

Beyond the CAP

Policies to support better UK meat
and dairy production post-Brexit



Contents

Summary	3
What we want to see	4
Background	5
Why the CAP is not fit for purpose for livestock	7
Trade negotiations are key	9
The status quo is not an option: Food and Farming Policy fit for the future	10

The recommendations outlined in this briefing paper have been developed in collaboration with civil society organisations and with farming interests. The views expressed in this briefing are those of Eating Better.

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Eating Better is an alliance of over 50 civil society organisations working to build consensus and develop collaborative practical approaches to engage policy makers, food businesses and civil society to catalyse shifts towards healthy and sustainable eating patterns.

Eating Better encourages a culture where we place greater value on the food we eat, the animals that provide it and the people who produce it. Eating Better supports farmers who produce meat and dairy in a sustainable way.

Moderating our dairy and meat consumption – whether red, white or processed meats – while also choosing ‘better’ meat and dairy that is naturally fed, has a known provenance and is produced to high animal welfare, environmental and quality standards can help support farmers without being more expensive for the public. A ‘less but better’ approach to meat and dairy with meals based around a greater variety of plant-based foods will ensure healthy, balanced diets that are better for the planet and for fairer food systems too.

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Summary

Brexit provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fresh thinking about the future of food and farming in the UK. Now is the time to develop a new strategy with policies and mechanisms to support the essential transition towards a fairer, greener and healthier food system.

In the next decade and beyond, we face the twin challenges of feeding a growing and more affluent global population and tackling diet-related disease while also significantly reducing agriculture's impact on the climate and the environment. That means producing food differently, reducing waste, and changing the way we eat. Addressing livestock production and consumption is central to this challenge.

The UK's departure from the European Union (EU) will have a profound impact on food and farming. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and current trade arrangements have played a key role in shaping our food and farming system, for better or for worse. The CAP is a huge distributor of farm support – worth over £3bn annually in the UK. The Conservative Government has promised that existing support will extend to 2020 but uncertainties lie beyond.

Concerns that Brexit will lead to a lowering of food standards and a weakening of environmental and social protections are well documented.¹ However, Brexit also presents an historic opportunity to reshape our food and farming system so that it delivers better for our health, better for the environment and tackling climate change, better for animal welfare, better for feeding people fairly and better for providing livelihoods for sustainable farming.

Central to achieving those goals is the transition to healthier and sustainable eating patterns: with more plant-based foods, less meat and dairy products particularly those from intensive, industrial systems, and towards farming systems that produce 'better' meat and dairy to higher animal welfare and environmental standards.

This policy paper puts forward a suite of recommendations from the Eating Better alliance to support this transition. We offer this research and analysis to engage policy makers, the food and farming sectors as well as our own civil society networks at a crucial time in the UK to consider how agricultural support mechanisms and trade arrangements can evolve post-Brexit to ensure that public money delivers genuine public benefits for our health, the environment and mitigating climate change, for animal welfare and local communities.

Our analysis draws on a report by IEEP, *Beyond the CAP: Towards an integrated approach to livestock farming, sustainable diets and the environment, 2017*² commissioned by a consortium of Eating Better alliance organisations to explore how the CAP and other EU trade policies influence the consumption and production of meat and dairy foods; and what policy changes could help shift livestock production and consumption onto a more sustainable, ethical and healthy pathway.

This paper focuses on meat and dairy and the livestock sectors. Its scope does not include broader sustainability issues and sectors such as food waste, fishing policies, arable or horticultural production or working conditions and jobs. We recognise these are important elements of a broader sustainable food and farming strategy, but they are beyond the scope of this paper.

Our analysis of the current agricultural support mechanism (CAP) and trade arrangements in relation to livestock shows:

1. The CAP is not fit for purpose for livestock against a range of measures. There is no clarity on policy objectives; it has evolved over time with the result that agricultural policy fails to pay proper attention to the wider context in which farming takes place. For example, subsidies to livestock farmers are failing to address the climate change and environmental impacts of this sector and dietary and health issues are rarely addressed at all. Importantly, subsidies fail to adequately distinguish between livestock farming types that bring environmental and animal welfare benefits and those that do not.

2. Trade negotiations will be crucial. The outcome of future trade negotiations will determine the extent to which the UK's markets in livestock products will be opened up to greater competition from abroad since currently EU trade agreements limit imports via tariffs. Trading relationships are particularly relevant for post-Brexit scenarios which focus heavily on export opportunities and favourable trade deals e.g. with the US. There are concerns that outcomes of trade negotiations could weaken and undermine UK environmental, health and animal welfare standards.

3. The status quo is not an option. Food and farming policies fit for the future will require more than tinkering with the CAP subsidies or favourable trade deals. Brexit provides an historic opportunity to develop a new vision that goes beyond the CAP's policy focus of agriculture, rural economies and land management to create integrated food and farming strategy and policies that deliver for environmental priorities and climate change, aligns with healthy and sustainable diets, and supports thriving rural livelihoods and high standards of animal welfare.

What we want to see

First, we need to step off the treadmill of industrially produced livestock that comes at such a cost to animal welfare and the environment. At the same time we cannot assume that more extensive systems are always more sustainable in all respects and they certainly cannot produce the same quantity of livestock products at cheap prices as intensive production systems. Yet we believe there is a way through this conundrum that provides win-wins, by a 'less and better' approach to livestock consumption and production. A shift to more extensive and mixed farming systems would result in a smaller quantity of livestock products with higher economic and environmental value which would help support farmers. When combined with a shift to eating less but better meat, people will not need to pay more for their food, so the shift need not be more expensive for consumers.

Our vision for livestock's role within a sustainable food and farming system is underpinned by the following 10 principles and recommendations. These are set out in more detail on pages 10-11.



- **An integrated food and farming strategy to replace CAP** wider than the set of policies concerned with agriculture, rural economies and land management and which better integrates and drives progress towards climate change goals for agriculture and supports public health and restoring biodiversity.
- **A transition to healthy sustainable eating patterns** with less and better meat and dairy with more plant-based eating, including fully integrating this approach into healthy eating advice to the public, public sector food procurement and exploring all options, including fiscal levers, to encourage behaviour change.
- **High standards and enforcement for environmental protection, food safety, livestock antibiotic use and farm animal welfare** maintained and strengthened in international trade negotiations, new UK agricultural policy and support mechanisms. Imports must be required to meet UK standards in these areas.
- **Public money for the provision of public goods** such as wildlife, farm animal welfare, environmental and landscape benefits, including building healthy soils, enhanced biodiversity, flood alleviation and climate change mitigation where this cannot be achieved via the market or regulation.
- **Sustainable levels of livestock production** in line with the carrying capacity of land, climate change goals and environmental limits, the principles of sustainable diets and public expectations for high quality, high welfare, sustainably produced UK livestock products.
- **Protection for high quality permanent grassland and carbon-rich soils** including maintaining inventories and ensuring appropriate site-specific livestock stocking densities to avoid overgrazing and greater support for agroforestry.
- **Sustainably sourced animal feed** to reduce the UK's impact on climate change and biodiversity in other countries, particularly from South American soya production. Alternative feeds with lower impact should be developed including consideration of heat-treated, safe, food waste for omnivores such as pigs and chickens.
- **Economic support for sustainable livestock production systems** including more extensive pasture-based, agro-ecological, organic, high nature value (HNV) and mixed farming systems, helping farmers to transit away from damaging and cruel unsustainable systems.
- **Clear and honest labelling** including a mandatory method of production labelling for all livestock products to empower the public, level the playing field and reward who shift from volume to quality production.
- **Sufficient transition funding for innovation, research and training to support the practical and cultural shift needed**, including research towards lower intensity, innovative and sustainable farming, with better understanding of soil carbon sequestration in different grazing systems.

Livestock production is a central element of UK farming, accounting for almost two thirds of agricultural land and 55% of the value of total agricultural output, a total of over £14bn in 2014.³ Aside from its economic importance, livestock production has played a significant part in shaping environments and landscapes, local cultures and traditions in both highlands and lowlands throughout the UK. Some of our most iconic landscapes and wildlife depend on land appropriately managed through grazing. However the cultural and environmental role of livestock production has changed radically in recent decades, with increased specialization, concentration and intensification of production in most sectors towards larger industrial scale farming and away from smaller mixed farms.

For example, although there are 10,000 pig farms in the UK, 92% of UK-produced pork comes from just 1600 farms (16%).⁴ According to the British Poultry Council 94% of chickens reared for meat are kept indoors.⁵ Dairy production too has intensified, so that milk production per cow has doubled over the last 40 years but at the expense of animal welfare, with cows typically worn out after just three lactations.⁶ Cheap animal feed (including subsidized cereal production, imported soy with zero import tariffs and high sugar feeds such as maize silage which increases soil degradation and erosion⁷) has contributed towards the intensification of livestock production.

This intensification of production has led to a host of environmental and social impacts including local pollution from waste, deforestation and habitat conversion in countries growing soy feed for poultry, pig and dairy production, climate change, animal welfare concerns and overuse of antibiotics contributing to the global public health crisis of antibiotic resistance. Large-scale intensive pig and dairy production units have also encountered local public opposition, and threaten the economic viability of smaller scale local production. Grazing systems avoid most of these negative impacts, but are not without environmental challenges if managed poorly. Overgrazing, for example by sheep in some parts of the uplands, can result in soil erosion and a biologically depleted environment with poor water retention contributing to flooding.

The environmental footprint of livestock production and consumption is coming under increasing scrutiny, including its significant contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Although the whole food chain contributes to GHG emissions, it is the agriculture stage – and specifically livestock production – where the greatest impacts occur. Of the 10% GHG emissions from agriculture in the UK,⁸ livestock production accounts for the majority (estimated around 60-70%). Agriculture in the devolved administrations is relatively more important for emissions, and for the economy, than for the UK as a whole where 2015 emissions were 29% of the total for Northern Ireland, 18% in Scotland and 13% in Wales.⁹ This is in addition to the emissions and biodiversity loss from deforestation in countries like Brazil and Argentina caused by the soy grown for our imported animal feed.

Land management, agriculture and the natural environments have crucial roles to play in reducing emissions and improving resilience to climate risks, including the role of carbon sequestration, reforestation of uplands and habitat restoration. While there have been some improvements, the UK Committee on Climate Change has warned that the UK agricultural sector is not on track to deliver agreed non-CO2 emissions reduction of at least 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (3 MtCO_{2e}) in England (4.5 MtCO_{2e} in the UK) by 2022.¹⁰

Agriculture is also the principal source (83%) of ammonia, a major cause of poor air quality with most emissions coming from indoor livestock production and nitrogen fertilizer.¹¹ Additionally agriculture is also responsible for 16% of water pollution, with dairy production being the biggest contributor by a significant margin.¹² Agricultural intensification, particularly from arable farming, is the leading cause of harm to UK farmland wildlife.¹³ In relation to livestock production, abandonment of mixed farming systems; intensification of grazing regimes; increased use of fertilisers and loss of hedgerows have all had significant damaging impacts on wildlife.

“The environmental footprint of livestock production and consumption is coming under increasing scrutiny”

Demand side measures

Agricultural production efficiencies and other carbon reduction measures will be insufficient to achieve the GHG emission reductions required by 2030 to avoid dangerous levels of climate change. As the Committee on Climate Change makes clear, demand side measures are also essential: *“Diet change and reducing food waste will be needed to deliver deeper cuts in agricultural emissions beyond 2030. Therefore consideration of these options before 2030 will be required in order to prepare for their implementation.”*¹⁴

“Evidence increasingly points to the need to reduce consumption of livestock products”

The importance of healthy and sustainable eating patterns with moderate amounts of meat consumption (see box) are increasingly being recognised in national dietary guidelines. Evidence increasingly points to the need to reduce consumption of livestock products by at least half from current UK levels in order to reduce climate impacts. It has been calculated that halving the consumption of meat, dairy products and eggs in the European Union would lead to a 25-40% GHG emission reduction, a 40% reduction in nitrogen emissions, and 23% per capita less use of cropland for food production.¹⁵ Such dietary shifts will also provide public health benefits. A study from Oxford University found that reducing average meat consumption in the UK to two or three servings a week could prevent 45,000 premature deaths a year and save the NHS £1.2 billion.¹⁶

Healthy Sustainable Eating Patterns

There is now a growing consensus around the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into dietary guidance. Sustainable diets are those that meet national nutritional recommendations while also addressing wider sustainability considerations.

In the UK *The Principles of healthy and sustainable eating patterns*¹⁷ sets out guidance for healthier and environmentally sustainable eating:

1. Eat a varied balanced diet to maintain a healthy body weight.
2. Eat more plant based foods, including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
3. Value your food. Ask about where it comes from and how it is produced. Don't waste it.
4. Choose fish sourced from sustainable stocks, taking seasonality and capture methods into consideration.
5. Moderate your meat consumption, and enjoy more peas, beans and pulses, tofu, nuts, and other plant sources of protein.
6. Include milk and dairy products in your diet and/or seek out plant based alternatives, including those that are fortified with additional vitamins and minerals.
7. Drink tap water.
8. Eat fewer foods high in fat, sugar and salt.

Eating Better promotes a ‘less and better’ approach to meat and dairy consumption, advocating a reduction in all types of meat – red (beef, lamb, pork), white (poultry) and processed meats of all types. For the meat we do eat, choosing ‘better’ means avoiding those from intensive industrial systems and choosing meat and dairy produced to higher animal welfare, environmental and quality standards such as organic, free-range or pasture-fed.

Eating Better is calling for UK’s national nutritional guidance – the Eatwell Guide¹⁸ – to do more to integrate sustainability within its advice and messaging including a ‘less but better’ approach to consumption of livestock products, and for such guidance to inform the future development of food, farming, fishery and climate change policies, including public and private food procurement standards.¹⁹ Other European countries have gone further than the UK to integrate sustainability into their dietary guidance – including Sweden²⁰ and the Netherlands.²¹

Why the CAP is not fit for purpose for livestock

Below we set out where the CAP falls short in relation to livestock production and addressing its impacts. UK post-Brexit policy has the opportunity to develop a better suite of policies.

Limited policy goal. Much of the CAP's focus historically has been on safeguarding the livelihoods of farmers – a legitimate goal but not the only one to be considered. Both environmental and social reasons are often given as justifications for the way CAP support is targeted, but the evidence that desirable environmental impacts are being secured is generally lacking and dietary and health issues are rarely addressed at all.

Failure to tackle climate change impacts from agriculture. While there are some incentives for lowering GHG emissions within the CAP there is no long-term strategic plan in the EU for reducing agricultural emissions. In the UK, a voluntary Greenhouse Gas Action Plan²² aims to deliver an agreed reduction of at least 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (3MtCO₂e) by 2022 in England (4.5 MtCO₂e for the UK), but this is not on track and there is no policy in place to deliver emissions reduction in agriculture beyond 2022. As other sectors decarbonise, the relative contribution of agriculture to total GHG emissions will increase. It is essential to develop a more strategic approach to achieving a low carbon farming sector which includes an appropriately sized and structured livestock sector and full consideration of the potential for agriculture to sequester carbon through better soil management and diversification.

Limited ambition of 'greening' measures. So-called 'greening' payments under the CAP are not distributed according to how well farmers introduce better environmental management and are mainly related to arable production. Only the measure to protect permanent grassland or pasture is relatively specific to livestock farms. Payments are fixed as a percentage of a farmer's basic direct payment rather than varying according to the amount of, or cost of, the environmental services provided. Thus farmers with higher (per hectare) rates of basic payments also receive higher greening payments, even though they are not required to do more for the environment than other farmers.

Farmers in the uplands and mountains, most of whom are partly or wholly livestock producers (both in the UK and in many other parts of Europe), predominantly receive significantly lower basic payments per hectare than their lowland counterparts. At the same time they manage a large proportion of the farmland of High Nature Value in Europe. Additionally the greening measures do not address impacts associated with livestock farming such as greenhouse gas emissions or the impact which manure deposition can have on water quality.

Managed grazing at appropriate stocking densities is inadequately supported by the CAP. CAP payments maintain extensive beef and lamb farming in the uplands, mountainous and remote areas – known as 'areas with natural constraints'. This is intended to help maintain pastoral systems and keep land in agriculture rather than the alternatives which include forests, abandonment/reversion to nature or in some cases urbanisation. However payments are not targeted to support any specific environmental goals and overgrazing, with associated impacts on biodiversity and soil quality, can be a problem. In some areas alternative forms of mixed land management to encourage biodiversity, such as agro-forestry might be preferable in environmental terms to what is currently a very broad brush measure.

“It is essential to develop a more strategic approach to achieving a low carbon farming sector”

Permanent grassland and carbon-rich soils are inadequately protected. The protection of permanent pasture was introduced by the EU, though opposed by UK farmers. Under the CAP 'greening' measures, which determine access to 30% of a farmer's payments, the only demand on livestock farmers with a high proportion of permanent grassland is its non-conversion. However, most of this land can be ploughed so long as it is reseeded (which allows farmer to switch to a more intensive system of grass production) and up to 5% nationally can be converted e.g. to arable production.

Member States must protect that proportion of permanent grassland that they judge to be environmentally sensitive from being ploughed at all, but most of them have applied this protection sparingly. Within the UK, Wales has banned ploughing in some areas outside its already protected Natura zones. In England, only the grassland sites already designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and thus already protected from ploughing through a licensing system administered by Natural England, have been designated as no-plough areas under the CAP. The importance of maintaining protection for carbon-rich soils post-Brexit is therefore crucial.

What do we mean by better meat and dairy?

Eating Better wants to encourage a culture where we value the food we eat, the animals that provide it and the people who produce it. Alongside eating less of all kinds of meat – red (beef, lamb and pork), white (poultry) and processed meats of all types, and dairy we can choose 'better' by avoiding intensively produced meat (typically poultry and pork) and ensuring that the meat and dairy we do eat is:

- **better for animal welfare:** by choosing meat and dairy produced to higher animal welfare standards such as free-range, RSPCA Assured and organic.
- **better for maintaining wildlife and landscapes:** by choosing beef and lamb and dairy from naturally grazed, pasture-fed extensive, mixed or upland farming systems that do not use imported soy feed and where grazing levels are at sustainable stocking densities which support our native wildlife.
- **better for reducing waste:** by valuing meat, making the most of each carcass through 'nose to tail' eating and reducing the amount of edible food that ends up in pet food, incinerated or in household waste. More food waste could also be used for animal feed for pigs and poultry.

- **better for producers:** by choosing meat and dairy from smaller scale, higher standard production systems that provide better profits for higher quality producers.
- **better for reconnecting producers and their customers:** by choosing meat and dairy with a known provenance – whether local, regional or national, such as through farm shops, box schemes, farmers markets and independent butchers.

There are fears that producing to higher standards will make farmers uncompetitive, but evidence suggests that environmental and animal welfare standards related to livestock production have only a small impact on the competitiveness of meat and dairy products. These costs are a very small proportion of overall production costs, whereas differences in the costs of feed, land and labour are much more significant.²³

High standards of animal welfare are not at the heart of the CAP. The CAP contains modest incentives to maintain unambitious minimum standards of animal welfare. They do not, for example, prevent farmers from receiving subsidy whilst keeping calves, pigs or other animals entirely indoors, in close proximity to one another, with artificial rather than natural lighting and without any opportunity to forage for food or to graze. Additional funding for animal welfare improvements is optional for Member States and very few use CAP funds for this purpose. In the UK only Scotland uses the specific Rural Development Programme measure for welfare, though in England, Wales and Northern Ireland some investment and training funding is used for welfare.

Failure to wean EU off its dependency on unsustainable feed. Europe's intensive livestock sectors, particularly granivores (pigs and poultry) and intensive dairy producers are heavily dependent on cereals and imported protein feed ingredients. Soy is predominantly imported from South America with devastating impacts for the environment and GHG emissions, such as the effects from land conversion and degradation including deforestation. Incentives to encourage greater EU soya and legume production (coupled payments & greening) have had only a very small impact on increased feed self-sufficiency and even increased EU production could not be expected meet current demand. Any further encouragement of home grown feed production should be linked to measures to reduce current levels of pork, chicken and dairy production that are dependent on unsustainable animal feed production.

Trade negotiations are key

Trading arrangements between the UK and the EU and the UK and other countries will be critical in determining the future path of livestock farming in the UK post-Brexit.

Current EU trade agreements limit imports from outside the EU. For example the EU beef market is protected by import tariffs – usually subject to a tariff worth over 50% of the world market price for beef. Trade negotiations will determine the extent to which the UK's markets in livestock products will be opened up to greater competition. However, UK trading outside the EU tariff barriers post-Brexit would face a very different scenario than operates currently.

While UK food and farming policy post Brexit has yet to be determined, the UK government (and current EU policy) appears to be focused heavily on export opportunities. A question that will be facing the UK is how far to protect the more economically vulnerable beef and sheep sectors from lower priced imports in the coming years – not just from the EU but from trade deals such as MERCOSUR with South America and TTIP with the US (which UK policy has previously favoured) or similar bilateral deals if these multilateral agreements are no longer on the table or available to the UK outside the EU. The UK has a long history of importing livestock products from South America, Australia & New Zealand and will have to decide how to trade off import vulnerabilities versus export opportunities.

While the UK economy as a whole depends less on farming than the EU average, there are marked differences between its four constituent countries and the politics of negotiating an agreement covering sectors in which the devolved governments have a strong and legitimate interest and policy competence will complicate the process of agreeing negotiating objectives.

The UK faces a stark choice: does it work to prioritise trade with the EU, and seek to maintain access to this market, ensuring food safety, environmental and animal welfare standards are aligned (or even improved), or does it instead focus on a US trade deal and potentially accept a significant weakening of standards? The latter would have a profound impact on farmers and the public. For example, the US permits the use of hormones in beef production and the use of chlorine wash in poultry production, which are banned in the EU. If hormone beef from US industrial feedlot systems were allowed to be imported into the UK tariff-free, UK beef farmers would find it almost impossible to compete on price. Less intensive, pasture-based production systems would be particularly vulnerable on price but in other respects offer a real point of difference.



Brexit provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fresh thinking about the future of food and farming in the UK. Now is the time to develop a new strategy with policies and mechanisms to support the essential transition towards a fairer, greener and healthier food system.

The status quo doesn't serve well the public purse, the majority of farmers, the environment and addressing climate change, our health, or the welfare of farm animals. In the next decade and beyond, we face the twin challenges of feeding a growing and more affluent global population, tackling diet-related disease while also significantly reducing agriculture's impact on the climate and the environment. That means producing food differently, reducing waste, and changing the way we eat. Addressing livestock production and consumption will be central to this challenge.

The following principles and recommendations for livestock production and consumption in the UK should be incorporated into a new strategy and policies to be delivered post Brexit:

An integrated food and farming strategy to replace CAP

Eating Better is one of many organisations that are calling for an integrated food and farming strategy – wider than the set of policies concerned with agriculture, rural economies and land management (as currently under the CAP) – and which better integrates and drives progress towards climate change goals for agriculture and aligns with policies towards public health and restoring biodiversity. In relation to climate change, this is in line with UK Committee on Climate Change recommendation to Government for new farming policies to 2030 that move beyond the current voluntary approach and replace CAP with a framework that links support more closely to the reduction of emissions and increase in sequestration in agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors.²⁴

A transition to healthy sustainable eating patterns

Such integrated policies should underpin and support the transition towards the goal of sustainable, healthy diets with less and better meat and dairy. This includes reviewing the UK national dietary guidance – the Eatwell Guide – to ensure that sustainability is fully integrated and that it underpins all government and local authority procurement and healthy eating advice to the public. All measures to achieve this dietary shift should be considered including exploring fiscal measures such as introducing VAT or other tax on some types of livestock products.

High standards for environmental protection, food safety and animal welfare

It is important to avoid a race to the bottom post Brexit by maintaining and strengthening standards and enforcement for environmental protection, food safety and animal welfare in international trade negotiations and new UK agricultural policy and support mechanisms. Imports must also be required to meet UK standards in these areas. This would help meet public expectations.

Improved standards need to include the phasing out of intensive livestock production systems that require routine preventative antibiotic use, strict restrictions on the use of antibiotics classified as “critically important in human medicine” and a ban on the use of the “last-resort” antibiotic colistin. High health and welfare livestock systems, including extensive livestock farming, should be promoted and supported as they often have far lower requirements for antibiotic use. Such standards are essential for maintaining public trust, for providing better returns for producers and to secure public support for farming.

Improvements in the area of animal welfare include banning of ‘enriched’ cages for laying hens, reducing maximum stocking density of broiler chickens, phasing out farrowing crates for sows, ban on live exports, end of zero-grazing of dairy cows and the introduction of CCTV in slaughterhouses.

Public money for the provision of public goods

In replacing the CAP and its current funding streams, public funding will be needed to enable the transition we propose and to support the provision of public goods such as wildlife, farm animal welfare, environmental and landscape benefits, including building healthy soils, enhanced biodiversity, flood alleviation and climate change mitigation where this cannot be achieved via the market or regulation. Direct payments should be phased out and replaced with better targeted payment schemes based on livestock farmers receiving payments for delivering specific public environmental, animal welfare and social benefits. There is a need for agreement on what such public goods should include – that needs to engage all stakeholders including the public.

Sustainable levels of livestock production

Production of livestock in the UK should be in line with the carrying capacity of land, climate change goals and environmental limits, the principles of sustainable diets and public expectations for high quality, high welfare and sustainably produced UK livestock products. This must include the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts from agriculture in the UK and in other countries (including from soy animal feed production). Further research is needed to determine which production systems provide greatest benefits and what is a more appropriately sized and structured livestock sector for UK countries that takes into account the UK's geography and climate. Farmers, land managers and communities who live and work in these areas should be supported to enable a managed transition to reduced stocking densities and potential alternative land uses which contribute to a range of policy goals, such as flood alleviation or nature conservation.

Protection for high quality permanent grassland and carbon-rich soils

Government needs to work with Natural England (and counterparts in devolved nations) to ensure adequate protection for high-quality permanent grassland including maintaining inventories and ensuring appropriate site specific livestock stocking densities to avoid overgrazing and for the restoration of the uplands.

Agroforestry – integrating trees and shrubs onto agricultural land – requires greater support. While agroforestry benefits have been recognised at the EU level, and farmers in some member states such as Scotland and Wales are able to receive funding under Pillar II of the CAP to plant trees and receive subsidy payments, farmers in England are not currently able to do so.

Sustainably sourced animal feed

The UK governments should introduce measures to monitor and reduce the UK's impact on biodiversity abroad related to livestock production and consumption. This should include incentives to reduce dependence on imported soy, such as introducing tariffs on imports, along with incentives for appropriate home-grown feed production and pasture based systems. This will need to be coupled with similar tariffs on imported livestock products, so that UK producers don't bear a cost not applied elsewhere. Government should actively support development of alternative feeds with lower impact including consideration of meat-containing heat-treated, safe, food waste for omnivores such as pigs and chickens.

Economic support for sustainable production systems

The Government should set out a commitment to support sustainable livestock farming including where appropriate more extensive pasture based, agro-ecological, organic, high nature value (HNV) and mixed farming systems, and to help farmers to transit away from intensive systems. There is growing interest in the concept of zero tolerance of zero grazing and to only subsidise livestock production which is primarily pasture-based.

Given uncertainties over future public funds for farm support, new ways need to be found to ensure the economic viability of sustainable production systems. This could include stimulating shorter food chains and direct farmer marketing, which both offer ways of increasing farmers' share of the final retail price and, importantly, connect farmers more closely with customer preferences including those for healthier, more sustainable food. If done well and fairly, this could reduce the need for subsidies to secure farmer livelihoods in future.

In addition, there is scope to harness more private sector money for environmentally focused management of pasture and other farmland from beneficiaries such as water companies and tourists. Structures to facilitate and oversee this will be required if new private funds are to be deployed on a significant scale and need to be considered urgently by policymakers.

Clear and honest labelling

Clear and honest labelling must include mandatory method of production labelling for all livestock products to empower the public, level the playing field and help allow more farmers to shift from volume to quality production.

Sufficient transition funding for innovation, research and training

The transition outlined above will require funding to support innovation, research and training. The current focus on 'sustainable intensification' needs to be redirected to include research towards lower intensity, innovative and sustainable farming, including farmer-led research. Greater understanding of soil carbon sequestration in different grazing systems and how it is accounted for should be a priority.

The farming transition required will need to be supported to ensure a fair and just transition. This will need to include a free farmer-led extension programme focusing on low input solutions. Training and improved skills are key to better livestock farming. The current Government has committed to matching current CAP payments to 2020 and providing the same level of support to 2022, we recommend that this period should be used to test and pilot new approaches, rather than maintaining the current status quo.



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