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Ref: Waste and Resource Strategy

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Publication of the Government's Waste and Resource Strategy

Introduction

The Government has published the long awaited for waste and resource strategy '[Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England](#)' on the 18th December 2018. The strategy sets out how the Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy in England.

The strategy covers several topics which are of interest to the farming sector and the Governments proposals are outlined in further detail below:

Plastic Recycling

- Invoke the 'polluter pays' principle and extend producer responsibility for packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging they place on the market
- Harness the potential of extended producer responsibility for other product types
- Stimulating demand for recycled plastic by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled plastic

The above recommendations may help with the collection and recycling of agricultural packaging and non-packaging plastic. This reform will be particularly helpful in light of the export issues currently facing the sector and wanting to strengthen the domestic market.

Waste Crime

- Improve the transport, management and description of waste by reforming regulations for duty of care, carrier/broker/dealers, hazardous waste, and international waste shipments
- Strengthen intelligence sharing and engagement to tackle illegal activity
- Launching a 'fly-tipping toolkit'
- Prevent illegal activity being hidden through waste exemptions by reforming the existing regime
- Create a Joint Unit for Waste Crime
- Toughen penalties for waste criminals
 - Increasing magistrates' awareness of the prevalence and importance of waste crime;
 - Working with the Judicial Office so magistrates are effectively trained in the Environmental Offences: Definitive Guideline on sentencing
 - Working with the Sentencing Council to ensure the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline is kept up-to-date. This will help secure higher fly-tipping fines, especially at magistrates' courts
- Equipping the regulator with the powers it needs to pursue and disrupt organised crime
- Reviewing the Controlled Waste Regulations and Household Waste Recycling Centres to ensure they are delivering value for money

The above recommendations will help contribute to the reduction of waste crime and in particular fly-tipping which is a specific problem for the agricultural sector. Some of these proposals mirror previous NFU asks and therefore represent wins for the industry once implemented.

Food Waste

- Seeking powers through the Agriculture Bill to introduce sector-specific statutory codes of contractual conduct to protect producers from exposure to unfair practices which are often the cause of viable produce going to waste. Practices such as late changes to product

specifications, or order cancellations with insufficient notice for a producer to find an alternative commercial outlet for their goods

- Developing a £10 million collaboration fund, open to groups of producers interested in pursuing joint business models: this could include funding for joint initiatives seeking alternative commercial outlets for non-specification goods, or support to establish short supply chains
- R&D - In light of the increased drive to reduce plastic packaging, Government want to encourage further examination of the trade-offs between plastic packaging reduction and increased food waste and where packaging can be reduced without adverse effects on food waste generation

Anaerobic Digestion

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection, subject to consultation

AD represents the best environmental outcome for food waste that cannot be prevented or redistributed to others. It provides renewable energy and digestate which can be used on agricultural land to confer benefits.

Next Steps

January 2019 - The NFU to arrange follow-up meetings with Defra and the Environment Agency to further discuss the implementation of the Strategy.

11th March 2019 – Meeting at Stoneleigh between plastic recyclers, NFU, Environment Agency and Defra to discuss plastic recycling issues.

Spring 2019 – NFU to attend National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group meeting led by Defra which will discuss and help implement the recommendations.