



[Monday 21st November 2011](#)

Dear Customer

I'm sorry I haven't kept you up to date on blight, pigeon or caterpillar crop attacks recently. I've just been so preoccupied with hens and cows, but will soon.

I am currently eeking out an existence in my brother's house in Teddington. Were he here, my stay would be restricted to 2 nights, possibly 3 but since he is away for a month messing around in Barbados and the Florida Keys, well-earned I hasten to add, I can hang out in London a while. My brother has lived in this house for getting on 20 years. It has four bedrooms and he refuses to put any beds in them so he can't accommodate any of his old school and university friends with wives and children when they descend for the rugby or theatre and shopping trips. At least that's what I suspect. I say 'eeking out' as I can't get the hot water to come on, nor the central heating. I can't use the oven and after 2 attempts at heating ready meals (I was exhausted), and melting the plastic into the baking tray, I gave up and am living on digestive biscuits and cherry tomatoes. There are 4 televisions and each says 'no signal'. I was beside myself last night missing Strictly and XF. I found an old portable in the garage but it had no aerial. I stuck a coat-hanger in it but it still didn't work.

I have been quite busy. The launch of Good Food Nation with Cow and Hen Nation was scheduled for 21st November in Selfridges – absolute bedlam finishing labels, packaging, bar codes, logistics, writing website text, doing press etc. etc. as well as doing all the buying for farmaround and work on the new farmaround site which launches soon. But that wasn't enough, I wanted to set myself a greater challenge. I decided to set the date for the moving of our whole packing operation for London back to London, for the 21st November, the same date, to have a real crescendo of a time. And not to neglect Izzy Lane, I would have our late Autumn/Winter photo shoot during the same week.

On Friday with barely no sleep and having spent the last 6 hours sending and receiving emails at the rate of 100 per hour and feeling like I couldn't take any more, I received this text from the dairy with reference to the milk:

“Yes, can process it Monday for Wednesday but I am going to need both Monday's and Wednesday's on Friday and Wednesday's on Monday to ensure we can hit their delivery window otherwise there wont be any milk ready for them”

And the very next minute when I email Selfridges to say we have just received a package of bar codes from them but that our products already have barcodes on the labels, I received this email:

“That’s fine, just keep them to one side. Send me down the barcodes and I’ll check they’re attached to the right product”.

I had to no idea what anyone was talking about and decided to go and lie down for 5 minutes to let my brain cool down but then caught sight of myself going past the mirror. It was 2pm and since I couldn’t wash as there was no hot water, I hadn’t bothered to get dressed and I was cold as I couldn’t work the heating so I was wearing a horrible lilac nightdress with a thick woolly magenta cardigan and pink ski socks. My hair was all greasy and I had make up down my face, my specs on and a demented look in my eyes exaggerated further by the lenses. I really made myself shudder.

As for our poor driver Lucasz and his instruction sheet :

“Drive the hire lorry down from Tadcaster with the all the packing stuff, unload then go back to Yorkshire, collect the fleeces from the barn in Richmond and take to the scourer in Bradford then go to Wass on the Yorkshire Moors, pick up the veg, drop some in Tadcaster and take the rest to London then go up to Suffolk and get the milk for Selfridges and the north, pick up a box of eggs and stickers from Liz in Clerkenwell, go and unload in Southall and pick up the banners, come to me in Teddington, give me the stickers, take another 2 boxes of eggs and drop all the eggs, banners and milk off at Selfridges then go to Southall, wait for the lorries to turn up from the Continent, then take the North’s up to the Yorkshire with their milk then pick up some cabbages from Tadcaster to bring to London and on the way down, go to Suffolk to pick up the milk for the south.....”

I was so busy that I didn’t have time to even contemplate that I had not recruited one person to start work on Monday for farmaround packing. I came to London with a pile of CV’s of good team players, and on midnight Friday I sent emails to them all. On Saturday morning there was nothing, not one reply and we had (have) to start packing on Monday (tomorrow) – our packing benches and scales, groceries and packaging had all arrived from Yorkshire. Liz asked me if I wanted her to call her cleaner who lives in North London. Diane offered up her youngest son who arrives tomorrow. Later on Saturday evening I finally had 3 responses from the 30 emails and so far only one has definitely said he will come tomorrow. I am all prepared to be rolling my sleeves up and getting dirty bagging potatoes at 7am tomorrow morning.

This morning we had a photo-call in Selfridges before the store opened for customers. It was great seeing the milk and eggs on the shelves. But even better, I got there on my own, was let through security and had the whole of Selfridges to myself – there was noone there. I tried on some lipstick in the cosmetics department.

Thank you for all your milk and egg orders. This week finally we have our proper packaging for them. Our website www.goodfoodnation.co.uk is now up and running and there is a funny video clip on it which someone edited. I just can’t say ‘live out their whole natural lives’ enough. You will also get a glimpse of Myfa !

It's funny being in London because I haven't noticed the weather at all until today, getting lost in dense fog in Bushey Park, bumping into lone, dejected stags. Before I left Richmond, I was acutely aware that when the sun was shining I was really happy and when it was dark and miserable, so was I.

I hope all is well with you,

Kind Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Isobel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Isobel Davies (isobel@farmaround.co.uk)