

## House of Lords Agriculture Bill Committee Stage Briefing - July 2020

We are asking for your help in tabling or supporting specific amendments to the Agriculture Bill during Committee Stage which starts on 7 July. These are aimed at improving the Bill and strengthening its impact on farm incomes, public health, and the environment. We would be happy to answer any queries you may have on the amendments and the Bill, given the expertise of our team and our broad membership of 100 public interest groups. (Links to the [Bill](#), [Explanatory Note](#)). The evidence base is clear, as is the public support, for a new approach to how we nurture sustainable, healthy, resilient farming that delivers healthy food and public goods. The Agriculture Bill has valuable content but needs improvements so that it delivers on this outcome.

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We are asking support for the following tabled amendments:

1. **A duty to deliver financial support for ‘public goods’ (Clause 1) and Fair Dealing in the supply chain (Clause 27).** These vital clauses are currently written as a power not a duty – leaving them vulnerable to political priorities and farmers potentially without adequate support. The Secretary of State needs to be accountable to deliver these key measures. We need to change the word ‘*may*’ to ‘*must*’ in Clause 1 (Page 2), and Clause 27 (page 22 line 2 and throughout). The Earl of Dundee and Lord Empey have tabled amendments on this issue.

### 2. **Financial Support for delivering critical public health outcomes**

We need public health goals related to healthier diets and farm systems in this Bill. This could cover critical issues such as access to fruit and vegetables (in which we remain deeply dependent on imports), curbing antibiotic use in livestock farming, and addressing pesticide harm to workers and consumers. Please can you support the following amendment:

*BARONESS BOYCOTT BARONESS MEACHER BARONESS BAKEWELL OF HARDINGTON  
MANDEVILLE BARONESS BENNETT OF MANOR CASTLE*

*Page 2, line 35, at end insert- “( ) In framing any financial assistance scheme, the Secretary of State must also have regard to the need to improve public health outcomes, in particular through measures to—*

- (a) increase the availability, affordability, diversity, quality and marketing of fruit, vegetables and pulses,*
- (b) reduce farm antibiotic and related veterinary product use, and antibiotic resistance to harmful micro-organisms, through improved animal health and welfare,*
- (c) provide support for farmers to diversify out of domestic production of foods where there may be reduced demand due to health concerns,*
- (d) reduce harm from use of chemicals on farms, and*
- (e) reduce pesticide residues in food.”*

### 3. **Financial Support for delivering agro-ecological farming and agroforestry across the UK**

This would help farmers to produce food whilst restoring the environment, storing carbon in healthy soils, through agroforestry, silviculture (rearing animals with trees) whilst protecting nature on the *whole* farm. [Modelling shows that](#) agro-ecological farming, like organic, could deliver both the food and environmental outcomes needed including climate mitigation alongside other shifts in consumption. Please support all the amendments on agroecology and agroforestry including those tabled by Lord Teverson (below) and by the Earl of Dundee:

LORD TEVERSON BARONESS BENNETT OF MANOR CASTLE BARONESS YOUNG OF OLD SCONE BARONESS RITCHIE OF DOWNPATRICK

Page 2, line 25, at end insert- “( ) establishing and maintaining agroforestry systems.”

**Member’s explanatory statement** This amendment ensures that financial assistance is granted for agroforestry systems.

Page 2, line 25, at end insert- “( ) establishing and maintaining whole farm agroecological systems.”

**Member’s explanatory statement** This amendment ensures that financial assistance is granted for whole farm agroecological systems.

LORD TEVERSON BARONESS BENNETT OF MANOR CASTLE BARONESS YOUNG OF OLD SCONE THE EARL OF CAITHNESS

Page 3, line 17, at end insert— ““whole farm agroecological systems” include any whole enterprise system for farming or land management which is designed to produce food or fuel while delivering environmental and social benefits, and may include organic farming.”

**Member’s explanatory statement** This amendment defines the practices and purpose of agroecology, alongside other agreed models, giving greater clarity and understanding for farmers and land-users seeking to invest and implement these whole farm agroecological systems.

4. **Trade rules and policy must not allow imports to lower standards.** We need measures to ensure agri-food imports are required to be produced to the same food, environment, employment, and animal welfare regulations as our own. There is strong stakeholder support for such measures and number of amendments have been tabled to achieve this by Peers including by Lord Granchester, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering and Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb. The Lord Curry of Kirkharle amendment “*Trade, Food and Farming Standards Commission*” is one which we favour only alongside more specific legal measures to secure import standards.
5. **Climate and pesticide use.** Given the urgency of the need to act on climate change emissions and pollution from land use, supporting farmers effectively in any transition, we are also in favour of a clause to set targets for delivering a reduction in carbon emissions, for pesticide use reductions and the development and use of integrated pest management approaches.
6. **New entrants, local food systems and peri-urban food** - We also need to see support for new entrants into farming (including by securing protection of the county farms estate – the Amendment on “*Smallholdings Estates*” by Lord Whitty) ) and for peri-urban food production and infrastructure support for boosting local food systems (tabled by the Earl of Dundee and Baroness Bennet of Manor Castle). These could provide more fresh produce, new enterprise and jobs, skills and education and engagement on farming for consumers and local communities and help speed up a green food recovery after Covid19 pandemic.

Sustain also asks you to support other amendments including guaranteeing long term funding and on powers for a new regulatory framework as proposed by [the Greener UK coalition](#).

We would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about these issues and can provide briefings which give more detail on the priority areas.

**Contact: Vicki Hird Sustainable Farm Campaign Coordinator 07903478249 [vicki@sustainweb.org](mailto:vicki@sustainweb.org)**

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional, and local level. [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)