

Rt. Hon Margaret Beckett MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Dear Secretary of State,

**RE: CAP Mid Term Review proposals**

We are writing to express our concerns about the weakness of the revised proposals for the mid term review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). We consider that this weakness undermines the positive momentum towards radical reform of the CAP that you have championed.

We welcomed many of the proposals made by the European Commission in their Mid Term Review (MTR) paper in July 2002. Yet many of the valuable elements of those proposals appear to have been lost, and we urge the UK government to do all it can to re-introduce the following, as a matter of priority, into the final MTR agreement:

- Modulation should be introduced in 2004, at the level originally proposed, to reach 20% by 2012. Proposals to commence modulation in 2007 at an incremental rate of 1% per year represent a major retreat on the improved funding of Pillar 2. This would seriously compromise the ability of Pillar 2 to deliver existing objectives, let alone support two new chapters;
- Money raised through modulation above the €50,000 threshold should be used to fund Pillar II payments, rather than for reform of the Dairy and Sugar Regimes;
- Cross compliance requirements should go beyond regulatory obligations, and all funding withheld from farmers in breach of these requirements should be transferred to the Rural Development Programme of the Member State in question;
- The farm advisory 'audit' should be compulsory for all farms in receipt of public funds;
- There should be improved levels of support for farmers who go beyond basic good animal husbandry practice.

We also urge the Government to resist moves to increase and extend the lifetime of the milk quota system. Reform of the Dairy Regime should take place so that the incentive to produce surpluses (and, as a result, subsidised exports) is removed and supply and demand are matched. Support for the sector should, in the future, be conditional on achieving higher animal welfare, environmental and public health standards.

The issue of farmers gaining 'decoupled' payments and moving into unsupported sectors such as horticulture – and thereby being able to compete on an unequal footing – needs to be addressed. We are also concerned at the base years of 2000-2002 being used as the reference period for calculating the 'decoupled' aids. Given the special circumstances in the UK during the Foot and Mouth epidemic we seek assurance that this would be a fair baseline period.



We hope you will be able to take these concerns on board, in the interests of the environment and conservation, public health, animal welfare, rural productivity, farm stability and international development. We will in turn make every effort to work with European colleagues to ensure a better outcome for CAP reforms.

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Minister for Europe, Dr Denis MacShane and the Prime Minister's Office.

Yours sincerely,

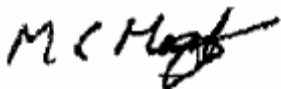


Martin Harper  
Chair of Wildlife and Countryside Link's  
Farming and Rural Development Working Group

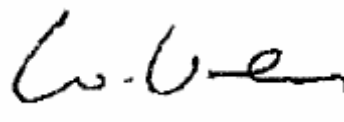


Neil Rankin  
Chairman Scottish Environment Link

And on behalf of Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming and UK Food Group Agriculture and Trade Working Party



Mike Hart  
Joint Working Party Chair



Bill Vorley  
Joint Working Party Chair

And on behalf of the following organisations

Bat Conservation Trust  
Buglife the Invertebrate Conservation Trust  
Butterfly Conservation  
Christian Aid  
Compassion in World Farming  
Council For British Archaeology  
Council for National Parks

CPRE  
Dept Health Management & Food Policy,  
City University  
Ecological Foundation  
Food Commission  
Friends of the Earth  
Institute for International Environment and  
Development

The Mammal Society  
The National Trust  
National Federation of Badger Groups  
Open Spaces Society  
Plantlife  
The Ramblers' Association  
The Royal Society for the Prevention of  
Cruelty to Animals  
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
Small and Family Farmers Alliance

The Wildlife Trusts  
The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust  
The Woodland Trust



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