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## **Somerset dairy farmers who milked £1.9m from VAT system jailed**

A father and daughter who ran a Somerset dairy farm, have been jailed for a total of nine and a half years for illegally claiming £1.9 million by making fraudulent VAT returns.

Jack Frederick Parfitt, 80, ran the farm in Masbury, Wells for over 40 years, and in April 2001, his daughter Sally Ann Parfitt, 51, joined the family business. They submitted fraudulent VAT repayment claims to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), using the money to fund their business and for general living expenses, including mortgage repayments.

Colin Spinks, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Rather than accept that their farming business was failing, the Parfitts decided to steal from the taxpayer to keep it afloat, denying vital public services of almost £2 million. They are now paying the price.

“We are working to create a level playing field for honest businesses and taxpayers. We urge anyone with information about people or businesses involved in tax fraud to contact our 24-hour Hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

Both were found guilty of tax fraud after a trial at Bristol Crown Court on 20 January 2017 and were sentenced to a total of nine and a half years on 7 February 2017. A third person was acquitted.

### **Notes for editors**

1. Jack Frederick Parfitt, Horsley, Eccleshall, Stafford, DOB 13/06/1936, was found guilty of the fraudulent evasion of VAT at Bristol Crown Court on 20 January 2017. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment at the same court on 7 February 2017.

2. Sally Ann Parfitt, Horsley, Eccleshall, Stafford, DOB 08/12/1965, was found guilty of the fraudulent evasion of VAT at Bristol Crown Court on 20 January 2017. She was sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment at the same court on 7 February 2017. In October 2005, Sally Parfitt bought a property in Horsley, Eccleshall, Stafford and when they no longer owned the farm in Masbury the family moved to Horsley.

3. The fraudulent VAT returns relate to their then farming business in Masbury, Wells, Somerset. The VAT repayments were submitted to HMRC from November 2007 until October 2013.

4. Anyone with information about people or businesses involved in tax fraud can call our 24-hour Hotline on 0800 59 5000 or report it online at:  
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/reportingfraud/online.htm>

5. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

6. HMRC's Flickr channel: [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)

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