

Written evidence submitted by the Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) (AB16)

The new “public money for public goods” approach is a huge opportunity to support farmers to adopt and maintain non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. It’s crucial that this approach is not undermined by a catch-all clause providing payments for productivity.

It is clear from many statements made by the Defra Minister George Eustice that he believes the development and uptake of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a crucial mechanism for ensuring that the objectives outlined in the Agriculture Bill and the 25 Year Environment Plan are delivered.

To strengthen this and ensure that farmers are rewarded for adopting proper IPM techniques based on an agroecological approach to farming, PAN UK is recommending that amendments to the proposed Bill be inserted as follows;

Part 1 Financial Assistance

Chapter 1 New Financial Assistance Powers

1. Secretary of State’s powers to give financial assistance

(1)The Secretary of State may give financial assistance for or in connection with any one or more 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 or natural heritage;
- (d) managing land, water or livestock in a way that mitigates or adapts to climate change;
- (e) managing land or water in a way that prevents, reduces or protects from environmental hazards;
- (f) protecting or improving the health or welfare of livestock;
- (g) conserving native livestock, native equines or genetic resources relating to any such animal;
- (h) protecting or improving the health of plants;
- (i) conserving plants grown or used in carrying on an agricultural, horticultural or forestry activity, their wild relatives or genetic resources relating to any such plant;
- (j) protecting or improving the quality of soil.
- (k) The uptake of comprehensive Integrated Pest and Weed Management (IPM /IWM) measures based upon an agroecological approach***

(4) In framing any financial assistance scheme, the Secretary of State must have regard to the need to encourage the production of food by producers in England and its production by them in an environmentally sustainable way. Approaches supported to achieve this would include support for IPM, agroecology and organic farming systems.

3. Financial assistance: checking, enforcing and monitoring

(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for or in connection with;

(a) checking whether eligibility criteria for receipt of financial assistance are met and the consequences, where financial assistance has already been given, if not;

(b) enforcing compliance with conditions subject to which financial assistance is given;

(c) monitoring the extent to which the purpose of financial assistance has been achieved;

(d) the investigation of suspected offences

(e) Development of a target for the uptake of IPM and agroecological farming practices and develop a robust system for monitoring progress towards this target

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