

ALBERT HENRY EATON
WR/319/45/31

At the beginning of World War II, Britain needed to increase home food production, and the area of land under cultivation was rapidly increased. County War Agricultural Executive Committees and district committees under them had exceptional powers to determine the direction of farming at a local level. Once the short-term objective of increasing food production had been met, thought was given to implementing a more general National Farm Survey with the purpose of providing data to form the basis of post-war planning. Census forms were sent out on 4th June 1941 for the farmer/market gardener to complete. In addition, every farm and holding of five acres (ranging from large farms to market gardens) received a visit from an inspector who surveyed and classified according to the physical condition of the land. These records may be viewed in the MAF 32 category at The National Archives, Kew; a team of Badsey Society members visited The National Archives in January 2013 and took copies of the records.

Albert Henry Eaton (c1876-1953) lived at Crab Farm, Bengeworth, Evesham, and was a full-time market gardener who was a tenant of the Lord & Parker estate, whose agent was Raymond Webb in Evesham. Albert Eaton also occupied land at Crab Farm in Bengeworth. The holding he held in Wickhamford was known as Shooting Field. Albert Eaton had around 24 acres of land, which he had occupied for 23 years; he worked the land on his own with no assistance. The land was given over to pasture; he had ten cows and three horses used for agricultural purposes. He did not have a tractor.

As the farm was over 5 acres in size, Form B496 needed to be completed by inspectors. The inspector, F W Morris, judged the farm to be 100% fair, moderately laid out, on soil which was 100% heavy, when he visited on 1st November 1943. There was no farmhouse. The situation in regard to road and railway and the condition of farm roads, fences and ditches was considered bad; the condition of field drainage was fair. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was a stream supplying water to the fields; there was no electricity.

Management of the farm was classed as C, the reason being personal failings, given as lack of initiative. The condition of pasture was bad with no use of fertilisers; there was no arable land.