

Christmas advert finally treats Norfolk accent with respect

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At last – the real Norfolk dialect is appearing on national TV! And it is not being used as a joke. Lidl's TV advertisement for their Christmas turkeys, which is now being broadcast on British television, shows Norfolk farmer Tony Kerry of Shropham talking seriously about the raising of his free-range turkeys.

Mr Kerry is not some incompetent actor. He is not even, thank goodness, Alan Partridge. He is a real Norfolk person. He is not speaking in phoney Mummersest but with a genuine and very agreeable Norfolk accent. And he is not participating in a comedy; he is being employed by Lidl to communicate what for them is a very serious message.

The intention of the advert is to demonstrate that its Norfolk free range turkeys really are free ranging, and that they are well looked after in a healthy environment. Mr Kerry communicates this message very well, in a very appealing and articulate way which nobody anywhere in the United Kingdom will have any trouble comprehending.

How very refreshing. This is progress. Many other local accents are paid the respect of being considered worthy of



■ Norfolk farmer, Tony Kerry, teaches Lidl-sceptic Debbie about free range farming in the Lidl Christmas advert. Picture: LIDL

being used in the media, and it would only be right if ours was too. Scots read the news on BBC radio, including even on Radio Norfolk.

A continuity announcer on Radio 4 has a Caribbean accent without it being considered comic. Broadcasters with Northern Irish accents are treated as respected professionals in the national media. BBC TV news is fronted by a presenter with a Welsh accent. A Canadian is currently reading the news on BBC Four TV. Radio stations in the Manchester and Newcastle areas use northern accents as matter of course.

Norfolk people, too, deserve to

have our accent accorded this esteem and recognition.

We know that advertisers consider carefully which accents they are going to use when making TV commercials, and then select the ones they believe will symbolise the qualities they want to suggest are embodied in their product. Mr Kerry's genuine Norfolk accent is surely intended to indicate, amongst other things, quality, authenticity and reliability.

If a German company can decide that the Norfolk accent stands for authenticity and reliability in a turkey commercial, then surely British institutions can use it in other more important contexts where we also expect these traits.