

Briefing for MPs for NC10 in the Agriculture Bill

October 2018

Greener UK priorities

Greener UK believes one of the top priorities for the Agriculture Bill should be to secure long term funding for the farming sector. As such, it is asking MPs to support the below new clause.

Secure long-term funding for the sector (NC10)

As a long term industry, farmers need certainty over the funding available if they are to engage in a future policy with confidence. At present, the bill is silent on this central issue. Although multi-annual contracts with government may provide a degree of certainty for individual farmers and land managers, certainty is also needed for the sector as a whole. As such, the Agriculture bill should place a duty on ministers to set multi-annual budgets that reflect the scale of financial need associated with relevant policy objectives and specify the timeframe over which these budgets would be set.

Such funding should also provide for good quality, consistent advice which is accessible to all farmers and land managers. In other sectors, funding for transport infrastructure, international aid and, most recently, social housing, have all been set and guaranteed beyond the lifetime of the current parliament. If the government is asking farmers to invest in a new scheme, it must follow this precedent and provide the certainty and security of long term funding. We must treat our natural capital like any other, and identify the long-term funding needed to secure it for the next generation.

NC10 sets a duty on future governments to report annually on how much money has been spent to meet the policy objectives set out in the purposes of Clause1(1) and whether this was sufficient to meet these objectives. Although the agriculture bill cannot explicitly set out a total sum of money to be used in the future, we believe NC10 goes some way to ensuring a duty on ministers to recognise the scale needed for delivering the Bill's objectives in Clause1(1). An independent assessment commissioned in 2017 by some Greener UK members estimated the costs of meeting our environmental land management commitments alone at £2.3 billion per year.¹

Without NC10, we would like to ask the Minister how he will ensure long-term funding for farmers in the future. We would also like to be assured that the current funding to farmers will not be reduced beyond the existing commitment to maintain funding until 2022. If we are to ensure a healthy, accessible environment, the recovery of our nature, and world-leading animal welfare

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https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/Images/Assessing%20the%20costs%20of%20Environmental%20Land%20Management%20in%20the%20UK%20Policy%20Briefing_tcm9-449500.pdf

standards, farmers and land managers must be reassured that Government will invest enough into a future policy to give farmers the confidence that they will be paid for the good work they do, and will be able to plan for the long-term with confidence.

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Greener UK is a coalition of 13 major environmental organisations united in the belief that leaving the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance the UK's environment.

Greener UK is working in partnership with Wildlife and Countryside Link.

Together, Greener UK and Wildlife and Countryside Link members have the support of over eight million people.



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