



House of Commons
Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs Committee

**Scrutiny of the
Agriculture Bill**

Tenth Report of Session 2017–19

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and associated public bodies.

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Introduction

1. Britain's imminent departure from the European Union (EU) has provided it with the opportunity to move away from the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by designing a new system of support for domestic agriculture. In February 2018, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) put forward proposals in its consultation *Health and Harmony: The future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit*.¹ Our response to the consultation was published in June 2018.²

2. The Agriculture Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 12 September 2018, had its second reading on 25 October 2018 and was examined by a public bill committee. The Bill would “authorise new expenditure for certain agricultural and other purposes” and “make provision about direct payments during an agricultural transition period following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union”.³ In addition, the Bill includes a range of other provisions relating to food supply chains, market intervention and compliance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture, amongst others.⁴

3. **Given the importance of this Bill in shaping UK agriculture for years to come, it is deeply disappointing that this Committee was not given the opportunity for thorough pre-legislative scrutiny. This unsatisfactory precedent has been swiftly followed by the publication of the Fisheries Bill without pre-legislative scrutiny. The Government should explain why the Bill was not presented in draft form for pre-legislative scrutiny.**

4. On the same day that the Bill was presented, we announced an inquiry on Scrutiny of the Agriculture Bill.⁵ We received around 80 written submissions and held four oral evidence sessions with a range of witnesses, including the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and George Eustice MP, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. During the months preceding the introduction of the Bill, we also received two private briefings from Defra officials. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this inquiry.

5. Our intention was that this report would be ready for Report Stage, when the Bill returned to the floor of the House. We hope that our recommendations will be considered by the Government and by Members from all parties when debating and amending the Bill as it continues its passage through Parliament.

6. Because our short inquiry ran in parallel to the Bill's passage through the House of Commons, we were unable to scrutinise all aspects of the Bill in detail. Therefore, this Report prioritises three key areas, each explored in a dedicated chapter: (i) The transition from CAP to a new system based on public money for public goods; (ii) future trade and (iii) fairness in the supply chain.

1 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape future farming policy](#), 27 February 2018

2 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2017–19, [The future for food, farming and the environment](#), HC 870

3 [Agriculture Bill](#), [Bill 266 (2017–19)]

4 [Agriculture Bill](#), [Bill 266 (2017–19)]

5 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [“Agriculture Bill inquiry launched”](#), 12 September 2018

1 Nature of the Bill

Delegated powers

7. The Government’s intention is for the Bill to “provide the legal framework required to transition out of the EU, replace the CAP and deliver a range of reforms”, while conferring on Government” the powers needed to deliver this policy in England and to devolve agricultural freedoms to the constituent nations, while maintaining common UK approaches where relevant”.⁶ It is an enabling Bill and therefore much of the detail will come in secondary legislation, or Statutory Instruments (SIs). The accompanying Delegated Powers Memorandum “identifies the provisions of the Bill that confer powers to make delegated legislation” and “explains in each case why the power has been taken and explains the nature of, and the reason for, the procedure selected”.⁷ The Government has stated that the delegated powers in the Bill are designed to:

- a) allow government policy to evolve in response to changing environmental priorities and changing social and economic circumstances;
- b) move away from the rigid bureaucratic constraints of the current CAP legislation; and
- c) enable government to respond to the, as yet unknown, outcomes of EU withdrawal negotiations.⁸

8. In October 2018, the House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee published its report on the Agriculture Bill, in which it expressed dismay at the Government’s approach to delegated powers.⁹ It stated that:

Parliament will not be able to debate the merits of the new agriculture regime because the Bill does not contain even an outline of the substantive law that will replace the CAP after the United Kingdom leaves the EU. Most debate will centre on delegated powers because most of the Bill is about delegated powers. At this stage it cannot even be said that the devil is in the detail, because the Bill contains so little detail. [...]

Parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill is minimised because most of the Bill concerns a framework for future regulatory changes rather than substantive legislative changes that can be debated here and now.¹⁰

The lack of detail in the Bill was also raised by witnesses. For example, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) stated that “the Bill is essentially an enabling Bill which allows the Minister to make legislative changes under secondary

6 [Agriculture Bill: Delegated Powers Memorandum from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee \[Bill 266 \(2017–19\)\]](#)

7 [Agriculture Bill: Delegated Powers Memorandum from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee \[Bill 266 \(2017–19\)\]](#)

8 [Agriculture Bill: Delegated Powers Memorandum from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee \[Bill 266 \(2017–19\)\]](#), page 3

9 House of Lords, [Agriculture Bill](#), Thirty-Fourth Report of the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, Session 2017–19, HL Paper 194, para 4

10 House of Lords, [Agriculture Bill](#), Thirty-Fourth Report of the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, Session 2017–19, HL Paper 194, para 4b-f

legislation so it is difficult to anticipate what this legislation will propose”.¹¹ Nick Allen, Chief Executive Officer of the British Meat Processors Association, told us that “we are struggling to see, out of the Bill, what it is planning to do and [...]we desperately need a lot more detail”.¹²

9. We asked the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, about the Government’s approach to delegated powers. He compared what was being proposed in the Bill to EU decision-making. For example, he stated that “Parliament will have more of a say than it had when we were in the European Union”.¹³ When we pointed out that SIs could not be amended, he responded “well, you could vote them down, of course, but you can’t with European Union law, so there is undoubtedly a democratic gain”.¹⁴ George Eustice MP, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, stated that the Government would:

be publishing more details about our latest thinking on the schemes so that, as the Bill progresses, people will have more information about our direction of travel and the nature of some of the pilots we are looking at, for instance. The actual SIs themselves, giving effect to some of these things such as contracts and fair dealing, will not have to happen in the short term, because it will mainly be deployed during the agricultural transition period from 2021 onward.¹⁵

10. There is uncertainty about what the UK’s future holds post-Brexit and therefore it is appropriate for the Agriculture Bill to be an enabling bill, allowing the Government some flexibility. However, we are disappointed by the extent to which powers have been delegated and by the Secretary of State’s weak justification of this approach. Delegated (or secondary) legislation cannot be scrutinised as effectively in Parliament as primary legislation. At the very least, the Government should have published some indicative draft statutory instruments alongside the Bill. *The Government should provide us with a detailed timetable for its programme of Statutory Instruments relating to this Bill.*

Powers and duties

11. Further uncertainty has resulted from the Bill’s provision of powers to the Government, with very few duties. For example, Sustain highlighted that:

At present, the Bill contains no requirement, nor any timeline, for the Secretary of State to act on many of the issues such as enforcing supply chain fairness. It provides powers to act not duties. This leaves much of it vulnerable to political priorities. There need to be amendments relating to duties.¹⁶

11 RSPCA ([SAB0009](#)) para 4

12 [Q98](#)

13 [Q272](#)

14 [Q295](#)

15 [Q379](#)

16 Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming ([SAB0038](#)) para 7

The House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee assessed the balance of powers and duties and found that:

Extensive powers are conferred on Ministers with correspondingly few duties. The words “The Secretary of State may” occur 36 times in the Bill. The words “The Secretary of State must” occur three times.

Significantly, powers are exercisable indefinitely and without sunset clauses. They include unlimited monetary penalties, the ability to create criminal offences punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment, and the conferral of enforcement functions on third parties. We are not convinced by the need for such extensive powers to be conferred on Ministers indefinitely.¹⁷

The Minister’s response was that:

The idea that we should have “the Secretary of State must” instead of “the Secretary of State may” is a misreading of how Bills have traditionally been drafted in this country. [...] The correct way to go about these things is to establish powers for the Government to be able to do things. How you then exercise those powers and commit yourself to do that becomes a matter for manifestos, for Budgets and for argument in the House of Commons.¹⁸

12. We are concerned that the imbalance of duties and powers in the Bill, combined with the significant delegation of powers, does not provide sufficient clarity about how the new system for agricultural support will function and how delegated powers will be used. *Given the fundamental changes being proposed, the Government should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny as the new system and policies are implemented.*

17 House of Lords, [Agriculture Bill](#), Thirty-Fourth Report of the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, Session 2017–19, HL Paper 194, paras 4d-e

18 [Q273](#)

2 Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy

Phasing out direct payments

13. The explanatory notes accompanying the Bill state that:

UK agriculture receives around €4.0 billion in support from the EU every year via the CAP [Common Agricultural Policy], which the UK Government also funds as part of its membership of the EU. The CAP is comprised of two “pillars”. Pillar 1 provides Direct Payments, accounting for about 88% of total payments (€3.2 billion in the UK in 2016). [...] Pillar 2 accounts for the remaining 12%, supporting environmental outcomes, farming productivity, socio-economic outcomes and rural growth (€0.8 billion in 2016).

There are three direct payment schemes in England: the basic payment scheme (BPS), greening and the young farmer payment. The three schemes combine to give each farmer applying a single direct payment for the scheme year, which runs from 1 January to 31 December.¹⁹

14. Chapter 1 (Clauses 4–8) of the Agriculture Bill provides for these direct payments in England to be modified and phased out over an agricultural transition period of seven years from 2021.²⁰ Defra stated that direct payments would be paid for the 2019 scheme year on the same basis as now, and that money would be allocated for 2020 in a similar manner, with some simplifications.²¹ The Bill was amended at committee stage to specify that in 2020, the direct payments ceiling can be reduced for England by up to 15%.²² From 2021, “payment reductions will be applied in a fair way, with higher reductions initially applied to amounts in higher payment bands”.²³ Defra stated that it would “reduce farmers’ Direct Payments by up to the following percentages”:

19 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], paras 8–9

20 [Agriculture Bill](#), Clauses 4–8; The Delegated powers memorandum includes a power to extend the transition period more than once, see [Agriculture Bill: Delegated Powers Memorandum from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19)]

21 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

22 [Agriculture Bill \[as amended in public bill committee\]](#), [Clause 7]

23 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

Direct Payment band**	Reduction percentage
Up to £30,000	5%
£30,000 - £50,000	10%
£50,000 - £150,000	20%
£150,000 or more	25%

** For example, for a claim worth £40,000, a 5% reduction would be applied to the first £30,000 and a 10% reduction would be applied to the next £10,000.²⁴

15. Defra estimated that this “could free up to around £150 million to reinvest into the delivery of public goods - piloting new schemes, investing in research & development and providing support for farmers during the transition”.²⁵ Defra stated that “these reduction percentages will be increased over the transition until the final payments are made for the 2027 scheme year” and that it would:

set the reduction percentages taking account of our detailed plans for future schemes and wider decisions about government spending. We will maintain the same cash total funding for the sector until the end of this parliament, expected in 2022.²⁶

No further information has been provided about what might happen to direct payments after 2022.

Public money for public goods

16. The Bill proposes a new system of agricultural support on the principle of “public money for public goods”, mooted in Defra’s *Health and Harmony* consultation in early 2018.²⁷ The Bill itself does not refer to or define the term “public good” but Part 1 states that:

[Clause 1] (1) The Secretary of State may give financial assistance for or in connection with any of the following purposes—

- a) managing land or water in a way that protects or improves the environment;
- b) supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment;
- c) managing land or water in a way that maintains, restores or enhances cultural heritage or natural heritage;
- d) mitigating or adapting to climate change;
- e) preventing, reducing or protecting from environmental hazards;

24 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

25 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

26 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

27 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

- f) protecting or improving the health or welfare of livestock;
- g) protecting or improving the health of plants.

(2) The Secretary of State may also give financial assistance for or in connection with the purpose of starting, or improving the productivity of, an agricultural, horticultural or forestry activity.²⁸

The explanatory notes provide some explanation and examples of what kind of activities might be included:²⁹

Purposes eligible for financial assistance	Extra Information given in the Explanatory Notes	Specific examples and benefits given in the Explanatory Notes
Clause 1 (a) managing land or water in a way that protects or improves the environment;	Delivery of Environmental outcomes such as clean air and water.	Incentivising tree planting to capture ammonia emissions and protect sensitive habitats from damaging nitrogen deposition.
Clause 1 (b) supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment;	Will also include assistance to support understanding about the environmental benefits that land can provide.	Incentivise foresters to provide facilities for educational visits for schools and contributing to their learning and engagement with the environment.
Clause 1 (c) managing land or water in a way that maintains, restores or enhances cultural heritage or natural heritage;	Can include building a monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance, due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic, historic or traditional interest. Includes geological assets and designated cultural heritage assets.	Can include the maintenance of historic farm buildings, dry stone walls and conservation of limestone pavement. Contributing to research, education, recreation and tourism with societal benefits of: beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment.
Clause 1 (d) mitigating or adapting to climate change;		Incentivise peatland restoration, in order to protect the existing carbon store and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.
Clause 1 (e) preventing, reducing or protecting from environmental hazards;	This includes hazards to, or caused by, the environment.	Could be used to reduce flood risk by incentivising good soil management, leading to a reduction in soil compaction.

28 [Agriculture Bill](#), [Clauses 1–2]

29 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN]; [The Agriculture Bill \(2017–19\)](#), Briefing Paper CBP 8405, House of Commons Library, 25 October 2018

Purposes eligible for financial assistance	Extra Information given in the Explanatory Notes	Specific examples and benefits given in the Explanatory Notes
Clause 1 (f) protecting or improving the health or welfare of livestock;	Can support action by farmers, vets and other organisations to improve animal health and welfare, reduce endemic disease and keep livestock well maintained and healthy.	Could include measures to incentivise participation on health or disease control schemes, supporting the financing of testing for a particular disease or strengthening animal welfare outcomes, such as reducing the impact of health conditions and ensuring animals have access to materials that allow them to express their natural behaviours.
Clause 1 (g) protecting or improving the health of plants.	This includes: wild plants, agricultural crops, trees, and bushes.	This can include support for measures across the forestry and horticulture sectors which reduce the risk of introduction and spread of harmful plant pests and disease thereby protecting their health and increasing biosecurity.
Clause (2)for or in connection with the purpose of starting, or improving the productivity of, an agricultural, horticultural or forestry activity.	This could be used to enable a farmer to invest in equipment that would both increase productivity and deliver environmental benefits.	This could include giving a farmer a grant or loan to enable the purchase of precision application equipment for slurry. This would allow the farmer to reduce the quantity of fertilisers used, reducing costs as well as reducing ammonia emissions.

17. In order to deliver financial assistance for these purposes, Defra stated that “the government will work with farmers and land managers who wish to improve the environment by entering into environmental land management contracts, which could span several years”.³⁰ It added:

we will work with potential participants to design, test and trial elements before piloting it widely and then rolling it out nationally. This will include new and innovative delivery mechanisms, like payment by results and reverse auctions. Trials will also be used to find out what advice participants in schemes need to succeed [...]

³⁰ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

We will work with the private sector to explore the scope for public-private finance partnerships [...] We will implement the new system in phases. This will allow for flexibility as we develop the system and enable us to deliver a system that is valued and participated in by farmers and land managers.³¹

18. We put to the Secretary of State a concern that it was not possible to deduce how much money would be paid for the delivery of public goods and what proportion each may receive. He responded:

That is a fair point. You cannot know—we cannot know—with absolute certainty at this stage, but one of the things we propose to do [...] is to pilot and bring forward schemes in collaboration with the sector to ensure there is a proper understanding of what the Government can provide through public money to support farm businesses.³²

Food production and public health

19. Submissions to our inquiry demonstrated differing views on what should constitute a public good under Clause 1(1) of the Bill, with several suggested additions. There was a particular focus on whether food production was adequately recognised in Part 1 of the Bill. The Potato Processors Association was concerned that “the Agricultural Bill, as currently proposed, does not recognise that the production of food, and therefore food security, is actually a Public Good”.³³ The NFU believed “that supporting domestic agriculture to ensure food security and stability of food supply should be included in the purposes to which financial assistance can be directed under clause 1 of the Bill” because “the government has a strategic interest in ensuring a sufficient level of domestic food production, and the Bill should provide government powers to support UK agriculture so it can continue to meet these expectations”.³⁴

20. In addition, there were calls from the Food Foundation for “the delivery of public health outcomes beyond environmental hazards, access to nature and animal and plant health” to be included.³⁵ The CLA also suggested that “consideration should also be given to the specific inclusion of rural vitality and national health and wellbeing as a public good for England (it is already included in Wellbeing Act in Wales)”.³⁶

21. Others disagreed that production and the delivery of public health outcomes should be included under Clause 1 of the Bill at all. Tom Lancaster, representing the Wildlife and Countryside Link coalition, stated that:

the basic premise of public money for public goods is where it is justifiable to pay farmers and use public money to incentivise farmers to do certain things where there is market failure. In terms of the Treasury logic around these things, food as a marketable commodity does not fall into that category, because it is inherently rival and excludable, effectively. It does

31 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit - policy statement](#), Updated 14 September 2018

32 [Q319](#)

33 Potato Processors' Association Ltd ([SAB0017](#)), page 1

34 National Farmers' Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 9

35 The Food Foundation ([SAB0016](#)), para 1

36 Country Land and Business Association (CLA) ([SAB0008](#)), page 3

not make sense to pay farmers public money once through the tax system and then again at the till. There is something inherently inequitable about that approach.

In terms of how we can incentivise the uptake and consumption of healthier food to address issues such as obesity, [...]paying farmers specifically to produce food when there is no way then to determine how that food as a raw product is processed and ends up in the supply chain is not an efficient way of guaranteeing food supplies or of guaranteeing the supplies of certain types of food.³⁷

22. In June, the Secretary of State acknowledged that “people wanted Defra to play a bigger role in the public health debate” and told us that Defra would produce a food strategy “which will look at everything from improving Government procurement to considering what the right steps are in order to help lead to more responsible and sustainable food production, and to help encourage people towards a better diet”.³⁸ Further correspondence from the Secretary of State clarified that the forthcoming National Food Strategy would “build on the work already underway in the Agriculture Bill, the Environment Bill, the Fisheries Bill, and the Childhood Obesity Plan to create an overarching, integrated food strategy for government”.³⁹ A formal launch is expected “early next year”.⁴⁰

23. The list of purposes (public goods) under Clause 1 of the Bill is sufficiently broad that most environmentally beneficial activities could qualify for funding. However, we are disappointed that this Clause does not explicitly recognise the important balance that must be struck between food production and the environment.

24. We are also concerned that there was no indication provided by the Government about how much financial assistance might be allocated to each public good or how they might be prioritised. Overall this will not give enough clarity to recipients about where to focus their efforts in order to qualify for financial assistance. *The Government should explain how it envisages the listed public goods would be prioritised when competing for a limited pot of funding.*

Funding during the transition period

25. The evidence we received suggested widespread support for a seven-year transition period, with the exception of Compassion in World Farming, which considered that seven years “should be an absolute maximum” and suggested that “this is tightened to five years of transition” because “it would be a major missed opportunity if the payments for ‘public goods’ only start in seven years”.⁴¹ However, there were concerns about the lack of certainty about what would happen after 2022. The RSPCA noted that “the Bill has no funding attached to it and the Government has only agreed funding to 2022, five years prior to when the new system is fully operational”.⁴² The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) stated that:

37 [Q51](#)

38 Oral evidence taken on 13 June 2018, HC (2017–19) 321, Q 119

39 Letter from Michael Gove to the Chair on the Government’s planned food strategy, 30 October 2018

40 Letter from Michael Gove to the Chair on the Government’s planned food strategy, 30 October 2018

41 Compassion in World Farming ([SAB0018](#)), paras 24–25

42 RSPCA ([SAB0009](#)), para 10

The Government is yet to provide further details beyond 2021, and while there is recognition that direct payments should be phased out over time for England, there is a serious risk to businesses if there are further significant cuts in 2022 and 2023 before the planned full introduction of the new Environmental Land Management System and animal welfare schemes available to all eligible parties by 2024.⁴³

Tim Breitmeyer, President of the CLA, stated that:

If we are to move to a system of transiting away from the [Basic Payment Scheme], we must make sure that the alternative mechanisms that the Government intend to put in place are available and ready to work. [...] Our huge fear at the moment is that whether it be a productivity and a comprehensive package or whether it be the new public good scheme, neither will be sufficiently worked up, they will not necessarily have the support and the knowledge that farmers know that those schemes are there. Thirdly, there may well not be an institution in place that is capable of delivering something that is far more complex. [...] I strongly feel that some sort of a check and balance and a stocktake in 2020, before we start taking money away from the industry in 2021, is very necessary.⁴⁴

26. *The Government should, before 2020, outline how it would phase out direct payments over the entire transition period, in order to give some certainty to those who currently receive direct payments under the CAP.*

27. *In 2020, before direct payments are reduced, the Government should conduct a review of whether the new environmental land management schemes are sufficiently advanced to begin replacing the direct payment system. The review should also assess whether farmers and land managers are aware of the new scheme and how to access it.*

28. There was widespread support from witnesses representing the farming sector for multiannual budgets to provide further certainty about funding in the long term. Minette Batters, NFU President, considered that a multiannual budget was “essential for the future” and that it would be “paramount” to the success of a domestic agricultural policy.⁴⁵ George Dunn, TFA, told us the TFA was supporting the NFU’s amendment regarding a multiannual financial framework and added “we need to have a process for every five or so years deciding what the budget is”.⁴⁶

29. *It is reasonable to expect the Government to outline a long-term financial commitment to agriculture. The Government should amend the Bill to require it to establish a multiannual financial framework before the agricultural transition period commences. We propose the following wording:*

Clause 36, page 27, line 29, at end insert–

43 Country Land and Business Association (CLA) ([SAB0008](#))

44 [Qq211–212](#) [Tim Breitmeyer]

45 [Q228](#)

46 [Q230](#) [George Dunn]

“(2) No payment may be made under this Act unless the Secretary of State has made regulations in accordance with subsection (3) to implement a multiannual financial framework setting out the sums available under Parts 1 and 2 of this Act during the agricultural transition period.

(3) Regulations made under subsection (2) shall be made before the beginning of the agricultural transition period and shall be subject to affirmative resolution procedure.”

3 Trade

Future trade deals

30. As well as proposing a new support scheme for the delivery of public goods, the Agriculture Bill includes a clause that “provides the Secretary of State with the powers to ensure the UK’s compliance with its obligations under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)”.⁴⁷ This is necessary because “payments made to agricultural producers during the agricultural transition and through any future public money for public goods schemes, would need to comply with the Agreement on Agriculture”.⁴⁸ Clause 26 “intends to ensure that all support schemes are properly classified as amber, green or blue, and if they fall into the amber box, that they do not cause the UK to exceed its Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) limit”.⁴⁹

31. The Agriculture Christian Fellowship considered that “the WTO is based on a view of food as being primarily a tradeable commodity” and that “any attempt to favour higher standards of environmental care, animal welfare or even food safety through trade policy is apt to be seen as ‘trade distortion’”.⁵⁰ It warned that:

In the WTO world, farming incomes will take two hits, one from an ending of EU payments and the other from cheap imports. It is very doubtful if environmental payments, however well distributed, can compensate for both of these.⁵¹

32. In February 2018, we published our Report on *Brexit: Trade in Food*, in which we highlighted the UK’s international reputation for high animal welfare, environmental and food standards. We concluded that:

These must not be sacrificed on the altar of cheap imports. Doing so could undermine the premium British brand and might affect our ability to negotiate trade deals with other countries. We will hold the Secretary of State to his assurances that there will be no compromise on animal welfare, environmental and food standards.⁵²

33. In response to this inquiry, Wildlife and Countryside Link explained the risks of compromising on import standards:

The import of poor quality produce with low animal welfare and environmental standards, as a result of international trade deals after we leave the EU, poses a fundamental risk to UK agriculture. Without safeguards against artificially cheap, low quality food, insufficiently scrutinised international trade deals could undercut British farmers and

47 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], Clause 26, page 32

48 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], Clause 26, pages 32–3

49 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], Clause 26, page 33

50 Agriculture Christian Fellowship ([SAB0011](#))

51 Agriculture Christian Fellowship ([SAB0011](#))

52 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2017–19, [Brexit: Trade in food](#), HC 348, para 64

undermine domestic environmental progress in the UK by exporting degradation elsewhere, generating a race to the bottom in food production and safety standards.⁵³

Similar concerns were expressed by the National Pig Association, Soil Association and RSPCA, among others.⁵⁴ The National Farmers Union (NFU) wanted the bill to “ensure that British farmers can continue to produce food to the current high environmental and animal welfare standards of which they are proud whilst being able to compete on a level playing field with producers elsewhere in the world and without being undermined by cheaper imports produced to lower standards”.⁵⁵

34. The NFU called on the Government to ensure that future trade deals always contain “provision to prevent agricultural products and food which does not meet our environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards from entering the country”.⁵⁶ It considered that the Agriculture Bill “should contain provisions to require all food imported into the UK be produced to at least equivalent standards, as they relate to animal welfare, environmental protection and any other legitimate public policy concerns associated with food production, as those required of producers in the UK”.⁵⁷ The NFU has proposed that the following clause be added to the Bill:

(1) The import of agri-food products into England is prohibited unless it can be demonstrated by the importer to Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs that the relevant products have been produced to standards that are equivalent to the relevant requirements under UK legislation in relation to–

- a) animal welfare;
- b) environmental protection; and
- c) food safety.

(2) The Secretary of State must make regulations specifying the “relevant requirements under UK legislation” referred to in subsection (1).”

Explanatory statement: To ensure that agri-food products produced to lower standards are not imported into the UK, undermining the efficiency, productivity and profitability of the agricultural sector.⁵⁸

35. In its response to our Report on *The Future for food, farming and the environment*, the Government stated “we will not water down our standards on food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection as part of any future trade deals”.⁵⁹ We asked the Minister whether the Government would endorse an amendment to the bill stipulating that domestic standards should apply to imports too. He responded that it was “out of the scope of the Agriculture Bill” and that it was “a legitimate argument to have in the

53 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([SAB0045](#)), para 27

54 National Pig Association ([SAB0013](#)) para 3.1; Soil Association ([SAB0054](#)), para 31; and RSPCA ([SAB0009](#)) para 15

55 National Farmers’ Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 13

56 National Farmers’ Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 14

57 National Farmers’ Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 15

58 Written evidence to the Agriculture Bill Committee ([AB21](#))

59 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, *Twelfth Special Report of Session 2017–19, The future for food, farming and the environment: Government Response to the Committee’s Sixth Report*, HC 1598, para 15

context of the Trade Bill”, which is currently passing through the House of Lords.⁶⁰ The Minister stated that “amendments have been put down to the current Trade Bill along those lines”.⁶¹ However, an amendment to the Trade Bill to ensure that trade agreements would maintain or enhance UK food standards was defeated in the bill committee in the Commons.⁶² George Dunn from the TFA was therefore concerned that “this is not a serious consideration for the Government” and that:

We hear the Secretary of State and others saying, “Over my dead body” and, “This is not going to happen. We are going to maintain our standards” but when it comes to putting the ink on the paper, we seem to fail every time.⁶³

36. *The Government should put its money where its mouth is and accept an amendment to the Agriculture Bill stipulating that food products imported as part of any future trade deal should meet or exceed British standards relating to production, animal welfare and the environment. This is particularly necessary because similar amendments to the Trade Bill have, so far, been voted down. We suggest the following amendment:*

To move the following Clause—

“Import of agricultural goods

(1) Agricultural goods may be imported into the UK only if the standards to which those goods were produced were as high as, or higher than, standards which at the time of import applied under UK law relating to—

- a) animal welfare,*
- b) protection of the environment, and*
- c) food safety.*

(2) “Agricultural goods”, for the purposes of this section, means—

- a) any livestock within the meaning of section 1(4),*
- b) any plants or seeds, within the meaning of section 15(6)*
- c) any product derived from livestock, plants or seeds.”*

37. There has been disagreement between the UK Government and Scottish Government over whether the Bill legislates in areas of devolved competence, including with regards to Clause 26.⁶⁴ We note that our counterparts on the Scottish Affairs Committee are currently holding an inquiry into the impact of Brexit on Scottish Agriculture.⁶⁵ **While respecting the delicate nature of the discussions between the UK and Scottish Governments over devolved competences, we hope that the Devolved Administrations would agree with the principle that food imports produced to lower standards should not be allowed under future trade deals.**

60 [Q306](#)

61 [Q306](#)

62 Trade Bill Committee, 30 January 2018, [col 197](#)

63 [Q254](#) [George Dunn]

64 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [“UK Government Agriculture Bill - Scotland myth-buster”](#), 13 September 2018

65 Scottish Affairs Committee, [“The future of Scottish agriculture post-Brexit inquiry”](#), accessed 15 November 2018

4 Fairness in the supply chain

38. Part 6 of the Bill addresses fairness in the supply chain and introduces fair dealing obligations for first purchasers. The Government explained that:

Primary agricultural producers in the UK tend to be small, individual businesses operating without strong links between them. By contrast, operators further up the supply chain—processors, distributors and retailers—tend to be highly consolidated businesses that command substantial shares of the relevant market. This disparity makes primary producers vulnerable to unfair trading practices. It often forces them into contractual relationships which impose on them commercially harmful terms, but to which they have no commercial alternative and in respect of which there is no legal protection. [...]

Clause 25 provides the Secretary of State with the power to make regulations to introduce obligations that promote fair contractual relationships between farmers and the first purchasers of their products. As the issues faced by different farming sectors vary considerably, the clause includes powers to introduce sector-specific codes, as well as general powers to improve principles of fair contractual practice across the whole industry.⁶⁶

39. The Bill sets out an exhaustive list of obligations that might be imposed, including written contracts specifying pricing mechanisms, payments and the quality and quantity of products provided.⁶⁷ The power to make regulations “will not be exercised in respect of any commercial arrangements within the GCA’s [Grocery Code Adjudicator] remit”, i.e. where the first purchaser of agricultural products is a retailer with an annual turnover exceeding £1 billion.⁶⁸ The Government explained that “it is widely recognised that the GCA has improved the relationship between large grocery retailers and their direct suppliers, and the first statutory review of the GCA found that it is an exemplary modern regulator”.⁶⁹ However, because “the majority of farmers do not supply supermarkets directly”, they are “[not] covered by the GCA and can be exposed to unfair trading practices”.⁷⁰ Rather than extend the remit of the GCA, the Government proposed, in the explanatory notes rather than the Bill, that the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) would be responsible for enforcement and that:

If the situation arose where a farmer felt that their contract was in breach of a statutory code that farmer would be able to approach the enforcement body, who would determine whether the first purchaser had complied with its fair dealing obligations. If it wasn’t compliant the first purchaser would have an opportunity to amend the contract to address the issues, and if they didn’t do so within a set period of time (set out in secondary legislation) it would be possible to impose a fine or a requirement to pay compensation on the first purchaser.⁷¹

66 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], paras 231–234

67 [Agriculture Bill](#), Clause 25

68 [Agriculture Bill](#), Clause 25; [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN]; Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, “[Groceries Supply Code of Practice](#)”, 4 August 2009

69 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], page 31

70 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], page 31

71 [Explanatory Notes to the Agriculture Bill](#) [Bill 266 (2017–19) -EN], para 240

40. While many, such as the NFU, welcomed the powers to impose obligations on first purchasers of agricultural products, academics from Queen’s University Belfast considered that “to deal with the issue of unfair trading practices, the whole of the food supply chain should be under the same requirements to aim at creating a certain balance between the different actors of the food chain”.⁷² Nick Allen from the British Meat Processors Association also preferred to have “one set of rules right the way through the supply chain”.⁷³ David Christensen, representing Arla Foods UK, was wary of changes that would affect Arla’s farmer cooperative model.⁷⁴

Enforcement of fair dealing obligations

41. Despite mixed views on the proposed fair dealing obligations, there was near unanimous agreement that the RPA was not the appropriate body for enforcement. George Dunn from the TFA considered the suggestion “derisory”.⁷⁵ The NFU stated that the RPA “does not currently carry out the type of qualitative assessment that would be necessary to establish the fairness or otherwise of agricultural contracts”.⁷⁶ David Christensen, Arla Foods UK, stated that “there needs to be a degree of cultural change within the RPA towards the way they work with farmers” and that “loading more workload and power on to them” was not sensible.⁷⁷ We too were critical of the RPA in our 2018 Report on the *Performance of the Rural Payments Agency*.⁷⁸

42. Most witnesses agreed that the GCA was a more appropriate enforcement body with relevant expertise.⁷⁹ However, Minette Batters, NFU, acknowledged that the GCA lacked capability due to resources and added that “it would have to be an enhanced and very different-looking Groceries Code Adjudicator that is fit for the future [...] you would have to enhance the role and the remit”.⁸⁰

43. Christine Tacon, the GCA, explained that one similarity between the Bill’s proposals and the Groceries Code was that:

The Explanatory Note indicates that any new regulations might provide for first purchasers of agricultural products to have a written contract. Where agricultural producers supply the regulated retailers directly, the Order already requires a written supply agreement to be in place.⁸¹

She also highlighted possible areas of divergence:

Clause 25 (Fair dealing obligations of first purchasers of agricultural products) provides that the Secretary of State may make regulations for the purpose of promoting fair contractual dealing by the first purchasers of agricultural products. In some cases, the first purchasers of those products

72 National Farmers’ Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 18; Dr Ludivine Petetin ([SAB0044](#)), para 10

73 [Q129](#)

74 [Q129](#)

75 [Q237](#)

76 National Farmers’ Union ([SAB0068](#)), para 18

77 [Q134](#)

78 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2017–19, [Performance of the Rural Payments Agency](#), 15 May 2018, HC 887

79 [Qq134–136](#); [Qq237–239](#)

80 [Q246](#)

81 Groceries Code Adjudicator ([SAB0079](#)), page 2

might be retailers designated under the Order [the Groceries (Supply Chain Practices) Market Investigation Order 2009] and it would be helpful to make clear which protection is applicable;

The Explanatory Note to the Bill indicates that any new regulations might for example specify that the notice period to be given before varying a contract may not be less than three months. While there is no further detail and this is just given as an example, setting a minimum notice period in this way would go further than the Code and would mean that direct suppliers to regulated retailers might be treated differently depending on whether or not they were agricultural producers;

The Explanatory Note indicates that it is envisaged that enforcement of any new regulations would be the responsibility of the Rural Payments Agency and further indicates that: 'If the situation arose where a farmer felt that their contract was in breach of a statutory code that farmer would be able to approach the enforcement body, who would determine whether the first purchaser had complied with its fair dealing obligations.' There is no further explanation of this idea, but as it stands it is different from the regulatory framework established for the GCA.⁸²

44. The Minister's objections to giving the GCA an enforcement role were that:

There are seven people at the GCA and it has a very narrow remit with the ten⁸³ major supermarkets. It is funded by a levy on the supermarkets. If farmers would like the GCA to do it and they wanted that to be upscaled, the implication is that there would be a levy on farmers in order to pay for that. The model has been set up specifically to do supermarkets and it works well for that. [...]

Obviously, the RPA will have reputational flack because of the difficulties of administering a dysfunctional EU scheme, which it has to do. The RPA also has a lot of expertise in many areas. It implements a school milk scheme for the EU; it runs carcass classification in all our abattoirs, so if you have new requirements on carcass classification and abattoirs, the RPA already has people there and is best placed to do that. [...]

Christine Tacon [the GCA] has been very clear, as you know, that she thinks the success of its model is that it has a very narrow remit and is built around improving the relationship with those ten⁸⁴ major supermarkets.

[...] our view is that the RPA is already doing this work, so it is best placed to take it on, and that the GCA is a successful model that we should not ruin by throwing too many other additional responsibilities on it.⁸⁵

45. **We are pleased that the Government is introducing measures to improve fairness in the supply chain for farmers and producers. However, we do not consider that the**

82 Groceries Code Adjudicator ([SAB0079](#)), pages 1–2

83 There are now 12 retailers designated under the Code

84 As above

85 [Qq352–355](#)

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is the appropriate body to oversee and enforce fair dealing obligations; it does not have the confidence of farmers and lacks relevant expertise.

46. The Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) is a more logical entity to oversee fair dealing obligations than the RPA. In addition, we see no reason why fairness in the food supply chain should be governed by two separate processes and enforcement bodies. *Fair dealing obligations of first purchasers of agricultural products, as specified in the Bill, should be the responsibility of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, whose resources and remit should be expanded accordingly. The levy on large retailers that funds the GCA's work should not be a barrier; it could be expanded so that purchasing organisations in the supply chain whose annual turnover exceeds a set amount would contribute towards it.*

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. Given the importance of this Bill in shaping UK agriculture for years to come, it is deeply disappointing that this Committee was not given the opportunity for thorough pre-legislative scrutiny. This unsatisfactory precedent has been swiftly followed by the publication of the Fisheries Bill without pre-legislative scrutiny. *The Government should explain why the Bill was not presented in draft form for pre-legislative scrutiny.* (Paragraph 3)

Nature of the Bill

2. There is uncertainty about what the UK's future holds post-Brexit and therefore it is appropriate for the Agriculture Bill to be an enabling bill, allowing the Government some flexibility. However, we are disappointed by the extent to which powers have been delegated and by the Secretary of State's weak justification of this approach. Delegated (or secondary) legislation cannot be scrutinised as effectively in Parliament as primary legislation. At the very least, the Government should have published some indicative draft statutory instruments alongside the Bill. *The Government should provide us with a detailed timetable for its programme of Statutory Instruments relating to this Bill.* (Paragraph 10)
3. We are concerned that the imbalance of duties and powers in the Bill, combined with the significant delegation of powers, does not provide sufficient clarity about how the new system for agricultural support will function and how delegated powers will be used. *Given the fundamental changes being proposed, the Government should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny as the new system and policies are implemented.* (Paragraph 12)

Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy

4. The list of purposes (public goods) under Clause 1 of the Bill is sufficiently broad that most environmentally beneficial activities could qualify for funding. However, we are disappointed that this Clause does not explicitly recognise the important balance that must be struck between food production and the environment. (Paragraph 23)
5. We are also concerned that there was no indication provided by the Government about how much financial assistance might be allocated to each public good or how they might be prioritised. Overall this will not give enough clarity to recipients about where to focus their efforts in order to qualify for financial assistance. *The Government should explain how it envisages the listed public goods would be prioritised when competing for a limited pot of funding.* (Paragraph 24)
6. *The Government should, before 2020, outline how it would phase out direct payments over the entire transition period, in order to give some certainty to those who currently receive direct payments under the CAP* (Paragraph 26)

7. *In 2020, before direct payments are reduced, the Government should conduct a review of whether the new environmental land management schemes are sufficiently advanced to begin replacing the direct payment system. The review should also assess whether farmers and land managers are aware of the new scheme and how to access it. (Paragraph 27)*
8. *It is reasonable to expect the Government to outline a long-term financial commitment to agriculture. The Government should amend the Bill to require it to establish a multiannual financial framework before the agricultural transition period commences. We propose the following wording:*

Clause 36, page 27, line 29, at end insert -

“(2) No payment may be made under this Act unless the Secretary of State has made regulations in accordance with subsection (3) to implement a multiannual financial framework setting out the sums available under Parts 1 and 2 of this Act during the agricultural transition period.

(3) Regulations made under subsection (2) shall be made before the beginning of the agricultural transition period and shall be subject to affirmative resolution procedure.”
(Paragraph 29)

Trade

9. *The Government should put its money where its mouth is and accept an amendment to the Agriculture Bill stipulating that food products imported as part of any future trade deal should meet or exceed British standards relating to production, animal welfare and the environment. This is particularly necessary because similar amendments to the Trade Bill have, so far, been voted down. We suggest the following amendment:*

To move the following Clause—

“Import of agricultural goods

(1) Agricultural goods may be imported into the UK only if the standards to which those goods were produced were as high as, or higher than, standards which at the time of import applied under UK law relating to—

- a) animal welfare,*
- b) protection of the environment, and*
- c) food safety.*

(2) “Agricultural goods”, for the purposes of this section, means—

- a) any livestock within the meaning of section 1(4),*
- b) any plants or seeds, within the meaning of section 15(6)*
- c) any product derived from livestock, plants or seeds.” (Paragraph 36)*

10. While respecting the delicate nature of the discussions between the UK and Scottish Governments over devolved competences, we hope that the Devolved Administrations would agree with the principle that food imports produced to lower standards should not be allowed under future trade deals. (Paragraph 37)

Fairness in the supply chain

11. We are pleased that the Government is introducing measures to improve fairness in the supply chain for farmers and producers. However, we do not consider that the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is the appropriate body to oversee and enforce fair dealing obligations; it does not have the confidence of farmers and lacks relevant expertise. (Paragraph 45)
12. The Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) is a more logical entity to oversee fair dealing obligations than the RPA. In addition, we see no reason why fairness in the food supply chain should be governed by two separate processes and enforcement bodies. *Fair dealing obligations of first purchasers of agricultural products, as specified in the Bill, should be the responsibility of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, whose resources and remit should be expanded accordingly. The levy on large retailers that funds the GCA's work should not be a barrier; it could be expanded so that purchasing organisations in the supply chain whose annual turnover exceeds a set amount would contribute towards it.* (Paragraph 46)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 21 November 2018

Members present:

Neil Parish, in the Chair

John Grogan Angela Smith

Kerry McCarthy Julian Sturdy

Draft Report (*Scrutiny of the Agriculture Bill*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 46 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Tenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 28 November 9.15 am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Questions number

Caroline Drummond MBE, Chief Executive, LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), **Vicki Hird**, Farm Campaign Coordinator, Sustain, **Tom Lancaster**, Vice Chair of Agriculture working group, Wildlife and Countryside Link, and **Stephen Russell**, Policy and Advocacy Officer, Ramblers.

[Q1–95](#)

Wednesday 24 October 2018

Nick Allen, Chief Executive Officer, British Meat Processors Association; **David Brown**, Policy Adviser, Horticultural Trades Association; **David Christensen**, Board of Representatives Member, Arla Foods.

[Q96–174](#)

Wednesday 24 October 2018

Tim Breitmeyer, President, Country Land and Business Association, **George Dunn**, Chief Executive, Tenant Farmers Association, and **Minette Batters**, President, National Farmers' Union.

[Q175–271](#)

Wednesday 31 October 2018

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and **George Eustice MP**, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

[Q272–381](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

SAB numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Agricultural Biotechnology Council ([SAB0004](#))
- 2 Agricultural Law Association ([SAB0046](#))
- 3 Agriculture Christian Fellowship ([SAB0011](#))
- 4 Anglian Water Services Limited ([SAB0031](#))
- 5 Arla Foods UK plc ([SAB0028](#))
- 6 Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy ([SAB0033](#))
- 7 British Canoeing ([SAB0037](#))
- 8 British Egg Industry Council ([SAB0070](#))
- 9 British Horse Society ([SAB0066](#))
- 10 British Poultry Council ([SAB0052](#))
- 11 British Veterinary Association ([SAB0049](#))
- 12 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists ([SAB0067](#))
- 13 Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management ([SAB0021](#))
- 14 Compassion in World Farming ([SAB0018](#))
- 15 Confor ([SAB0039](#))
- 16 Country Land and Business Association ([SAB0076](#))
- 17 Country Land and Business Association (CLA) ([SAB0008](#))
- 18 Countryside Alliance ([SAB0043](#))
- 19 Cycling UK ([SAB0056](#))
- 20 DAIRY UK ([SAB0012](#))
- 21 David Reay ([SAB0030](#))
- 22 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ([SAB0078](#))
- 23 Devon County Council ([SAB0060](#))
- 24 Dr Ludivine Petetin ([SAB0044](#))
- 25 Farmers' Union of Wales ([SAB0072](#))
- 26 Federation of Cumbria Commners ([SAB0059](#))
- 27 Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland ([SAB0036](#))
- 28 Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust ([SAB0041](#))
- 29 GM Freeze ([SAB0061](#))
- 30 Groceries Code Adjudicator ([SAB0079](#))
- 31 Herefordshire Council ([SAB0006](#))
- 32 Heritage Alliance ([SAB0029](#))
- 33 Horticultural Trades Association ([SAB0050](#))

- 34 Ms Christine Watt ([SAB0014](#))
- 35 MSD Animal Health ([SAB0042](#))
- 36 National Farmers' Union ([SAB0068](#))
- 37 National Farmers Union, Scotland ([SAB0074](#))
- 38 National Office Animal Health ([SAB0051](#))
- 39 National Parks England ([SAB0027](#))
- 40 National Pig Association ([SAB0013](#))
- 41 Open Spaces Society ([SAB0058](#))
- 42 Potato Processors' Association Ltd ([SAB0017](#))
- 43 Professor Alan Swinbank ([SAB0001](#))
- 44 Professor Stefan Tangermann ([SAB0002](#))
- 45 Ramblers ([SAB0040](#))
- 46 Rare Breeds Survival Trust ([SAB0020](#))
- 47 RSPCA ([SAB0009](#))
- 48 Salmon and Trout Conservation UK ([SAB0024](#))
- 49 School & Nursery Milk Alliance ([SAB0003](#))
- 50 Soil Association ([SAB0054](#))
- 51 Stephen Ramsden ([SAB0034](#))
- 52 Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming ([SAB0038](#))
- 53 Sustainable Food Trust ([SAB0063](#))
- 54 Tenant Farmers Association ([SAB0065](#))
- 55 Tenant Farmers Association ([SAB0077](#))
- 56 Tessa Burrington ([SAB0064](#))
- 57 Thames Water ([SAB0075](#))
- 58 the Arthur Rank Centre ([SAB0035](#))
- 59 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) ([SAB0071](#))
- 60 The Food Foundation ([SAB0016](#))
- 61 The Marches LEP ([SAB0007](#))
- 62 The Scottish Government ([SAB0080](#))
- 63 The Wildlife Trusts ([SAB0047](#))
- 64 Traidcraft Exchange ([SAB0055](#))
- 65 UK Pesticides Campaign ([SAB0069](#))
- 66 UK Plant Genetic Resources Group ([SAB0005](#))
- 67 Uplands Alliance ([SAB0010](#))
- 68 Valuing Nature Programme Peatland Tipping Points project ([SAB0048](#))
- 69 Welsh Government ([SAB0073](#))
- 70 Which? ([SAB0057](#))

- 71 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([SAB0045](#))
- 72 Woodland Trust ([SAB0062](#))
- 73 WWF ([SAB0053](#))
- 74 Yorkshire Agricultural Society, Farmer-Scientist Network ([SAB0023](#))
- 75 Yorkshire Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme ([SAB0032](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2017–19

First Report	2 Sisters and Standards in Poultry Processing	HC 490
Second Report	Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill 2017	HC 709
Third Report	Brexit: Trade in Food	HC 348
Fourth Report	Improving air quality	HC 433
Fifth Report	Performance of the Rural Payments Agency	HC 887
Sixth Report	The future for food, farming and the environment	HC 870
Seventh Report	Fur trade in the UK	HC 823
Eighth Report	Regulation of the water industry	HC 1041
Ninth Report	Controlling dangerous dogs	HC 1040
First Special Report	Food waste in England: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 444
Second Special Report	Forestry in England: Seeing the wood for the trees: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 445
Third Special Report	Feeding the nation: labour constraints: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016–17	HC 446
Fourth Special Report	Post-legislative scrutiny: Flood and Water Management Act 2010: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 447
Fifth Special Report	2 Sisters and Standards in Poultry Processing: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 772
Sixth Special Report	2 Sisters and Standards in Poultry Processing: Food Standards Agency Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 861
Seventh Special Report	Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill 2017: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 984
Eighth Special Report	Brexit: Trade in Food: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1021
Ninth Special Report	2 Sisters and Standards in Poultry Processing: Food Standards Agency Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 1070

Tenth Special Report	Improving air quality: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1149
Eleventh Special Report	Performance of the Rural Payments Agency: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1448
Twelfth Special Report	The future for food, farming and the environment: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1598
Thirteenth Special Report	Fur trade in the UK: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report	HC 1675