1. I am responding to this enquiry because I am very concerned about the damaging effect that fracking would have on rural tourism in England, and also in the rest of the UK. For the past 60 years I have enjoyed regular holidays throughout rural areas in all parts of the UK, staying on small caravan sites (Certified Locations for only 5 caravans, mostly on working farms) as well as self catering accommodation. We always select quiet rural areas, one of our favourites being the North York Moors which are currently under threat from fracking.

2. I am horrified to learn of the implications that fracking will have on the environment. It is clear from reports from America that the water table CANNOT be protected from the effects of chemical pollution, which will affect areas a long distance from the site, whilst ground tremors can also be an issue. I have only recently heard of the localised effects on air pollution - even the exploratory drilling has caused pollution in some villages.

3. I understand that each site will be a major development with multiple well heads. This will obviously have a major impact in terms of land use, destruction of the countryside, damage to natural ecosystems, as well as the vast increase in heavy traffic on roads not designed for this. Local villages have already been virtually closed down by lorry traffic to the exploratory drilling sites. This can only get worse with development.

4. The impact on tourism in the area will obviously be vast. I would certainly not visit within many miles of such a site. Many countries, such as France, Germany, Bulgaria, Holland and Scotland have banned fracking because of the known health risks, so tourists from those countries are likely to boycott our country if fracking is developed – why go on holiday to a place where your health will be endangered! Dr. Howard A. Zucker, NY State Health Commissioner, who recommended a fracking ban in his home state after a six-year study, said, “Would I let my family live in a community with fracking? The answer is no. The potential risks of fracking are too great. In fact, they are not even fully known.”

5. The organic food industry is developing well. However this will also be affected as sites within many miles of a fracking site will be considered suspect because of the pollution risks. This will again have a major impact on rural economies:

6. Defra’s draft Shale Gas Rural Economy Impacts Paper, which was eventually published unredacted in July 2015, states the following: “Shale gas may transform a previously pristine and quiet natural region, bringing increased industrialisation. As a result, rural economy businesses that rely on clean air, land, water and/or a tranquil environment may suffer losses from this change, such as agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation.”

7. I am sure you will already be aware of the information supplied to the thousands of us who joined the York protest, but here is a link to the speeches given: York rally

8. In conclusion I can only say that fracking is of benefit only to the major oil companies. The impact on local communities is not fully known, but everything that is known is negative! It will be a disaster for rural economies, for rural tourism and for natural ecological systems.
It will contribute still further to global warming and climate change, thus going against our commitment to the Paris Agreement.

9. I believe it is the duty of DEFRA to oppose all such development and instead to encourage the government to promote rural economies and tourism, and to protect our countryside; also to put funding back into renewable energy development instead of fossil fuels.

10. The EFRA Select Committee should demand an immediate moratorium on fracking and other forms of unconventional gas production.

August 2016