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## Leicestershire Farmers Turn Unused Field into Cemetery to Offset Tax Burden

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A farming family in Leicestershire has transformed an unproductive barley field into a burial ground, creating a new income stream as inheritance tax changes loom over agricultural landowners.

James and Claire Goodson, owners of Castle View Farm in Bottesford, operate a 136-hectare property that includes livery stables, a fishing lake, and solar panels. Faced with declining returns on certain crops, the couple converted a 10-acre heavy-clay field into a cemetery capable of holding up to 7,500 plots. The idea, first proposed by their daughter Emily when she was a 21-year-old university student, took shape after the land proved unsuitable for farming.

The burial ground offers ashes plots for approximately £500 and full burial plots for around £1,400. Instead of traditional gravestones, wooden plaques are placed at ground level to mark each site. Planning permission was granted in 2021, and the cemetery has been operating for three years. The setting provides views of the Vale of Belvoir, Belvoir Castle, and Lincoln.

Claire Goodson explained to *The Telegraph* that farmers are increasingly forced to diversify due to economic pressures, including new inheritance tax rules set out by Chancellor Rachel Reeves in the October budget. The revised policy, taking effect in April 2026, will apply a 20 percent tax rate to agricultural property and land worth more than £1 million. This adjustment, which is half the standard base rate, has raised concerns among campaigners who say it could impact nearly all family farms.

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) and other critics warn that the measure—referred to by some as the “family farm tax”—could push small and medium-sized farms to sell off land in order to meet tax obligations. Protests, including tractor demonstrations in Westminster, have been staged in response. Some Labour Members of Parliament have signaled support for amending the policy, suggesting higher thresholds before relief is lost.

While the Goodsons' decision to open a cemetery predates the inheritance tax changes, Claire says the timing has been fortuitous. Speaking to the BBC, she noted that the burial ground not only generates income but also offers a peaceful alternative to traditional churchyards and crematoriums. “No one wants to talk about death, but I feel like more people are now,” she said. “This is a nicer alternative because they know they can come and visit a nice place.”

The family has also integrated environmental efforts into the project, planting 93 trees with plans for bat and owl boxes, maintaining hedgehog boxes, and supporting local wildlife, including a family of nine hares.

Local reaction has shifted from skepticism to approval, with some residents expressing interest in securing a plot. The Goodsons hope the cemetery will serve the community for generations while helping their farm remain viable amid shifting economic and policy challenges.