

Mad Cow Disease Hits Britain Again



British farmers - hard hit by mad cow disease and bird flu in recent years as well as a devastating outbreak of foot and mouth in 2001 - voiced concern over the threat to their livelihoods and to the \$1 billion-a-year meat export industry.

Symptoms of foot-and-mouth disease were first reported on Thursday 2nd August 2007 at a farm near Guildford 30 miles southwest of London. By Friday, the British government had placed a nationwide ban on the movement of all animals with cloven hooves, including cattle, pigs, sheep and goats.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown, visiting a disease control centre close to the affected area, said a

major national effort was under way to halt the infection.

"We are desperately trying at the earliest opportunity to contain and control this disease and then to eradicate it," he said.

The government's chief veterinary officer, Debby Reynolds, said investigators were looking at whether recent floods played a role in transmitting the virus. Britain's rural community is fearing a repeat of the foot and mouth epidemic six years ago, which devastated the countryside economy. The epidemic battered the farming and tourism industries, costing Britain's economy an estimated eight billion pounds (16.3 billion dollars, 11.9 billion euros).

The grisly spectacle of cattle carcasses ablaze on giant pyres and dark smoke filling the air became a familiar distressing sight across the country as between 6.5 and 10 million animals were culled. The outbreak caused trauma and misery for farmers already hammered by the epidemic of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (bse or mad cow disease), and many were driven out of business.

In 2001, the rural tourism industry was blighted by the closure of pathways across open land, restrictions imposed to stop the spread of the highly infectious disease. The army was called in to help deal with the crisis and even the general and local elections date was postponed, the first such delay since world war. A total of 2,026 cases of foot and mouth were confirmed the length and breadth of Great Britain between February 20 and September 30, 2001. The first outbreak was confirmed in pigs at an abattoir in Essex, eastern England on February 20, 2001. However, the epidemic's origin was traced to a pig unit in Northumberland, North-eastern England. By the end of march, up to 50 cases a day were being confirmed nationwide and outbreaks occurred elsewhere in Europe.

While the world community is systematically banning British meat products, Ontario Federation of Agriculture officials are calling for better scrutinizing of travellers arriving from Britain at the Canadian border.

Sources: www.washingtonpost.com, www.ndtvprofit.com, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>, <http://thechronicleherald.ca>

Timeline: Canada A chronology of key events:

1998 - Supreme court rules that if Quebec votes to secede, it can only carry out the policy with the federal government's consent. For its part, the federal government is obliged to negotiate on secession if a majority of Quebec's citizens desires it.

1999 - Territory of Nunavut is formed in the north-west. It is the first territory in Canada to have a majority indigenous population.

2000 - Chretien again elected prime minister. His Liberal Party picks up votes in Quebec, weakening support for Quebec separatists.

2001 April - Leaders of countries from across the Americas meet in Canada at the Summit of the Americas. They reaffirm their commitment to setting up the world's largest free trade zone by 2005.

British Army Mark a Milestone of Peacemaking

The longest continuous deployment in U.K. military history ended at midnight 31st July 2007 as Northern Ireland witnessed another milestone in the ongoing peace process.

The British army's peacekeeping mission began in the summer of 1969, when 300 troops marched into Belfast with fixed bayonets. The government of Northern Ireland had turned to London for help after local police were unable to cope with bloody rioting by Catholics and Protestants.

In the 38 years since, more than 300,000 British troops were deployed in

an effort to control the violence. Yet it only got worse after the troops arrived, and especially after the Irish Republican Army split into the Official and Provisional wings.

The IRA launched a campaign of bombings and shootings that claimed the lives of thousands over the years. More than 750 British soldiers were killed.

One of the darkest moments of the conflict was Bloody Sunday, which occurred in Londonderry in January 1972. British paratroopers opened fire on Catholics protesting against the government's policy of internment without trial. Fourteen demonstrators died. The tragedy is still the subject of a public inquiry. Since 1969 over 3,500 people were killed, more than half civilians.

After the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 no British soldier has been killed by the IRA. The troop withdrawal was part of that agreement.

Although the British peacekeeping mission has officially ended, a garrison of 5,000 soldiers will remain in Northern Ireland. They will have no security responsibilities. That will once again be the local police's responsibility.



British troops on the streets of Belfast

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news>

Cricket in Montreal?

If you thought of cricket as a marginal sport here, you're wrong. Every summer, around 1,200 cricket players sign on to one of the 50 teams spread over six divisions of competence and take to one of 17 local cricket fields tucked away in places like Jarry Park, the Douglas Hospital grounds and Wagar High.

If you're interested in playing contact Subrata Mandal by email: subrata.mandal@sympatico.ca or by phone on 514-963-7553.

The Aftermath of the Floods

The Association of British Insurers have declared that damage done by the worst floods in half a century may cost more than £3 billion to put right.

At the end of July 2007 stunned Britons tried to dry out their houses after the worst flooding in more than half a century. Downstream from the worst-hit areas in Gloucestershire, residents nervously watched river levels, fearing the runoff from the floods could inundate new areas of western England.

The floods caused the death of one man as he drowned after jumping into a rain-swollen river. A woman trapped in her home in the town of Tewkesbury lost twins when she went into labor prematurely and paramedics could not reach her by land. A father and his son died while cleaning a flooded rugby club office in the town of Tewkesbury. The fire and rescue service for the Gloucestershire region said they might have been overcome by fumes from a gas-powered pump. And a 19-year-old man disappeared after leaving a pub as flooding increased.



“Rainfall-wise, the worst is over, certainly for the working week,” said John Hammond of Met Office, the national weather service.

Queen Elizabeth II sent a message of support to flooded areas, saying she was “shocked and deeply concerned” by the damage. She thanked the emergency services, military and volunteers and expressed sympathy “to all the many people whose homes have been damaged, livelihoods threatened, or who have been affected by the water and power shortages.”

Some 350,000 people in the Gloucestershire region, the most severely affected, remained without drinking water, relying on hundreds of thousands of gallons brought in by emergency workers in bottles or in tankers. Many may have to wait a week or more for the floodwaters to recede enough to allow pumping stations to operate.

Britain has had one of its wettest summers on record — a sharp contrast to last summer, which was one of its driest and hottest.

However, help maybe on the way; flood-hit areas could get a vital cash boost if a government bid for up to a £125m in European aid proves successful. Insurance estimates to repair the damage would mean Britain qualified comfortably for assistance. The EU's threshold for damages is around £1.3bn.

Once Britain has made its application, the European Commission will rule on the amount of the grant, which will be approved by MEPs and member states.

Sources: www.msnbc.msn.com, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

Financial Planning

Why have a Financial Planner?

Modern life is complicated and hectic. Often we feel we are too consumed with the more mundane problems of day-to-day living to find the time to manage our longer-term financial affairs with the care they deserve. Also, designing a plan for your financial future requires a multi-disciplinary approach; most of us don't have the knowledge or the time to acquire it. Some of the more commonly cited reasons for seeking out a financial planner are:

- To assist with the time and effort of managing your finances,
- To get timely advice on markets and investment opportunities,
- To seek advice on tax-reduction,
- Budget planning in order to optimize your available income to invest,
- To optimize your retirement savings.

What does a financial planner do?

A financial planner is like having a personal trainer for your money. Their aim is to help you protect and get more out of the money you have, so you can have more of the things you want – today and in the future.

After finding out who you are, your current circumstances and where you want to be, your financial planner will help you make informed decisions about how to make the most of your money, investing and protecting it to your advantage and using financial products that suit your needs.

How can a financial planner help you?

financial planner s provide expertise in financial planning and can advise on a range of matters, including:

- Financial management from basic budgeting to complex portfolios.
- Investment strategies, including recommending investment categories and specific products.
- Superannuation strategies to help you accumulate enough money to retire with the lifestyle you'd like and strategies to help you minimize the tax you pay right now.
- Retirement planning for people who are retiring soon or many years from now – the sooner you plan the better.
- How to use a redundancy payout most effectively, including how to make it last as long as possible.
- Insurance to make sure you adequately protect what you've achieved so far, whether that's a property, assets or your income.
- Can give advice about mortgages and loans.



MDMM is Marc Dacosta, a financial planner working in Montreal for over 20 years, and Mick McCafferty, a British immigrant and editor of The BritClub Gazette and founder of www.britclub.ca.

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www.mdmm.ca

Shake-up in Pensions Could Affect British Expats

A shake-up of the UK pensions system could have major implications for many British expatriates in Canada.

Britons living here who have been making extra payments to ensure they do not miss out on their UK state pension entitlement might decide to end their contributions as a result of the changes.

The amount of state pension Britons receive is based on the number of years in which they have paid a tax called National Insurance (NI), which is taken from wages and goes to finance state benefits.

At present, men have to have 44 years of NI contributions in order to get the full state pension at 65, while women need to have 39 years of contributions in order to claim a full pension when they reach 60.

Expatriates who do not pay UK taxes are exempt from having to pay National Insurance, but they can make voluntary NI contributions to ensure they receive a full state pension. Typically, they might be asked to pay close to £400 per year.

However, under plans currently going through Parliament in London, the British government is cutting the number of qualifying years needed to get for a full state pension to 30. This measure is being brought in to help out women who stop paying NI contributions when they take time off work to bring up children, but as a side effect it is likely to benefit expatriates who do not have full contribution records.

A spokesman for the UK's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has said that the measures were likely to become law by the end of this month.

The spokesman said it was difficult to generalise about how the changes would affect expatriates, but added they "could potentially mean" that expatriates would need to pay fewer years of voluntary NI contributions in order to get a full state pension.

"It's very important that people are aware of these pension reforms and the fact that they can have a potential effect on them,"

The new rules will only apply to people who reach state pension age on or after April 6, 2010, which means men born on or after April 6, 1945, and women born on or after April 6, 1950.

You are advised to look at websites for The Pension Service www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk which is part of the DWP, and HM Revenue and Customs www.hmrc.gov.uk to find out more.

Source: <http://www.gulfnews.com>

Message from the editor:

Hello everyone! This month's issue of the BritClub Gazette reflects the major news stories from the UK as I saw them whilst I was over in Nottingham with my family for the last 2 week of July. We visited Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire, Wickham in Hampshire and Teddington in Middlesex and had decent weather everywhere. Although we did get rained on a few times and I caught the obligatory cold as a result. We were lucky when visiting central London; having spent 10 minutes sheltering from a rain storm the sun came out and the sky turned blue for our "flight" on the London Eye - well worth it.

Anyway, back to business. The BritClub Gazette has been faithfully keeping you informed for well over a year now and I want focus more on the British Expats living in Montreal. Therefore I am pleading with you to send in your stories. What brought you to Montreal/Quebec? what are you doing now? Are you doing anything of great significance to Montrealers or do you know someone who is. What do you love about the place? What do you hate? How much do you miss home? Etc, etc. All contributions will be gratefully received. Thanks and have a great August - Mick **Ed.** mick@britclub.ca

History- 1500's Trivia

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water".

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs".

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, Dirt poor. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence the saying a thresh hold.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew the fat".

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a ...dead ringer.

And that's the truth...Now, whoever said History was boring. A Big Thanks to Len and June for this fascinating incite into 16th century Britain!!

Other News & Events

Net Tightens Round British lab

Prime Minister Gordon Brown was waiting for a second report on Wednesday on Britain's foot and mouth outbreak after an initial probe fingered human activity at a laboratory as the most likely cause.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) said there was a "strong probability" the leaked strain came from the Pirbright site south-west of London, adding it was a "real possibility" that human movement spread the disease to two nearby farms.

The chance of foot and mouth being spread by flooding or aerial transmission was dismissed as "negligible".

Environment Secretary Hilary Benn admitted the government had to consider the possibility of deliberate human contamination.

<http://www.iol.co.za>

Parents believe missing British girl alive

The father of missing British four-year-old Madeleine McCann said he strongly believed his daughter was alive, rejecting reports she may have been murdered after disappearing from their apartment in Portugal.

"We are not naive but on numerous occasions Portuguese police have assured us they were looking for Madeleine alive," Gerry McCann said in a televised interview with Britain's Sky News.

"I don't know of any information that has changed that," he said, standing next to his wife Kate.

<http://ca.today.reuters.com>

British Beach Breaks Bad For Brits

Britain is far from being a family-friendly destination for those on holiday or on day trips, according to a survey.

More than three quarters of parents said most hotels do not cater for families with young children and thought their seaside break was a rip-off.

About 70% of 2,000 parents questioned said a week in a hotel abroad was cheaper than a week's stay in Britain.

The average family hotel room in the UK costs £120 per night. Only 42% of parents with a baby or young children said they received a warm welcome at their British holiday hotel. Almost 60% were given the impression that young children were not welcome and 69% said family rooms were too small.

When it came to family days out in the UK, parents said they felt "fleeced" by the average cost of £84 an outing.

The average family spends £2,016 per year on family days out in Britain.

<http://news.sky.com>

Great British Beer Festival

The doors to the biggest pub in the world swung open overnight as bartenders at the 30th Great British Beer Festival poured the first of 340,000 pints from across the globe.

The annual five-day bash, which raises a toast to finely-crafted ales - and hurls bland, fizzy lager straight out with the slops - promises to be the biggest festival yet.

Organisers hope to top last year's record attendance of 66,000 and have ordered in an extra 43,200 pints to quench the thirst of beer enthusiasts.

More than 700 different real ales, ciders and foreign beers, the world's widest range, are on offer at the Earls Court exhibition centre in west London.

<http://www.news.com.au>

Britons don't want pay-as-you-go banking

More than 90pc of British

current account holders would prefer to keep 'free' banking with penalty charges, rather than introduce upfront pay-as-you-go costs which could amount to £300 a year.

The news comes during an Office of Fair Trading (OFT) investigation into the ways that banks charge customers for personal current accounts, which could see a pay-per-transaction system introduced in the UK.

In a YouGov survey of more than 2,000 people, conducted for the comparison website Moneysupermarket.com, the overwhelming majority said they would rather keep the current system of high penalty charges.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

British woman in Austria gives birth to identical triplets

A British woman has given birth in Austria to identical triplets, something that only happens in one out of 200 million births, her doctor said Wednesday.

The three baby girls -- Amy, Kim and Zoe, each weighing 1,500 grams (3.3 pounds) -- were born Monday to their 25-year-old mother by Caesarian section in the 33rd week of her pregnancy.

The family's doctor Peter Schwaerzler said the chances of having identical triplets in natural cases such as this, where artificial insemination had not been used, was one in 200 million, the Austrian news agency APA reported.

The Police Return to Montreal

If you missed them in July The Police return to the Bell Centre on Mon Nov 12, 2007 at 7:30 PM for more information contact the Bell Centre

<http://www.bellcentre.ca>

Health - GlucoAid

"The simple and compact way of controlling your intake"



Have you been told that your blood sugar is high or have you been diagnosed with diabetes? The GlucoAid wheel is the exciting new way to help you control your sugar level and avoid, postpone or reduced your medication.

The GlucoAid system is aimed at helping people monitor their carbs and calories intake by simply turning a wheel. Although there are **over 270 items of information** in the system it is simplicity itself; easy to learn and easy to use.

Loosing weight and controlling carbs intake can help people to avoid developing diabetes. Using the GlucoAid wheel, diabetic people could use less medication (or avoid medication) and have a better control over their health. In fact, diabetic people controlling their carbs intake greatly increase their chances of avoiding associated health problems (heart and vascular disease, kidney, visual and neurological complications). GlucoAid wheel eases carbs counting for insulin users and should help them to better achieve their glycemia target.

Glucoaid is endorsed by the Treehouse Child Care Centre, Hudson. You can buy the GlucoAid online at www.britclub.ca

Language Training for immigrants

The Government of Canada, in cooperation with provincial governments, school boards, community colleges, and immigrant and community organizations, offers free language training across the country for adult permanent residents. In most provinces, the name of the program is LINC, which stands for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. These centres can assess your language training needs and refer you to the right LINC classes for your needs.

Most universities and community colleges also offer language classes, as do some private language schools and community organizations. You can contact these groups directly for more information. Remember to ask about fees, since these courses may not be free.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program

LINC offers both full- and part-time classes to suit your needs, and some centres offer free childcare while you attend classes. Most LINC centres can also refer you to other language training classes in your area. Remember, language classes are available for every adult in your family, not just the person who may be looking for work.

In Quebec contact the Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration. <http://www.micc.gouv.qc.ca/fr/index.asp>

<i>Carrefours d'intégration - Island of Montréal</i>			
North Island 255, boulevard Crémazie Est 8e étage Montréal (Québec) H2M 1L5 (514) 864-9191	West Island 181, boulevard Hymus 2e étage Point-Claire (Québec) H9R 5P4 (514) 864-9191	East Island 8000, boulevard Langelier 6e étage Saint-Léonard (Québec) H1P 3K2 (514) 864-9191	South Island 800, boulevard de Maisonnette Est Place Dupuis, bureau 200, Montréal (Québec) H2L 4L8 (514) 864-9191

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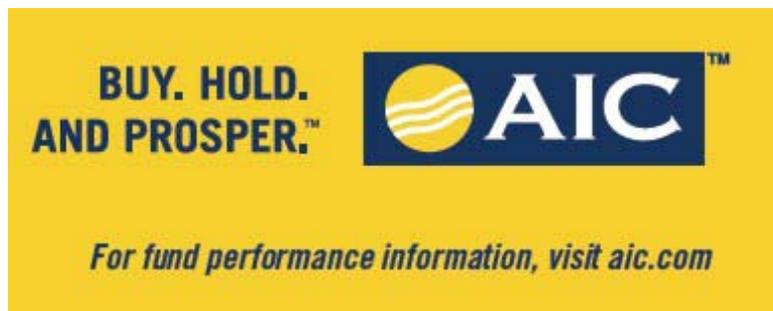
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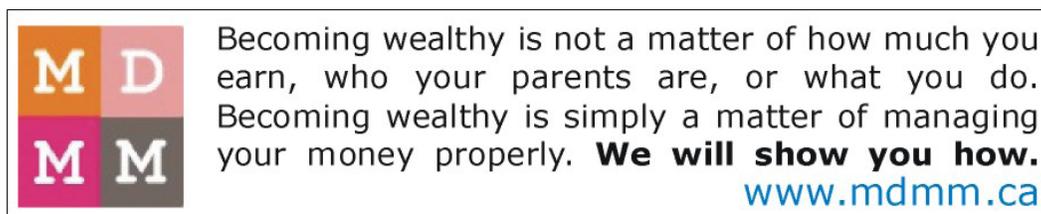
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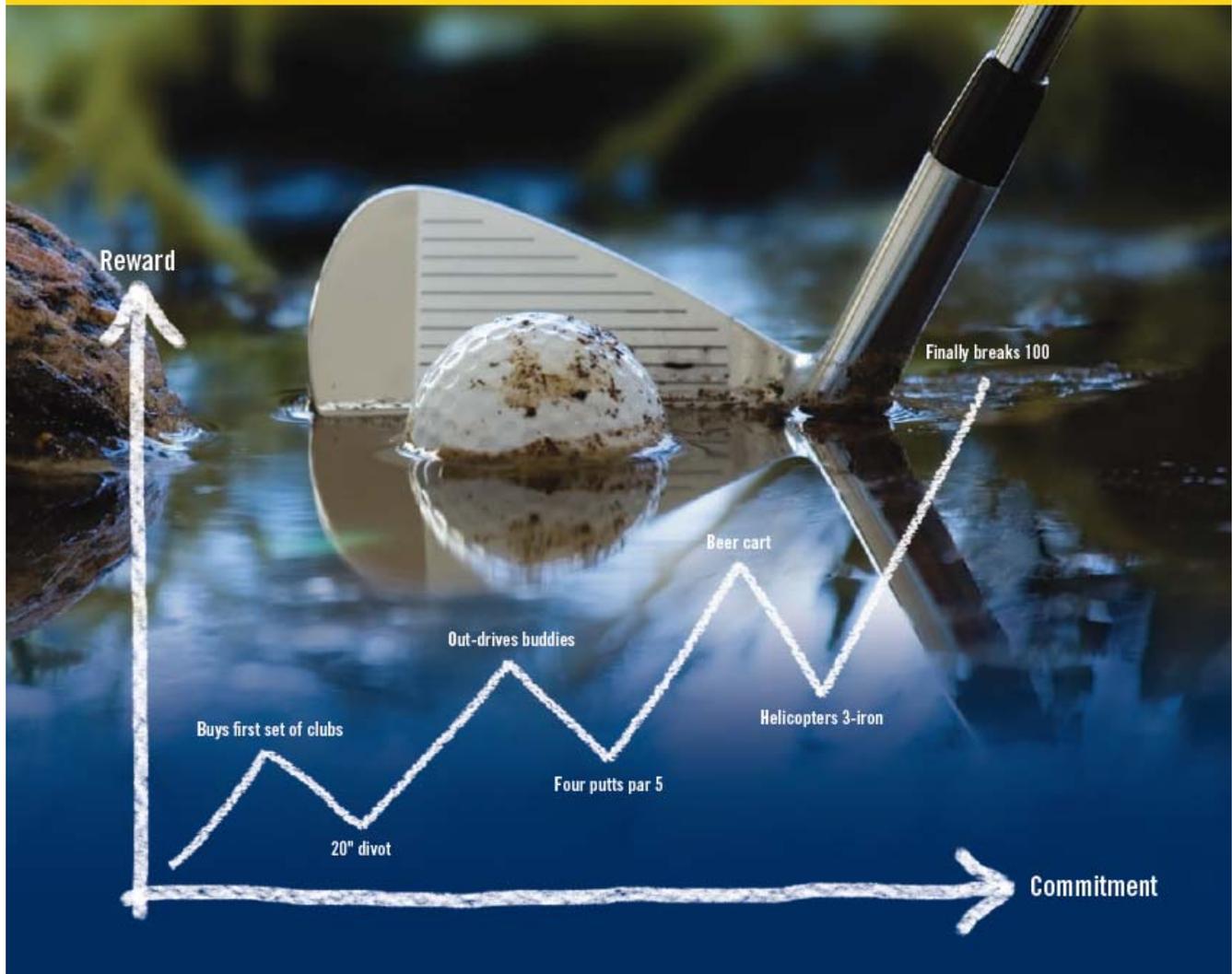
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