

Agriculture Bill

COMMONS REASONS

[The page and line numbers refer to HL Bill 112, the bill as first printed for the Lords]

Clause 4

LORDS AMENDMENT 1

Page 5, line 14, at end insert –

- “() The Secretary of State must have regard to the current environmental improvement plan when setting out strategic priorities for giving financial assistance during the plan period.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 1 for the following Reason –

- 1A** *Because environmental objectives will be considered when setting out strategic priorities for giving financial assistance.*

After Clause 17

LORDS AMENDMENT 9

Insert the following new Clause –

“National Food Strategy

- (1) The Secretary of State must, before the end of the period of 12 months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed, lay before Parliament a strategy outlining the steps that Her Majesty’s Government proposes to take to –
- (a) increase sustainability of food production,
 - (b) support food production and consumption, and
 - (c) improve dietary health and reduce obesity,
- in the United Kingdom.

- (2) In relation to the priority mentioned in subsection (1)(a), the strategy must include analysis of the merits of—
 - (a) incorporating the environmental sustainability of food into the Eatwell Guide,
 - (b) ensuring that domestically produced food meets environmental sustainability standards,
 - (c) ensuring that food waste is minimised,
 - (d) ensuring that public procurement meets both health and sustainability standards, and
 - (e) providing increased funding for research and development into sustainable agriculture.
- (3) In relation to the priority mentioned in subsection (1)(b), the strategy must include analysis of the merits of—
 - (a) supporting local and regional food identities,
 - (b) supporting procurement of food produced in the United Kingdom where appropriate and sustainable, and
 - (c) developing an assurance scheme for food produced in the United Kingdom to enhance consumer confidence in the safety, quality and sustainability of such food.
- (4) In relation to the priority mentioned in subsection (1)(c), the strategy must include analysis of the merits of—
 - (a) ensuring the reformulation of less healthy foods using fiscal and other appropriate means,
 - (b) restricting the marketing, promotion, and advertising of less healthy food both in retail outlets and through the media,
 - (c) reducing food insecurity, food poverty, and obesity in the lowest income groups,
 - (d) standardising and mandating food labelling relating to nutrition, and
 - (e) improving children’s diets.
- (5) Before publishing the strategy under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must develop a standardised set of reporting metrics on health and sustainability across the food system by which progress on implementation of the strategy can be measured.
- (6) The strategy in subsection (1) must—
 - (a) set out proposals for independent oversight of aspects of food policy covered by the strategy, and
 - (b) consider whether responsibility for such oversight should be given to—
 - (i) a new non-departmental public body, or
 - (ii) an existing organisation.
- (7) In preparing the strategy under subsection (1) the Secretary of State must consult—
 - (a) other relevant Ministers of the Crown,
 - (b) the Scottish Ministers,
 - (c) the Welsh Ministers,
 - (d) the Northern Ireland Department, and
 - (e) bodies that appear to the Secretary of State to represent the interests of the UK agricultural and food sectors.

(8) In this section –

“Eatwell Guide” means the United Kingdom’s national food guide entitled the “Eatwell Guide”, as produced by Her Majesty’s Government;

“food waste” means waste of agri-food products by households or the food service sector;

“less healthy food” means foods high in fat, salt and sugars.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 9 for the following Reason –

9A *Because it is inappropriate to impose a duty to publish a National Food Strategy.*

After Clause 34

LORDS AMENDMENT 11

Insert the following new Clause –

“Application of pesticides: limitations on use to protect human health

- (1) The Secretary of State must by regulations make provision prohibiting the application of any pesticide for the purposes of agriculture or horticulture near –
 - (a) any building used for human habitation;
 - (b) any building or open space used for work or recreation; or
 - (c) any public or private building where members of the public may be present, including but not limited to –
 - (i) schools and childcare nurseries;
 - (ii) hospitals.
- (2) Regulations under subsection (1) must specify a minimum distance from any of the locations listed under subsection (1)(a) to (c) to be maintained during the application of any pesticide.
- (3) For the purposes of this section “public building” includes any building used for the purposes of education.
- (4) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 11 for the following Reason –

11A *Because the Commons consider that the existing regulations relating to pesticides are sufficient.*

Clause 35

LORDS AMENDMENT 12

Page 32, line 36, at end insert –

“() where a product is imported, a statement of compliance with the relevant domestic standards and regulations specified under section (*Requirement for agricultural and food imports to meet domestic standards*).”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 12 for the following Reason –

12A

Because the Commons do not consider it appropriate to create new requirements for imports to meet particular standards.

After Clause 42

LORDS AMENDMENT 16

Insert the following new Clause –

“Requirement for agricultural and food imports to meet domestic standards

- (1) Chapters of an international trade agreement that contain provisions relating to the importation of agricultural and food products into the United Kingdom may not be ratified unless the conditions in subsections (2) to (5) have been met.
- (2) The condition in this subsection is that a Minister of the Crown has laid before Parliament a statement confirming that –
 - (a) the agreement contains an affirmation of the United Kingdom’s rights and obligations under the World Trade Organisation Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, and
 - (b) any agricultural or food product imported into the United Kingdom under the agreement will have been produced or processed according to standards which, on the date of their importation, are equivalent to, or exceed, the relevant domestic standards and regulations in relation to –
 - (i) animal health and welfare,
 - (ii) protection of the environment,
 - (iii) food safety, hygiene and traceability, and
 - (iv) plant health.
- (3) The condition in this subsection is that the Secretary of State has by regulations specified –
 - (a) the process by which the Secretary of State will determine –
 - (i) that the standards to which any agricultural or food product imported into the United Kingdom under a trade agreement is produced or processed are equivalent to, or exceed, the relevant domestic standards and regulations in relation to animal health and welfare, protection of the environment, food safety, hygiene and traceability, and plant health, and

- (ii) that the enforcement of standards in relation to any product under subsection (3)(a)(i) is at least as effective as the enforcement of the equivalent domestic standards and regulations in the United Kingdom;
 - (b) the “relevant domestic standards and regulations” for the purposes of subsections (2)(b) and (3)(a)(i).
- (4) The condition in this subsection is that the chapters have been approved by a resolution of the House of Commons on a motion moved by a Minister of the Crown.
- (5) The condition in this subsection is that a motion for the House of Lords to take note of the chapters has been tabled in the House of Lords by a Minister of the Crown and—
- (a) the House of Lords has debated the motion, or
 - (b) the House of Lords has not concluded a debate on the motion before the end of the period of five Lords sitting days beginning with the first Lords sitting day after the day on which the House of Commons passes the resolution mentioned in subsection (4).
- (6) A Minister of the Crown may, where the Minister considers appropriate, make regulations amending any regulations made under subsection (3).
- (7) Regulations made under subsection (3) or (6) are subject to affirmative resolution procedure.
- (8) In this section—
- “chapters” means any individual section or sections of an international trade agreement;
 - “international trade agreement” means—
 - (a) an agreement that is or was notifiable under—
 - (i) paragraph 7(a) of Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, part of Annex 1A to the WTO Agreement (as modified from time to time), or
 - (ii) paragraph 7(a) of Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, part of Annex 1B to the WTO Agreement (as modified from time to time), or
 - (b) an international agreement that mainly relates to trade, other than an agreement mentioned in paragraph (a)(i) or (ii);
 - “Lords sitting day” means a day on which the House of Lords is sitting (and a day is only a day on which the House of Lords is sitting if the House begins to sit on that day);
 - “Minister of the Crown” has the same meaning as in the Ministers of the Crown Act 1975;
 - “ratified” has the same meaning as in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010;
 - “World Trade Organisation Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement” means the agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, part of Annex 1A to the WTO Agreement (as modified from time to time);
 - “WTO Agreement” means the agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation signed at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 16 for the following Reason –

- 16A** *Because the Commons do not consider it appropriate to create new requirements for imports to meet particular standards.*

LORDS AMENDMENT 17

Insert the following new Clause –

“Contribution of agriculture and associated land use to climate change targets

- (1) In performing functions under this Act, the Secretary of State must have due regard to –
 - (a) the target for 2050 contained in section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008, and
 - (b) international climate change treaties to which the United Kingdom is a signatory, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- (2) Within 6 months of the day on which this Act is passed, the Secretary of State must by regulations introduce an interim target for 2030 which would provide for agriculture and associated land use to reduce and sequester climate change emissions in a manner commensurate with meeting the target for 2050.
- (3) Within 12 months of the day on which this Act is passed, the Secretary of State must lay before Parliament a strategy outlining the policies Her Majesty’s Government will pursue to meet the interim target for 2030.
- (4) Before fulfilling the requirements under subsections (2) and (3), the Secretary of State must –
 - (a) consult the devolved authorities, and
 - (b) obtain, and take into account, the advice of the Committee on Climate Change.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (2) are subject to affirmative resolution procedure.
- (6) In this section –

“Committee on Climate Change” means the body established under section 32 of the Climate Change Act 2008;

“devolved authorities” has the meaning outlined in section 40 of this Act.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 17 for the following Reason –

- 17A** *Because the Commons consider that the existing law on this matter is sufficient.*

LORDS AMENDMENT 18

Insert the following new Clause –

“Trade and Agriculture Commission

- (1) The Trade and Agriculture Commission (“the TAC”) is established.

- (2) Within three months of the day on which this Act is passed, the TAC must produce a report making recommendations to the Secretary of State to promote, maintain and safeguard current standards of food production through international trade policy, including standards related to food safety, the environment and animal welfare.
- (3) The Secretary of State must lay the report under subsection (2) before Parliament on the date of publication.
- (4) The report under subsection (2) must include –
 - (a) recommendations for the policies and legislation that the Government may adopt, including the necessary processes and institutions, in order to ensure that imported agri-food products placed on the market in the United Kingdom meet equivalent standards to those required of UK producers and that UK law and policy relating to food imports is effectively supportive of high standards, including in relation to food safety, the environment and animal welfare both domestically and internationally;
 - (b) where relevant production standards are not provided for in existing primary or secondary legislation in the United Kingdom, recommendations for the policies and legislation that the Government may adopt, including the necessary processes and institutions (such as testing regimes, assurance schemes and certification bodies), in order to ensure that imported agri-food products sold in the United Kingdom are produced to appropriately high standards in relation to food safety, the environment and animal welfare;
 - (c) the scope of agri-food standards and regulations for production methods and final and intermediate products that are relevant to agri-food products which the Government should aim to maintain in future trade negotiations relating to the trade of agri-food products;
 - (d) identification of existing powers exercisable by a Minister of the Crown for administering, enforcing and monitoring standards as set out in paragraph (c), including import restrictions based on those standards;
 - (e) recommendations about how to ensure effective and transparent comparison of agri-food production standards with international standards, including how different production systems and regulatory approaches might be considered equivalent to those that apply in the United Kingdom;
 - (f) recommendations for how to monitor imports of agri-food products in order to assess and compare the standards as defined under paragraph (c);
 - (g) consideration of exceptions to import restrictions of agricultural products, for instance where a requirement may have negative impacts on consumer interests or on developing countries, and recommendations of how best to manage such exceptions; and
 - (h) recommendations for public and Parliamentary scrutiny of any current or future trade negotiations relating to the trade of agri-food products with a view to agreeing an international trade agreement consistent with the TAC's other recommendations under subsection (2).

- (5) In addition to the report under subsection (2), the TAC must produce a report relating to each and any international trade agreement agreed, negotiated or concluded by the Government at any time after the commencement of this Act, prior to such an agreement being signed, considering its impact on the trade of agri-food products.
- (6) A report under subsection (5) must assess the terms of the international trade agreement under consideration and its impact on the Secretary of State's ability to promote, maintain and safeguard standards of agri-food production, including in relation to food safety, the environment and animal welfare.
- (7) The Secretary of State must lay any report under subsection (5) before Parliament on the date of publication, and a Minister of the Crown must move a motion to consider any recommendations in the report in each House of Parliament prior to the relevant agreement being signed.
- (8) The relevant international trade agreement may not be signed by the Secretary of State or another Minister of the Crown within 21 days of a motion being moved under subsection (7).
- (9) "International trade agreement" means –
 - (a) an agreement that is or was notifiable under –
 - (i) paragraph 7(a) of Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, part of Annex 1A to the WTO Agreement (as modified from time to time), or
 - (ii) paragraph 7(a) of Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, part of Annex 1B to the WTO Agreement (as modified from time to time), or
 - (b) an international agreement that mainly relates to trade, other than an agreement mentioned in paragraph (a)(i) or (ii).
- (10) The TAC may create such working groups and commission such research as it deems appropriate to meet its duties under subsections (2) and (5).
- (11) Within three months of a report being laid under subsection (3), the Secretary of State must –
 - (a) lay before Parliament a response to the TAC's report and all its recommendations, including how the Secretary of State intends to maintain the United Kingdom's standards for food production in importing agricultural products in relation to food safety, the environment and animal welfare, and
 - (b) make a statement to Parliament on the Government's response to the TAC's recommendations.
- (12) Ministers of the Crown must table motions for resolution regarding the response under subsection (11) in each House of Parliament.
- (13) It shall be an objective of the Secretary of State to achieve outcomes consistent with the relevant resolutions passed under subsection (12).
- (14) The Secretary of State may by regulations made by statutory instrument confer further functions on the TAC after the report under subsection (2) has been published.
- (15) The Secretary of State may by regulations made by statutory instrument amend the period of three months under subsection (2) provided that such an extension is agreed by the TAC in writing.

- (16) A statutory instrument containing regulations under subsection (14) is subject to affirmative resolution procedure.
- (17) A statutory instrument containing regulations under subsection (15) is subject to negative resolution procedure.”

COMMONS REASON

The Commons disagree to Lords Amendment 18 for the following Reason –

18A

Because it would involve a charge on public funds, and the Commons do not offer any further Reason, trusting that this Reason may be deemed sufficient.

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12th October 2020

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS