

## **DEFRA THREAT TO MOTOR SPORT**

Local motor clubs throughout the UK face a threat from new government regulations forbidding the use of agricultural land for motor sport.

Rising rally co-driver Graham Raeburn said: "Lots of grassroot motoring events through the UK are threatened by the latest countryside decree. Some are events which have run regularly since pre-war days and are part of motor sport heritage. It's the biggest single threat we have faced as a sport in years."

Club officials claim that the new regulations were passed by Whitehall "without any consultation".

Farmers who currently permit motorcycle or car events to use otherwise idle land (which has been designated as 'set aside') will in future be allowed to hold events such as local carnivals, horse events and pop concerts, but motor sport will be specifically banned.

This will affect thousands of events for motorcycles, whose governing body (the Auto Cycle Union) is said to be "devasted".

For those competing on four wheels, the new regulations will mainly affect more than 1,000 autograss events which run outside the remit of the MSA (the UK's main motor sport governing body), but about 40 per cent of club motor sport events authorised by the MSA will also face restrictions, including sporting trials, production car trials, 4x4 events and some rallies.

The new rules from DEFRA came into force by decree last month, without any obvious consultation with the hundreds of clubs who organise affected local events.