



BACK BRITISH FARMING

BREXIT AND BEYOND

THE NFU 2017 MANIFESTO



Back British Farming

A successful British farming sector matters to the people of Britain. Our farmers deliver for the economy, the environment and the wellbeing of the nation.



85%

of people think it is important that Britain has a productive and resilient farming industry



61%

of nation's food needs are met by British farming



£7.40

For every pound invested in British farming the industry puts more than seven back into the UK economy



£108 BILLION

Value of the food sector, the UK's largest manufacturing sector



3.9 MILLION

people employed in UK food sector



£12.3 BILLION

The value of UK exports of food and non-alcoholic drinks



70%

of UK landscape is managed by British farmers



475,000

UK jobs are in British agriculture



£21 BILLION

The value of recreational visits to rural Britain

WHY FARMING MATTERS

The success of British farming matters to the British electorate – especially at this time of unprecedented change. The UK's decision to leave the European Union may dominate the political agenda but now is also the time for long-term planning. There are new opportunities with a growing UK population, and opportunities too with a new relationship with the European Union. Plans are needed to counter the threat of climate change and global concern over food and energy security. We want the next Government to have confidence in UK farming and that enables us to deliver for our country, our countryside and the vast majority of people who want to buy British food.

Indeed, YouGov polling commissioned by the NFU this year shows that 85% of people think it is important that Britain has a productive and resilient farming industry.

This is because farming matters to Britain. We deliver for the economy, providing 475,000 jobs and driving growth in rural communities and the wider economy. British farming produces 61% of the nation's food. We provide vital ingredients for the food sector, the UK's largest manufacturing sector, worth more than £108 billion and employing 3.9 million people. And farming is at the heart of the rural economy, hosting diverse businesses, generating renewable energy and promoting tourism.

We deliver for the wellbeing of the nation, providing assured, safe, trusted and affordable food for shoppers, produced to high welfare and food safety standards.

And we deliver for our environment. British farmers manage more than 70% of the UK landscape, are custodians of iconic British landscapes, and are proud of our management of the countryside which protects wildlife, water and soils and helps achieve climate change targets.

And we believe, with the right ingredients, we can deliver more in the future.

We believe that Brexit presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future of British agriculture. The NFU has a vision of a productive, profitable and progressive farming sector. Over the next parliament, we want to work in partnership with the new Government to achieve this with a predictable and manageable transition process.

In our manifesto, we are setting out five key policy challenges. These are **Making Brexit a success; Investing for growth; Safeguarding short, fair, and secure supply chains; Placing science at the heart of policy making** and **Caring for our countryside and rural communities**. The British food and farming sector, working alongside Government, must address these points in the next Parliament.



Meurig Raymond
NFU President



Minette Batters
Deputy President



Guy Smith
Vice President



Stephen James
President
NFU Cymru



5 INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

The NFU is setting out five key policy challenges. The British food and farming sector, working alongside Government, must address these points during the next parliament.

Making Brexit a success for British farmers

Trade agreements that work for British farming

Farming needs an ambitious bilateral trade agreement with the EU that delivers frictionless, tariff-free trade. UK farmers want new markets that exploit their proud record of welfare and environmental production standards. But we expect the UK Government to recognise these same standards when negotiating new agreements with countries outside the EU.

Ensuring access to a competent, reliable workforce

The UK food supply chain will be substantially less competitive if restrictions are placed on labour after Brexit. For successful farm businesses, continued access to non-UK seasonal and non-seasonal workers on-farm is critical. As well as an urgent need for the Government to issue clarity on the rules around EU migrants following the end of free movement, the NFU urges the Government to publish the timetable for the Immigration Bill as soon as possible.

Creating a Domestic Agriculture Policy which promotes productivity

We now have an opportunity to work together to create a well-funded, refreshed agricultural policy that delivers for all sectors and all parts of the UK. The NFU believes it is essential for Government to maintain the existing level of investment in farming. Farm businesses invest in the long-term, so an abrupt cliff-edge halt to long established policies and income streams must be avoided. We expect the new Government to provide sufficient time for new policies to be agreed and implemented.



Investing for growth

A long-term vision for the future of British farming

Food and farming should be a clear strategic priority for the new Government, one of the cornerstones of a broad industrial strategy. There remains a clear need to see the 25-year food and farming plan to grow more, buy more and sell more British food. After a two year delay, this should be a priority for the new Government.

Making the Digital Economy universal

The new Government must ensure the accelerated rollout of high-speed broadband to all rural areas to provide universal coverage equivalent to urban areas.

Promoting British food at home and abroad

There are significant opportunities to promote British food at home and abroad. The NFU and its members want a guarantee that all central Government departments purchase foods produced to British farm assurance standards (namely Red Tractor) where possible. When we leave the EU in 2019, the UK Government will be able to make far wider use of domestic products in all public procurement contracts. We also look to the next Government to work with food and farming businesses to open up and develop new export markets.



Safeguarding short, fair and secure food chains for British people

A clear and honest country-of-origin labelling system

The NFU believes food manufacturers and retailers must provide clear unambiguous country-of-origin labelling on food packaging, both online and at point of purchase. It is essential for shoppers to have this information when making a purchasing decision.

A fair supply chain that promotes trust and shared values

Farming needs to see an extension of the remit of the Grocery Code Adjudicator to protect farmers from unfair practices in the food chain.

An education system which supports British farming

The NFU wants food and farming to be at the heart of the national curriculum in England and Wales so children and families understand the importance of food production and provenance. We also want to work to develop skills in our sector through technical education. We support work placements in the farming and food sector, working in collaboration with organisations such as the National Land Based College and the Agri-Skills Forum.

Placing science at the heart of policy making

A commitment to continue with the 25-year TB eradication strategy

Bovine TB is the greatest threat facing our beef and dairy farmers and it is vital we do everything we can to control and eradicate it. We call on the next Government to continue to fully implement Defra's TB eradication strategy for England, including sanctioning further culling to help prevent the spread of this terrible disease.

Increased investment and use of agri-science and technology

As farmers we need to be equipped with the right tools in order to meet growing demand for food at home and abroad, protecting the environment as well as meeting the demands of climate change. This should include support for research and commercial adoption of crop biotechnology, supported by evidence-led legislation.

Robust scientific evidence to ensure continued access to a wide range of plant protection products

The UK faces an enormous threat from a range of potential pests and diseases, as well as invasive weeds, pesticide resistance and non-native species. A restricted range of plant protection products boosts pest resistance and reduces UK farming's competitiveness. The UK Government should commit to a science-led approach with fit-for-purpose legislation to approve safe and effective tools such as glyphosate and neonicotinoids, coupled with effective border controls to retain the UK's high health status.



Caring for our countryside and rural communities

Ensure that all farmers can grow their businesses in harmony with the environment

Farmers manage over 70% of the land area of England and Wales. Farming shapes our cherished landscapes, yet many farmers are unable to access new countryside management schemes. The next Government must ensure schemes are open to all and properly recognise and reward the environmental contributions of farmers.

Access to water to grow the nation's food

Defra's reform of the water abstraction regime must deliver adequate access to water for the increasing demand of UK-grown fruit and vegetables.

A promise to combat increasing level of rural crime

We want to work with Government to address the major rural crime issues, such as fly-tipping and hare coursing, which are having a huge impact on farming communities and agricultural businesses. The next Government should consult with all stakeholders to agree a national definition for rural crime. The Home Office must consult on a funding formula that reflects the needs of rural policing. And the Ministry of Justice should direct the Sentencing Council to ensure up to date Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines are in place for all rural crimes.





The NFU External Affairs team is here to help; we offer a briefing service to MPs and prospective candidates and provide online resources at www.nfuonline.com/about-us/our-offices/westminster



Follow us on Twitter: @nfupolitical



Telephone: 0207 808 6600



Fax: 020 7808 6610



Email: nfulondon@nfu.org.uk

Published by:

NFU
Agriculture House
Stoneleigh Park
Stoneleigh
Warwickshire
CV8 2TZ

May 2017

NFU supported by



NFU Mutual

