



23rd October 2017

**Countrywide Farmers plc.
Countrywide agrees terms to sell its Retail business to Mole Valley Farmers Ltd.**

Following the announcement on the 2nd October that Countrywide had entered into exclusive discussions, Countrywide confirms that it has now agreed terms to sell its Retail business to Mole Valley Farmers Ltd.

Under the terms of the sale, Mole Valley will acquire the Retail business which will include 48 of the 53 currently trading stores, support teams and IT operating systems for a value that is dependent upon stock levels in the business at time of completion. Countrywide will retain all freehold properties, with Mole Valley entering into lease agreements as a tenant. The sale is subject to review by the Competition and Markets Authority, with completion expected to take place before the end of January 2018.

The Retail business comprises 53 trading stores and a fully operational website supported by field, distribution and head office teams. The sale of the Retail business will affect around 750 employees whom are expected to transfer to Mole Valley following consultation under the "TUPE" process (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006). The stores that will not be transferring and therefore close are Amesbury, Glastonbury, Honiton, Towcester and Wenvoe.

Commenting on the deal, Countrywide Farmers Chief Executive John Hardman said: "We are delighted to have reached an agreement with Mole Valley Farmers. This represents an excellent opportunity to secure the future of our Retail business with an established sector leading company. I would like to thank all of our staff who work within the Retail business and have remained committed through a significant period of change and uncertainty. We are very grateful for their contribution and wish them all the very best for the future."

Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive of Mole Valley Farmers, said: "We very much look forward to welcoming and integrating the Countrywide Retail team into the company. My perception is that the staff have remained loyal and focussed on maintaining business performance despite uncertainty about their futures, which is a commendable measure of their stamina and commitment to the business and customers alike."

Following a period of major change, Countrywide will focus, moving forward, on the growth and development of its Rural Energy - LPG business to create value for key stakeholders. Rural Energy - LPG currently supplies bulk LPG and bottled gas to both commercial and rural domestic customers.

The Directors of Countrywide Farmers plc accept full responsibility for this statement

Find more information about Countrywide at www.countrywidefarmers.co.uk

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