

Key things to remember when communicating with your MP

Do your research – understanding the MP's views and voting is key to build up before you reach out to them. The website www.theyworkforyou.com has all the details on this.

Be clear about what you want to talk to them about; pick a particular issue or problem. And explain concisely why this is important.

Be positive and propose solutions.

Follow up with the MP to say thank you and to send them any additional information. This will go a long way in cementing a relationship.

Build a relationship for the long-term – not all meetings will end up with politicians singing farming's praises, and that's okay. A longer-term relationship will be much more valuable than a one-off meeting.

Ways to engage with your MP

Writing a letter/email – a letter or email to your MP can help build your relationship with them. Remember to keep it concise and include a call to action for the MP.

Farm visits – inviting politicians on-farm can be an excellent way to build relationships with MPs. Setting aside a couple of hours to host a visit during a busy time such as harvest, when there's lots to see, is definitely worthwhile. It will give you the opportunity to inform their thinking on key issues for the arable sector and make it a day they will remember. The best days are Fridays or during any weekday during recess periods.

Media and social media – taking photos with your MP and sharing them on social media or sending them to your local media outlet is an important add-on to any engagement you've had with your MP, especially after a farm visit. 'Tagging' your MP on Facebook or Twitter to ensure they see what you say is a good way to follow up.

What can they do for us?

When it comes to backbench MPs and peers, there are a number of things we can ask them to do for us, for example:

- Write a letter to a specific Minister, or ask a parliamentary question.
- Secure a debate in Parliament.
- Vote for/against legislation and specific amendments, and introduce their own amendments.
- Raise an issue in the media, or promote a cause through social media.
- Take part in, or form, an All Party Parliamentary Group.
- Sponsor or sign an Early Day Motion to demonstrate support for a particular issue.

Plan your MP farm visit with us

If you're planning a farm visit with your MP, the NFU's Westminster team would love to know about it.

You can contact them by emailing NFULondon@nfu.org.uk or calling 0207 808 6600.

Make sure you tag @NFUTweets on Twitter or NFU Online on Facebook to bring your social media posts to our attention so we can share your stories with our thousands of followers.

As a NFU member, you have a wealth of skills and experience at your fingertips. If you have any questions about lobbying, social media or the press contact your regional office.



Your guide to telling our brilliant story

#YourHarvest

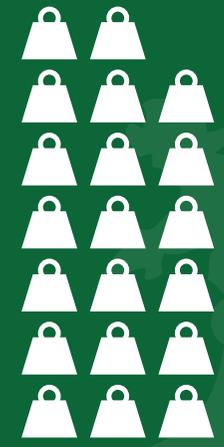




YOUR HARVEST

IN NUMBERS

The arable sector is the biggest user of productive land making it instrumental in delivering environmental outcomes in partnership with food production.



20 MILLION TONNES

Every year the UK produces over 20Mt of grain providing home-produced raw materials for a vast number of applications in the food and animal feed manufacturing sectors

Every year 11 million tonnes of British grain is used in animal feed which then gives the UK:



25BN
pints of milk



10.5BN
eggs



1BN
chickens



10M
pigs



11 MILLION

The equivalent of 11 million loaves of bread produced every day in the UK and 85% of the wheat used is British

5 MILLION



UK produces over 5 million tonnes of flour per year



985M PINTS

In the past decade, UK beer exports – which British barley and malt is used for – grew 15% to 985m pints-worth more than £500m



£4.36 BILLION

British barley is a key ingredient in the £4.36bn worth of Scotch Whisky – which accounts for 20% of all UK food and drink exports



400,000

Using biofuels made from UK crops saves as much carbon emissions as taking 400,000 cars off UK roads



UK FOOD AND FARMING

Is worth

£112 BILLION



and employs nearly



4 MILLION

people



30,000km

of hedgerows have been planted and cared for by British farmers, providing shelter for wildlife



Farmers have planted

10,000 FOOTBALL PITCHES

worth of wildflowers

Policy priorities for #YourHarvest

- Ensuring British arable farmers are able to produce food on a level playing field. If the UK's key competitors can produce grain to lower standards with a lower cost of production, farmers here could be left unable to compete post-Brexit.
- A science-based approach to regulating crop production – not political. Integrated Pest Management (including the targeted use of pesticides) in partnership with emerging breeding technologies can help drive a productive future. Crop production is complex, so the government must follow the science in its regulatory decision making.
- Introducing an ambitious environmental land management scheme that is open to all farmers. A straightforward approach that provides fair rewards for environmental enhancement, compliments the practicalities of food production and supports productivity will deliver positive results for the environment, society and rural businesses.
- Growing the uses of our productive arable land to deliver both food and non-food goods and services to ensure future generations both home and abroad can benefit from Britain's farm land.

Whether it's producing the grain for a plethora of British food and drink products, or nurturing of the natural environment across swathes of the iconic British countryside – the UK arable sector has a brilliant story to tell. And never has there been a more important time to tell it.

The NFU's #YourHarvest campaign aims to raise the political profile of the arable sector. Increasing the understanding of our sector will help us garner wider support for our policy priorities.

As arable farmers, we all have a responsibility to show how we grow the crops which form the bedrock of the UK's food and drink sector.

This is your guide, crafted by our experts in NFU HQ and Westminster, to making your voice heard to parliamentarians from the comfort of your own field. The facts and statistics in this document are something we should all be immensely proud of – so please use these in your conversations with decision-makers.

I look forward to hearing about #YourHarvest and how you're using the campaign to celebrate the industry we're so lucky to work in.

Tom Bradshaw

NFU Crops Board Chairman and arable farmer from Essex