the Group will operate in the future.

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