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## [CAP reform: Tell Defra what you think](#)

Defra is running an online consultation on CAP reform – and **we want you to [get involved](#)**.

- [NEW! – NFU Weekly News Briefing](#)  
Find out where we’ve been making media waves.
- [Schmallenberg virus - What should I look for?](#)

## [Crackdown on stolen scrap announced](#)

New legislation to tackle an ‘epidemic of metal theft’ is great news for farming, the NFU has said. Plans [announced](#) by the Home Secretary Theresa May will make it a criminal offence to buy scrap for cash, and will stiffen penalties under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964. We’ve made a sustained push for tougher measures to address a recent escalation in this type of crime, which can cause huge disruption to farms and other rural businesses...[more](#)

## [Schmallenberg virus cases increase](#)

Eleven cases of Schmallenberg virus have now been identified in the UK. The [Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency](#) found SBV positive lambs at premises in Suffolk, Norfolk, Kent and East Sussex. It says infection is likely to have occurred in the summer or autumn of last year. The locations of UK cases would ‘add credence’ to the suspicion that transmission is by midges, rather than mosquitoes or ticks, said Defra. **Get the latest [here](#)**.

## [‘Fight not yet over’ on EID](#)

Further reform of sheep EID is needed to help farmers struggling with inappropriate requirements. That was the view of UK and Irish farming union officeholders at a meeting organised by the NFU this week. The strategy planning session was held following recent positive news - a delay to the individual recording of the historic flock - and the disappointing announcement on ‘zero tolerance’ for sheep EID moves in Wales...[more](#)

## [President’s message...](#)

The Prime Minister put in a reassuring performance before the Countryfile cameras in his recent interview – except for a jarring note when it came to the CAP. See what Peter Kendall made of it [here](#).

## [NFU tributes to former President](#)

Former NFU President Sir Richard Butler had died at the age of 83. Sir Richard piloted the organisation through one of the most turbulent periods in its history. In office between 1979 and 1986, he had to contend with growing controversy over the EEC’s food mountains, the unfairness of the so-called ‘green pound’, the introduction of milk quotas and the passing of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. “The farmers and growers of England and Wales owe him a huge debt of gratitude,” said Peter Kendall. **Read more [here](#)**.

## [Lawrence becomes first 'next gen' chairman](#)

The NFU’s Next Generation Policy Forum has elected William Lawrence as its first chairman. Mr Lawrence is 31 and runs a dairy, beef and arable farm partnership with his parents in Wales...[more](#)

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## [£1,000 'access deal' for HS2 farmers](#)

Farm owners and occupiers affected by the [High Speed Two railway](#) are to be offered £1,000 to allow contractors onto private land during the early development of the route. The payment is part of a deal with HS2 Ltd brokered by the NFU and the CLA. **Full story** [here](#).

## [Cold snap to chill UK this week](#)

The [Met Office](#) has issued a widespread cold weather warning, with below average temperatures expected in most parts of England and Wales until well into the weekend. "At the moment we have a high pressure system over eastern Europe trying to push cold air in from the East, while milder Atlantic air is trying to push in from the West," said chief forecaster Chris Tubbs. "The colder air is set to win, bringing a risk of snow"...[more](#)

## [Industry 'more optimistic' says Mackintosh](#)

Outgoing board chairman Alistair Mackintosh says the livestock sector is more optimistic now than when he was elected in 2008. "Our industry is in a positive mood," he said. "Prices are stronger, relationships have vastly improved across the supply chain and we have achieved flexibility for farmers on sheep EID, to help cope with the difficulties in the regulation." CAP 'greening' measures, the review of movement controls and animal health developments would feature among his successor's challenges, he added...[more](#)

## [Defra looks beyond peat for future growth](#)

The horticultural sector as a whole should benefit from moves to investigate more sustainable growing mediums. That was our view as a Defra task force unveiled its [programme of work](#) for the next six months. "Solutions must stack-up economically while moving the industry to a place where it can promote itself on its responsibly-sourced growing media," said NFU adviser Dr Chris Hartfield...[more](#)

## [Report reveals farming future](#)

The UK's first [Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) will help improve our understanding of how agriculture can be part of the solution to major public challenges, the NFU has said. The report will allow government to compare a wide range of outcomes linked to changing climate. It looks at both risks and opportunities, warning that flooding, heat waves and water shortages could become more likely – but that benefits might include new shipping lanes, fewer cold-related deaths and higher crop yields. **Find out more** [here](#).

## [Forecasts show many sectors on the up](#)

Defra's latest income projections are welcome – but high input costs and crisis in the eurozone leave no room for complacency, the NFU has said. The new [figures](#) suggested a strong 12 months for the industry overall, although pig and poultry units bucked that trend and horticultural ventures were not included in the forecasts. **Read more** [here](#).

## [Eblex unveils 'keys' to lower carbon livestock](#)

[EBLEX](#) has identified four key steps towards a lower carbon footprint on beef and sheep farms, in the [latest chapter](#) of its 'roadmap' work. Best of all, the levy board says all four areas of efficiency improvement can help your farming bottom line as well as the environment...[more](#)

## [Potato growers wary of blight threat](#)

A blight found in the Netherlands two years ago is continuing to cause UK growers concern, the Potato Council's Winter Forum has heard. The so-called 'green33' variety of the blight pathogen was identified in one domestic outbreak towards the end of last season. There has been some suggestion that it is more resilient to the fungicide Fluazinam. Research is on-going...[more](#)

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## [This week's Brussels in Brief](#)

**In EU news:** Schmallenberg virus spreads to five member states, GM proposals back on the table, new trade strategy to tackle poverty, warning on EU welfare compliance, British MEPs keep key agriculture roles... [more](#)

## [Coastal access – Weymouth Bay route approved](#)

The Secretary of State has approved the first stretch of the England Coast Path, at Weymouth Bay. Natural England aims to have the section open in time for the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events in July. The news marks the first chapter proper in [plans](#) for the blanket provision of access to the English coast. The NFU believes that the limited funds available for that project would be better spent on ensuring high quality and well-maintained routes where they are actually needed. We've also raised concerns about maintenance and 'spreading room'... [more](#)

## [Six Nations and 1,350 acres...](#)

Norfolk arable farmer Nick Youngs will be watching the Six Nations rugby tournament at the weekend with a close personal interest – his youngest son Ben should be pulling on an England shirt. [Read our interview here.](#)

## [Wanted: Your help to cut red tape](#)

Fed up with forms? Put out by paperwork? Think you know how to improve official information gathering? Now is your chance to have your say and to influence government. As part of its response to the Farming Regulation Task Force, Defra wants to do what it can to reduce the burden of information requests on farmers. It is looking for participants for a workshop at NFU HQ. [Click here](#) to register your interest.

## [Buying a farm building?](#)

If you're in the market for a farm building you are unlikely to suffer from a lack of choice. But that can present problems in itself. The NFU and [RIDBA](#) have produced a guide to help you choose the farm building that's right for you. It should help you ask the right questions, helping to ensure you get a structure that is properly fabricated and constructed, safe and most appropriate for its intended use... [more](#)

## [RPA chief outlines SPS progress](#)

Mark Grimshaw made a well-received presentation to NFU Council last week, reporting an improved performance against targets during the last seven months. **See what the RPA chief executive had to say** [here](#).

## [Water White Paper: NFU provides evidence](#)

The NFU has provided written evidence to an [Efra Committee](#) inquiry into the Water White Paper. Among a range of issues, we've highlighted concern that agriculture could 'leak' water rights to the more profitable public water sector, under the free market model proposed by Defra. **We will publish the submission to our** [water channel](#) soon.

## [Habitats regulation review: We need your views](#)

NFU members are asked to comment this week on the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives, and particularly their impact on proposed developments. We want to feed into a review by Defra ministers. **Find out more** [here](#).

## [The Isle of Wight 'shakes up its wake-up'](#)

**Video:** See how the NFU and the NHS helped islanders celebrate Farmhouse Breakfast Week on Saturday... [more](#)

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