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## **‘I’d do it again’ – true blue farmer’s 225-mile Tractor Aid mission to flood-stricken Somerset hits the headlines**

A Yorkshireman who drove more than 200 miles in his New Holland T7 to help deliver 30 tonnes of forage for flooded-out farmers in Somerset says his action succeeded in highlighting their plight – and he was ready to do it again.

Philip Rowbottom, who runs an arable operation at Mount Farm, near Woolley, Wakefield, was so moved by seeing tracts of land swamped under water that he headed up a [Tractor Aid](#) mission with the backing of the [NFU](#).

Joined by agriculture contractor Andrew Nicholson, he completed the 225-mile journey from Wakefield to Bridgwater in 10 hours, each carrying a 15-tonne mix of silage, haylage, hay and straw.

It was dropped off at Sedgemoor agriculture market to be distributed by the local branch of the NFU.

“We were very well received,” said Philip. “They were pleased to see the moral support more than the load of silage. It was the fact that we were from the farming community and we were aware and doing something about it.

“The tractor was superb. I have had it for a year and I’m very pleased with it. I found it very comfortable to drive. People said, ‘10 hours’ drive? That’s a lot’. But that’s what I do when I’m ploughing – and at least I got a change of scenery!

“Farmers in the South West are facing 18 months without livestock feed so what we did was trivial physically – but as a support and a shoulder to lean on it was a massive support for them. They are not on their own.

“It must be soul-destroying – they are weeks away from being able to do anything. I’m just glad that I was able to help in some way.

He added: “I think we have done a fairly good job in raising the plight of farmers to the public eye. If they want another load I would gladly go again if I thought it would do some good.”

He was backed by New Holland dealers Russell Group, based in Yorkshire, where Philip and Andrew are both customers.

A spokesman from Russell Group commented: “Philip and Andrew have done a marvellous job flagging the particular problems faced by farmers trying to look after their livestock and produce food for the UK. Were very proud a New Holland machine supplied by us was part of it.”



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NFU South West regional director Melanie Squires added: “The response from the farming community both locally and from the farthest reaches of the UK has been magnificent and we thank everyone for their support.

“We fully understand and appreciate people’s desire to pitch in immediately with practical help when they see the heart-breaking pictures of colleagues and their animals up to their waists in water.

“But the situation is under control in the short term with livestock safe and feed and bedding currently available. Anyone who wants to provide fodder and bedding should contact us via [south.west@nfu.org.uk](mailto:south.west@nfu.org.uk) (01392 440700) so we can log all the offers and match them up with those in need when that need arises.”



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