

# BACKING THE BUSINESS OF BRITISH FARMING



## UK Farming Unions' Manifesto European Elections 2014



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## Message from the Presidents

This document aims to inform Members of the European Parliament and others about our priorities for UK agriculture for the years ahead. Farming is critical to both the UK and Europe's economy, and vital to ensure growth and employment in rural areas throughout the EU. UK farmers are therefore calling on MEPs to help maximize the potential of our sector and create a policy environment in which our farmers and growers can thrive.

With world food demand expected to climb significantly by 2050 and resources becoming increasingly scarce, candidates for the European Parliament elections have a duty to support sustainable and competitive food production. To achieve this research and innovation should be encouraged and policy decisions must be based on sound science. Safeguarding the environment must go hand in hand with agriculture and the food chain needs to work better to enable farmers to get a good return from the market. In addition, fair and balanced trade agreements with global partners are crucial.

UK agriculture is good for the economy, for the environment, for employment and ensures quality food supplies for consumers in the UK and across the world. European policies and legislation play a major part in shaping the framework in which farming operates and MEPs have always played an important role in the formation of those policies. It is vital that they connect with UK farmers in their constituencies and in Brussels. We look forward to working closely with MEPs during the next parliamentary term and beyond.



**Meurig Raymond**  
NFU President



**Nigel Miller**  
NFU Scotland  
President



**Harry Sinclair**  
Ulster Farmers'  
Union President



**Stephen James**  
NFU Cymru  
President



## The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

A new CAP reform was finally agreed in mid-2013 after years of discussion and negotiations on this fundamental policy for European agriculture. This reform will not be implemented nationally until January 1 2015 and will result in numerous changes for our members.

We believe that our industry is of the utmost strategic importance to deliver EU and world food security. We had envisioned that the new CAP 2014-2020 would be a more common, fair and market focused policy that released farmers and growers from the burden of unnecessary and over regulation. Unfortunately we feel that this reform was a missed opportunity to iron out the problems of the past and to move the policy in a more market orientated direction.

Our industry remains committed to maintaining the high standards expected by our consumers and to meeting the wider challenges of a growing world population and the impact of climate change. We want the European Parliament to recognise the need for an effective CAP to underpin these goals and to celebrate the wider contribution that farming makes to our society, environment and economy.

We want our MEPs to back a CAP that supports our farmers in continuing to produce sustainably while becoming more productive and globally competitive. We also wish to see the newly reformed CAP supporting genuinely active farmers and protecting those most affected by the upheaval of this reform. We are convinced that some of the new rules introduced in the latest CAP reform are misguided and we will continue to call on MEPs to press for changes at the earliest opportunity.



## International Trade

The EU is in the process of negotiating preferential trade agreements with an unprecedented number of third country partners. According to the European Commission if it were to complete all its current free trade talks tomorrow, this would add 2.2% or €275 billion to the GDP of the EU. This is the equivalent of adding a country as big as Austria or Denmark to the EU economy. We strongly believe that the EU should seek balanced trade agreements and should there be negative impacts, it is appropriate for farmers to be compensated through adjustment mechanisms.

**“The EU remains a net exporter in key commodities such as dairy products and cereals with significant potential to increase exports of high value farm goods.” Nigel Miller, NFUS President**

Some trade agreements are likely to benefit UK agriculture by expanding the opportunities for exports. However, freeing up trade may also make it more difficult for some UK farmers to compete with imports.

As farming unions it is therefore important to us that:

- The impact of prospective trade agreements is clearly understood
- The degree of equivalency in food safety, traceability, environmental and animal welfare standards which farmers are required to meet to supply the EU market is properly assessed
- The EU must be able to maintain safeguard measures for all products if exceptional market circumstances require such action

We would like MEPs to support our calls to have some products, specifically animal products such as meat and eggs, treated as “sensitive” in the negotiations. We would also like the support of MEPs in fighting for the improvement of rules relating to the protection of products from certain areas of the EU- the products of ‘specific geographical indication’ and allowing the EU to maintain the right to establish higher standards on the basis of sound scientific justification or risk assessment processes.

## The Environment

The reform of the CAP demands more from farmers than ever before. Farmers in the UK understand that to farm successfully they need healthy soil, fresh water and clean air in order for their crops and animals to grow. Safeguarding the environment goes hand in hand with food production and farmers work hard to conserve and enhance nature.

Each farm offers very different environmental benefits, some are particularly suited to measures that protect farmland birds while others would do better to focus on supporting pollinators. While there are some generic actions that should be used on every farm there are many measures that only offer full benefits when situated in the right place on the right farm and in a way which complements the overall management plan for the farm. This will enable farmers to fulfil the essential need to produce more food while also improving their delivery of environmental benefits, and maintaining their roles as custodians of the countryside.

**'We want to see a greater recognition of the good work farmers are doing to protect and enhance ecosystems, provide habitats and boost biodiversity'**  
**Stephen James, NFU Cymru President**

We would like MEPs to recognise that broad brush EU legislation – such as the greening rules in the direct payment regulations - do not always deliver the necessary environmental benefits and can have negative impacts on farm businesses.

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM  
BRITISH FARMING HAVE BEEN  
CUT BY 20% SINCE 1990<sup>1</sup>**

**ACROSS BRITISH FARMLAND  
PHOSPHATE USE WAS 17 KG/HA IN 2012  
– A 57.5% REDUCTION SINCE  
RECORDS BEGAN IN 1983<sup>3</sup>**

**AGRICULTURE IS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
JUST 1%**

**OF UK CARBON  
DIOXIDE  
EMISSIONS,  
DESPITE USING 70%  
OF LAND SPACE<sup>2</sup>**

**OVER 10  
BILLION**

**TONNES OF  
CARBON IS  
ESTIMATED  
TO BE STORED  
IN UK SOILS,  
EQUIVALENT TO  
1 ½ YEARS OF  
GLOBAL CARBON  
EMISSIONS<sup>4</sup>**

1. Department of energy and climate

2. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277021/20140204\\_2012\\_UK\\_Greenhouse\\_Gas\\_Emissions\\_Final\\_Figures.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277021/20140204_2012_UK_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Final_Figures.pdf)

3. State of the countryside 2010

4. Carbon management by land and marine managers 2008 Natural England



## Science and Technology



We have consistently called for sound science to be the foundation on which European policies are based. With the welcome appointment of an EU Chief Scientist in 2011 we hoped that the role of science in policymaking would rise higher up the agenda. However there remain too many instances where the body of scientific evidence is ignored, with emotion and national politics

driving decision-making. Current examples include the regulatory deadlock in the EU on GM crop cultivation, the cloning debate and restrictions on neonicotinoids when there is no agreed scientific position.

The EU's programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020, provides a great opportunity for us to develop and use science and technology for the benefit of our farmers, now and for the future.

Agriculture and the bio-economy form one key pillar of Horizon 2020. The role of Rural Development funds to bring farmers together in operational groups through European Innovation Partnerships, to lead and develop future projects and draw down future Horizon 2020 funding is an opportunity we must not miss.

**'We need MEPs to help ensure that the priorities for the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Sustainability and Productivity are fit for purpose, and help UK farmers prepare for current and future farming challenges'**

**Harry Sinclair, UFU President**

European policy making should be based on robust, sound, peer-reviewed scientific evidence. MEPs should continue to demand this of the Commission and each other. It is very damaging to the EU economy, industry and wider society for an anti-technology reputation to persist while our competitors in the rest of the world embrace innovation in food and farming.



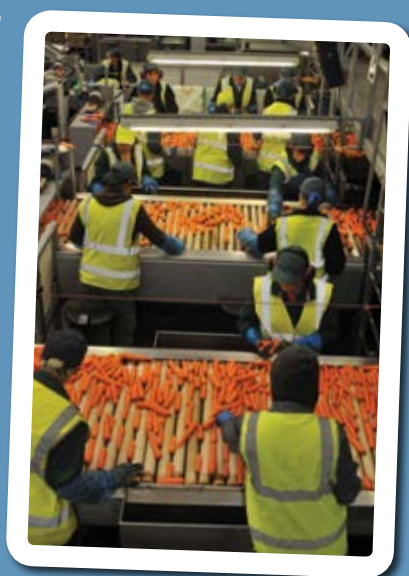
# Food Supply Chains

Farmers are facing the growing pressures of increasing demand for food, an uncertain climate and volatile commodity prices. With these challenges to the future of farm businesses, it is of paramount importance that food supply chains work properly. The reduction in direct support for productive farming emphasises that farming businesses now more than ever need to see sustainable returns from a market that is fair to all.

The horsemeat scandal in the processing and retail sector in 2013 was a wake-up call for the food industry. It is clear that complicated food supply chains with significant downward price pressure allow malpractice to emerge. The UK farming unions believe that food chains should be built on longer term supply relationships that are simple, transparent and fair.

We have worked tirelessly to improve supply chain relations and in the UK we have a statutory Groceries Supply Chain Code of Practice (GSCOP), backed up by a Groceries Code Adjudicator. This operates to deliver a better working environment for direct suppliers to supermarkets to ensure the long term sustainability of the agri-food sector. We do not believe this type of approach should be confined to the borders of the UK. Farmers and growers want to play a full and active role in the European internal market. Fair dealings and transparent trading contributes to food security, a well-functioning single market and promotes resource efficiency and economic growth.

There is a lot of work to do at European level to ensure the grocery market is dynamic and innovative. We would like to see MEPs leading the charge to ensure that our food supply chains provide a fair return for everyone.



## Crop Protection

The choice, safety, security, availability and quality of food production is based on the practical application of technology in farming. Continuing to develop and improve these tools is essential to our ongoing ability to produce food and manage threats such as pests, weeds and diseases. Without doubt the technologies used to produce our food need to be regulated to ensure safety and confidence, but decision making on crop protection technologies must be based on an evaluation of sound science and an understanding of risk in a practical context.

The competitiveness of European food production requires access to chemical, biological and genetic technologies to complement cultural control techniques. The availability of chemical control is now very limited with many sectors relying on only one chemical to achieve control of major pests. This is a huge concern within our industry where the development of biotechnology and other approaches is critical to ensuring that European farming remains on a sustainable and competitive footing with other countries. We must prioritise innovation and investment in research and development on crop protection to ensure European farmers are not left behind.

EU policies should consider the impacts on innovation as well as any socio-economic impacts of restricting availability to any chemical, biological or genetic technology that could benefit crop protection and the broader public good.

**"The further restriction of certain key chemical products threatens to create problems in certain sectors for both major and speciality crops"**

**Meurig Raymond, NFU President**

We are therefore calling on MEPs to ensure that risk based policy making, and policy based on sound science governs the regulatory process. MEPs should ensure that current policy and future decisions on crop protection are fit for purpose and consistent with sustainable crop production.

# 17.2MILLION

HECTARES ARE FARMED IN THE UK. THIS EQUATES TO 70% OF THE LAND SURFACE<sup>5</sup>

# OVER 3.5 MILLION

PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN THE FARMING AND FOOD SECTOR IN THE UK<sup>6</sup>

THERE WERE  
**10,000 MORE JOBS**  
JOBS CREATED IN FARMING BETWEEN 2010 AND 2011<sup>7</sup>

FARMING ADDS  
**£8.84 BILLION**  
TO THE ECONOMY EVERY YEAR<sup>8</sup>

5. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/208436/auk-2012-25jun13.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/208436/auk-2012-25jun13.pdf)

6. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/208436/auk-2012-25jun13.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/208436/auk-2012-25jun13.pdf)

7. Defra UK agriculture departments June Survey/Census of Agriculture 2010

8. Defra, Aggregate agricultural account for the UK May 2012



## **THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL BUREAU REPRESENTS THE 70,000 MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES, NFU SCOTLAND, THE ULSTER FARMERS' UNION AND NFU CYMRU**

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