

Political Lobbying Brief – April 2017

Brexit Negotiations:

- Trade – Page 2
- Domestic Agriculture Policy – Page 2
- Regulation – Page 3
- Labour Availability – Page 4

Food and Farming

- Bovine TB – Page 5
- Food Labelling – Page 5

Policy Services

- Glyphosate – Page 7
- Neonicotinoids – Page 7
- Rural Crime – Page 8
- Rural Broadband – Page 9
- Planning – Page 10
- Flooding – Page 10
- Industrial Strategy – Page 10

Brexit Negotiations:

The NFU is setting out its policy position on Brexit across four priority areas:

1. Trade

The NFU's primary concern is that our continued access to the EU single market should not be fettered by tariffs or non-tariff barriers. The NFU wants to see an ambitious bilateral free trade agreement with the EU that delivers two-way tariff-free trade while avoiding customs duties on trade.

If necessary, the UK Government should prioritise a smooth and orderly Brexit by agreeing transitional arrangements that maintain frictionless trade in goods between the UK and the EU at the point of exit.

Once the terms of that trading agreement are clear, the UK should engage, with due care and consideration, in formal trade negotiations with third countries. This includes consulting with stakeholders and undertaking detailed economic impact assessments when trade negotiations are opened and before any offers are exchanged. Alongside this, the UK will need to establish itself as an independent member of WTO, adopting the EU's current schedule of Most Favoured Nation bound tariff rates, and we will also need to examine closely how we might adopt existing EU free trade agreements and other preferential trade arrangements, including the UK's fair share of tariff rate quotas for some imports.

How you can your MP help?

Question: Will you write to the Secretary of State for International Trade to urge him to put agriculture at the heart of all future trade arrangements?

2. Domestic Agricultural Policy

Brexit is an opportunity not only to design a policy to fit UK farming's particular needs and conditions, but also to construct a multi-faceted framework with different instruments targeted at different issues. To facilitate the development of this policy framework, we see agricultural policy as being formed of three constituent parts:

- Productivity measures and business resilience
- Volatility mitigation measures and management tools
- Environmental measures

The Government has stated that it wants to deliver a smooth exit from the EU and that it wants to "avoid a disruptive cliff-edge", acknowledging the potential need for phasing in any new arrangements. We believe it is crucial that transitional arrangements are agreed at an early stage to ensure continuity and certainty for farm businesses when we leave the EU.

We believe that farming should maintain current levels of public investment through this new policy framework, but recognise that in the future this may be delivered in different ways, directly or indirectly to farmers, for instance through fiscal incentives, environmental schemes or ensuring farmers benefit from cutting edge developments in R&D.

We envisage moving towards a new domestic agricultural policy over a period of years. By including a range of measures under the three policy cornerstones, we can ensure a flexible framework that takes into account micro- and macro-economic factors. For instance, if government policy on issues like trade,

The voice of British farming

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, neither the NFU nor the author can accept liability for errors and or omissions. © NFU



regulation and labour allows farming to flourish, we can develop a new and bold domestic agricultural policy, that works for both farmers and society at large, and that builds a more productive, competitive and progressive agriculture. Emphasis could switch from basic measures designed to mitigate volatility to more targeted measures that promote productivity, improve technical knowledge and the uptake of technology, and protect the environment. Conversely, emphasis would remain on volatility mitigation, including direct payments if government fails to back farming in its Brexit settlement.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you argue for existing level of public investment for farming, ensuring that farmers are allowed to flourish and continue to contribute to the national economy?

3. Regulation

Brexit provides the opportunity to review much of the regulation governing farming. We recognise the value of good regulation, which can foster innovation or promote productivity while protecting our health and the environment or standardising operations.

Nevertheless, leaving the EU provides an opportunity to deliver a regulatory framework suited to UK farmers, whether through the Great Repeal Bill process or through other legislative and regulatory measures. The Government should, as a matter of priority, look at ways to ensure agriculture operates under an efficient and streamlined regulatory system, for instance through a future Agriculture Bill.

However, it is important to ensure a high degree of continuity and stability giving businesses the certainty they need as they navigate Brexit. Farming is probably impacted by Brexit more than any other sector, with a huge number of pieces of directly applicable EU legislation and national implementing regulations governing the way our farmers carry out their day-to-day businesses. As the Government looks to transpose these regulations through the Great Repeal Bill, it must not jeopardise our future trading relationship with Europe.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you press the Government to use the UK's departure from the EU as an opportunity to create a regulatory environment that enables both farming and the environment to become profitable and successful?

4. Labour Availability

The whole food supply chain will be heavily disadvantaged if restrictions are placed on labour. For farm businesses, especially in the horticulture, poultry, pig and dairy sectors, continued access to non-UK seasonal and non-seasonal workers on-farm is critical. While it is challenging to accurately measure the proportion of non-UK nationals working in agriculture and horticulture there are available figures across a couple of sectors:

The horticultural sector requires 80,000 seasonal workers a year; (British Growers' Association). This sizeable workforce together plants, picks, grades and packs over 9 million tonnes and 300 types of fruit, vegetable and flower crops in Britain every year. The horticulture industry also employs 37,000 permanent staff of which it is estimated that around 10,000 are from the EU. Approximately 85% of the UK's seasonal horticultural workforce workers are recruited from Romania and Bulgaria (A2 countries) and the remainder largely from Poland (A8). The meat processing sector employs c.75,000 people around 63% of whom are from the EU 27.

The voice of British farming

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, neither the NFU nor the author can accept liability for errors and or omissions. © NFU



As well as an urgent need for the Government to issue clarity on the rules around EU migrants following the end of free movement, the NFU urges the Government to publish the timetable for the Immigration Bill as soon as possible.

The NFU is urgently calling for the Government to start work on a suite of visa and/or work permit schemes that offer employers flexible solutions for recruiting migrant workers for low-skilled, seasonal work, and which place minimum burdens on business to apply and process applications.

How can your MP help?

Question: What representations can be made to the UK Government to press for a commitment from Government that farmers and growers will have access to sufficient numbers of seasonal and permanent workers from outside of the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

Food and Farming

Bovine TB

The National Farmers Union of England and Wales supports the targeted control of badgers in specific areas where there is a high incidence of Bovine TB (bTB). The eradication of bTB will be a long fight and we believe it is critical that the Government's 25 year TB eradication strategy is seen through to completion. No other major cattle producing country in the world has ever got on top of bTB without also tackling the reservoir of infection in wildlife, making it absolutely clear that a targeted and well-managed badger cull must form part of the answer to stopping bTB becoming endemic in Great Britain.

We must consider the outcome of the full report on the pilot culls when it is available and look at areas in which the practice could be improved for maximum humaneness, effectiveness and safety. As each year of the pilot culls takes place and we gain further knowledge to implement in subsequent years.

Bovine TB is the greatest threat facing our beef and dairy farmers and it is vital we do everything we can to control and eradicate it. The NFU remains committed to supporting wider roll out of the cull to help prevent the spread of this terrible disease.

What is the NFU doing?

The NFU is lobbying for effective wildlife and cattle measures. Whilst Government has historically pressed ahead with cattle measures, it is only recently that we have seen meaningful wildlife control undertaken. On the cattle measure side, we press Government to ensure that cattle restrictions are risk based and proportionate, and still permit a viable cattle industry. We are also working with Government to ensure all viable avenues for tackling the disease are used; by tackling the disease in cattle alone it misses the critical infection risk from wildlife. Currently Government only permits 10 new license applications for badger control measures each year, which limits the speed at which action can be taken; in addition, there are concerns around what shape supplementary culling (i.e. after an intensive cull) looks like.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you commit to speaking in support of the Government's Bovine TB eradication strategy when it is next given parliamentary time?

Food Labelling

With Brexit on the horizon clear country of origin labelling has never been so important. Consumers want to buy British food; a survey in May 2016 found that 60% of the public often or always look specifically for British produce when shopping for food. The NFU believes labelling must provide clear unambiguous country of origin labelling on packaging, online and at point of purchase. It is essential for consumers to have this information when making a purchasing decision.

France, Lithuania, Portugal, Italy, Finland and Greece are running trials to introduce mandatory labelling of meat and/or milk as an ingredient. The NFU would like to see better country of origin labelling of meat and/or milk as an ingredient in the UK.

While some retailers and manufacturers feel origin is important and are going above what is required in law by supporting The Voluntary Principles of Labelling, which commit to clear country of origin labelling. More can be done to strengthen these principles by ensuring they reflect best practice already

The voice of British farming

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, neither the NFU nor the author can accept liability for errors and or omissions. © NFU



being demonstrated, increasing their reach across the different parts of the food sector (including brands) and to bring them up to date with changes in legislation and current shopping habits.

What is the NFU doing?

The NFU has written to the Secretary of State, Andrea Leadsom, asking for the introduction of this national measure in the UK and Defra is looking into what can be achieved at this time through voluntary and mandatory measures in the UK.

We have regular meetings with Defra highlighting the issues and suggesting changes to the voluntary principles. During a recent parliamentary debate on food labelling, MPs raised the idea of a 'Buy British' filter button which could make it easier for online shoppers to identify and choose British produce. The NFU is in conversations with Defra about how this idea can be taken forward.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you press Defra ministers to support our call on labelling by strengthening the voluntary codes of practice?

Will you write to Defra ministers asking the Government to give support to an online 'Buy British' filter button, enabling shoppers to easily choose British produce when shopping online?

Policy Services

#GlyphosateisVital

Glyphosate is Europe's most commonly used herbicide. It is found in many household products, notably the weed-killer Roundup. It is an essential part of the crop protection toolkit; used by dairy, arable, and livestock farmers alike. In 2016, the use of Glyphosate was re-authorised for a period of eighteen months. By the end of 2017, the European Commission will need to take a view on whether to re-authorise Glyphosate for a further fifteen years.

The NFU is very much of the view that glyphosate should be re-authorised. In UK farming it is widely used for weed control, to prepare the some crops for harvesting and reduce disease and the potential for natural contaminants to develop. It also allows cultivation methods that bring noticeable environmental benefits. British farmers are heavily regulated in their use of pesticides and when used correctly, glyphosate is one of the safest products available. In March 2017, the European Chemicals Agency confirmed that 'glyphosate did not meet the criteria to classify glyphosate as a carcinogen, as a mutagen or as toxic for reproduction'

What is the NFU doing?

We are calling on NFU members to get involved by writing to their MP and/or MEP to outline the importance of glyphosate on their farms, and by using social media to show why glyphosate is vital to their business. Members have invited MPs and MEPs out onto farm so that politicians can see first-hand how this vital tool is used as part of an Integrated Pest Management strategy to control weeds and offer huge conservation benefits.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you contact the European Commission to push for glyphosate to be re-authorised?

Neonicotinoids and all field crops

Neonicotinoids have been used widely in the UK on a range of agricultural and horticultural crops, but in particular as seed treatments on oilseed rape, cereals, sugar beet and maize. They are particularly important in controlling chewing and sucking insect pests during crop establishment.

In 2013, the European Commission chose to ban use of three neonicotinoids as seed treatments on crops attractive to bees, spring-sown cereals and maize. **The Commission is now considering extending this ban to cover all field-grown crops.** This proposal will impact many UK crops – including winter-sown cereals, sugar beet, vegetables and salad crops, leading to reduced yields, increased use of insecticide sprays, and increased risks of pesticide resistance. Member State experts will meet in Brussels in mid-May to discuss the proposed ban. If no agreement can be reached, the European Commission's department for public health – DG SANTE - can take a final decision on whether to implement the ban. Our intelligence is that DG SANTE'S approach is politically, not scientifically, driven and that the likelihood of a ban coming into force later this year is therefore quite high.

What is the NFU doing?

Regarding the 2013 ban, in January 2017, the NFU applied for [emergency authorisations](#) to use neonicotinoid seed treatments on 11% of the national oilseed rape crop, targeted at areas where pest

pressure hasn't reached uncontrollable levels, and where pyrethroid resistance hasn't been an issue. The applications will be considered by the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides on 11 April.

Regarding the current proposal to extend the ban to all field-grown crops, the NFU is urging Defra officials to continue to take a proportionate evidence-based approach and not support these poorly-justified proposals. The NFU is also communicating directly with the Commissioners responsible and using its membership of the European farmers' association to achieve a united front on the subject.

The NFU believes the evidence does not justify the current ban, let alone extending it. The Commission's own studies show the current ban has damaged farming across Europe, but it seemingly has no political will to take this impact into account. It has no evidence this ban has benefited bee populations across Europe. Extending the ban appears illogical. It is also surprising the Commission is making these proposals – based on guidance documents that still aren't finalised or agreed by Member States – when earlier this year the legality of its current ban was debated before the EU General Court. While the Court is still considering the case, the Commission is using the same draft guidance and questioned procedure to propose extending the ban. Proposing to do 'more of the same' before the Court has given its judgment just shows to us how high-handed and autocratic the Commission's approach to decision making appears to have become.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you write to UK Ministers and the European Commission and call for a decision based on scientific evidence and not driven by a politicised overly-precautionary hazard-based approach?

Rural Crime

NFU members are experiencing increases in various rural crime incidents that severely impact businesses and can result in damage or loss of property, as well as intimidation and threats of violence. A number of these incidents seem to be linked to organised crime. These incidents can be grouped as:

- Wildlife & environmental crime, including livestock worrying, fly-grazing, fly-tipping, trespass, poaching and hare coursing.
- Theft of modern tractors and plants, older tractors and parts, diesel, scrap metal, vehicles, chemicals, feed and animals.
- Criminal damage, including arson, vandalism and heritage crime.

NFU members have identified:

- an inequality between urban and rural police funding
- a breakdown in trust and communication between farming communities and the police, leading to an under-reporting of rural crime
- an inconsistency in approaches by different police forces and agencies
- a frustration that sentences fail to reflect the impact of crimes or potential links to organised crime

What is the NFU doing?

The NFU is developing a Manifesto with key asks on rural crime, to be launched at a stakeholder event in Westminster in June 2017.

The NFU has identified a number of common issues behind increases in rural crime that are likely to be included in the Manifesto, including the need for:

The voice of British farming

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, neither the NFU nor the author can accept liability for errors and or omissions. © NFU



- A Home Office funding formula that reflects the needs of rural policing
- An agreed definition of rural crime to be used by government, police & agencies
- A coordinated, consistent approach across all police forces areas.
- A coordinated, consistent approach across all agencies and stakeholders
- Training of police officers and control room staff on agricultural practices
- An effective justice system that reflects the true costs of rural crime

The NFU will look for commitments from government and stakeholders to address the major rural crime issues that are having a huge impact on farming communities and agricultural businesses.

How can your MP help?

Question: Will you attend the Rural Crime Manifesto launch in June?

Question: Can the Home Office take the lead in coordinating all agencies to ensure a consistent approach to rural crime in all police forces areas, with an agreed definition of rural crime that can be used by all parties?

Rural Broadband

Many people living in the countryside rely on basic broadband speeds, or have no coverage at all. It's essential that they are able to access super-fast services to run efficient businesses, meet government regulations and to maintain access to rural services.

The NFU is lobbying for fast, affordable and reliable broadband and mobile phone coverage for farmers, growers and their rural communities.

What is the NFU doing?

Launched at NFU Conference on 21 February 2017, 'Feeding the future, four years on: A review of innovation needs for British farming' highlighted harnessing the power of recent developments in data and digital technologies as a key objective for future farming innovation.

How can your MP help?

Questions: How will UK farmers be able to innovate if they have less than 2Mbps broadband speeds as the NFU survey has confirmed? Will the Government commit to 30Mbps 100% superfast broadband by 2020 to stop our farmers falling behind our international markets and competitors?

Planning

The Government published its recommendations following the Rural Planning Review in February, alongside a number of technical consultation responses and the wider Housing White Paper.

What is the NFU doing?

The NFU welcomes the Rural Planning Review which proposes new planning guidance to support the development of farm shops, poly tunnels and on farm reservoirs. But there are concerns that this guidance has not yet been updated. We are lobbying government on behalf of farmers who are still waiting for updated permitted development rights for farm buildings and operations, known as Class 6 permitted development rights. Permitted development rights establish the principle of planning

The voice of British farming

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, neither the NFU nor the author can accept liability for errors and or omissions. © NFU



development, leaving the local planning authority to check detailed matters such as siting, access and design, as the current rules date from 1995 they are over 20 years out of date.

How can your MP help?

***Question: When will the Government bring in new positive planning rules for farm shops, poly tunnels and on farm reservoirs as recommended by the Rural Planning Review?
How will the Government ensure that future proofed permitted development rights for farming will soon be brought into planning law?***

Flooding

It is estimated that the costs of the 2007 and 2013/14 floods on agricultural businesses were £50m and £19m respectively. The final costs of the 2015 floods are still unknown.

Agriculture is often at the mercy of extreme and changeable weather. Whilst current funding prioritises concentrations of people and property, farmers experience a lack of maintenance of watercourses and coastal channels and reduced maintenance of banks and flood defence assets. The result is more frequent, more extensive and longer duration flooding. This is an unsustainable and inequitable outcome, which causes damage to farming businesses and rural communities.

What is the NFU doing?

The NFU's preferred approach is for government to establish a long-term, strategic plan for flood and coastal risk management. In order to ensure that this plan can be enacted and delivered, actions and measures to address flood risk must be properly funded and the allocation for any funding must be transparent.

We recognise that farming has a key role to play in flood management. Where farmers provide a service in mitigating flood risk to help protect others this must be a coherent, planned component of total catchment management, for which farmers must be fairly compensated.

Industrial Strategy

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has released proposals for a "modern industrial strategy" – which takes the form of a 'Green Paper' covering regulatory barriers, trade deals, innovation and skills. Smart energy, electric vehicles, robotics, artificial intelligence and 5G mobile are among the subjects included, although there is no specific mention of food production or the existing Agri-Tech Strategy. However, the NFU is aware that the Government's broader thinking does include aspects of food and farming, biotechnology and the bioeconomy - as well as the application of new energy technologies and robotics in agriculture.

What is the NFU doing?

Our key 'asks' are summarised below, under each of the ten 'pillars' of the Green Paper.

Investing in Science, Research and Innovation: The NFU calls for the new Industrial Strategy to build upon the priorities and aims of the previous 2013 Agri-tech Strategy. We ask for regulation to be based upon robust evidence. Both science and knowledge exchange must be rewarded, and links strengthened between research centres and their local rural businesses.

Developing Skills: The NFU values technical as well as academic education, including work placements in the farming and food sector, working in collaboration with organisations such as the National Land Based College and the AgriSkills Forum.

Upgrading Infrastructure: We advocate tax relief on agricultural buildings, fast-tracking of farm-scale reservoir applications and a more responsive planning system to enable growth in the rural economy. To support digital technologies, geographical coverage of broadband and mobile services must be completed in rural areas.

Supporting Businesses to Start and Grow: In addition to calling for reform of tax allowances, we are asking for a domestic agricultural policy that focuses on productivity, volatility mitigation and reward for environmental services. To redress the neglected investment opportunities in northern England, we call upon Government not to 'cap' biofuel production from crops at 2% of UK transport needs.

Contact Details for Further Information:

Fay Jones
External Affairs Manager, NFU
T: 020 7808 6640
E: fay.jones@nfu.org.uk