

SOWING FRESH SEEDS POST BREXIT

CHARTER FOR A CARING FOOD POLICY THAT NOURISHES OUR HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

SECTION 1

As the UK moves away from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), we have an opportunity to start with a blank sheet of paper in designing our food and farming system. We believe its key elements should include:

- Producing nutritious food and promoting healthy diets
- Farming in ways that restore natural resources – soils, water, biodiversity – and then maintain them in good shape for future generations
- Achieving food security
- Ensuring that farming contributes to the Paris target of limiting temperature increases to ‘well below 2°C
- Providing decent livelihoods for farmers
- Reducing farm antibiotics use
- Achieving high standards of animal welfare.

There are two important starting points. First, we should develop a cohesive Food and Farming Policy that seeks to deliver on all the above intermeshed objectives.

Second, we need to move away from industrial livestock production as this is a key driver, or an important contributor, to the detrimental impact of today’s farming on the environment, public health, antibiotic resistance, climate change and animal welfare.

Compassion in World Farming calls on the UK to adopt the following:

CORE OBJECTIVE: PUT ANIMALS BACK ON THE FARM

Replace factory farming with pasture and land-based farming of animals to high animal welfare and environmental standards

PLEDGES:

- **REDUCE GRAIN-RELIANT LIVESTOCK FEEDING**
A 33% reduction by 2025 – and a 50% reduction by 2035 – in the use of human-edible crops to feed farm animals as this is an inefficient, environmentally damaging way of feeding people. This should be coupled with keeping farm animals on the land in efficient and environmentally friendly forms of husbandry such as mixed rotational farming.
- **ENCOURAGE LESS AND BETTER MEAT AND DAIRY CONSUMPTION**
This would give us healthier lives, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help restore the environment and make it easier to feed the growing world population. As a guide we should aim for a 33% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2025 and a 50% reduction by 2035 with livestock products consumed coming from land-based farming systems which provide better animal welfare and nutritional and environmental benefits.
- **INTRODUCE HIGH STANDARDS OF ANIMAL WELFARE**
Phase out cruel factory farming systems including cages and crates
- **REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC USE**
End the routine preventive use of antibiotics to suppress the diseases that are inevitable when animals are kept in crowded, stressful conditions. This should be accompanied by a switch to higher welfare farming systems less reliant on antibiotics.
- **HONEST LABELLING**
Introduce mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to farming method
- **BETTER PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**
Public procurement will only use meat, milk and eggs that have been produced humanely and sustainably.

SECTION 2: IMPROVING ANIMAL WELFARE

COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING CALLS ON THE UK TO:

Ban the export of live animals for slaughter or fattening

Once the UK is no longer bound by EU rules, it will be free to ban live exports provided that in any new trade agreement with the EU it insists on the inclusion of a clause permitting it to do so.

Adopt a more ambitious approach to animal welfare

Good welfare goes beyond minimising negative experiences; it also involves providing animals with opportunities to have positive experiences such as pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of well-being. Animals should be treated as sentient beings, as individuals. The status of animals as sentient beings should be enshrined in UK legislation.

Protect UK farmers from low welfare imports

The UK must insist on the inclusion in new trade agreements of a clause permitting it to require imports to meet UK animal welfare standards.

Encourage a move from factory farming to free-range systems

Industrial systems, even with good management, have little or no potential for delivering good welfare outcomes. Free-range and pasture-fed systems, if well designed and well managed, have the potential to produce high standards of welfare. When animals are housed, they should be kept in large barns with ample space, plenty of straw, natural light and effective ventilation.

Halt the zero-grazing of dairy cows

UK dairy cows are increasingly being taken off the fields and kept indoors year round in zero grazing operations. Government should provide incentives and support to farmers to keep dairy cows in seasonal pasture-based systems.

Phase out enriched cages for laying hens

Germany has banned enriched cages from 2025. All the UK's major supermarkets have stopped selling enriched cage eggs or have pledged to do so. The UK should now ban enriched cages otherwise they may still be used to produce the egg ingredients that appear in a range of foods.

Improve the welfare of pigs

The UK should enforce the legislation that bans routine tail docking and requires pigs to be provided with enrichment materials such as straw. Regrettably, some UK pig farmers still ignore these laws that have been in force since 2003. The UK should encourage the replacement of farrowing crates with free farrowing systems. Some of these have been developed by British scientists and farmers and piglet mortalities in free farrowing systems can be as low as, or lower than, in crates.^{1 2 3}

SECTION 3: BUILDING AN INTEGRATED FOOD POLICY

Production: Policies should be adopted to facilitate a transition from industrial grain-based livestock production towards sustainable, humane forms of animal husbandry.

45% of UK cereals are used as animal feed.⁴ For every 100 calories fed to animals in the form of human-edible crops, we receive on average just 17-30 calories as meat.^{5 6} Using cereals as animal feed is a wasteful use not just of these crops but of the land, water and energy used to grow them.

Industrial livestock's huge demand for cereals as feed has fuelled the intensification of crop production which, with its monocultures and agro-chemicals, has led to water pollution, soil degradation^{7 8} and biodiversity loss.^{9 10} If the pressure to farm arable land intensively could be eased by reducing the need for animal feed, we could restore soils, water and biodiversity.

A substantial reduction in the use of grain to feed animals would enhance resource-efficiency and food security as more people are fed when scarce arable land is used to grow food for people rather than for animal feed. The UK should avoid the excessive use of cereals in animal feed and instead put more emphasis on:

- **raising animals on extensive pastures:** Extensively reared cattle and sheep convert grass into food that we can eat and are able to use land that is generally not suitable for other forms of food production;
- **integrated crop/livestock production:** the link between animals and the land should be restored through mixed rotational farming where animals are fed on crop residues and their manure, rather than being a pollutant, fertilises the land;
- **pigs and poultry are nature's great foragers and recyclers:** many UK pigs and poultry are factory farmed. They should instead be kept outdoors where some of their diet can come from foraging, pasture, by-products, cull vegetables from local farms and unavoidable food waste. This could replace part of the cereal- and soy-based feed currently used.

Redefining the role of livestock

The above proposals are in line with recent studies. Research funded by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (and two of the authors work for the FAO) argues that, rather than being fed on cereals, the role of livestock should be "to use resources that cannot otherwise be used for food production" such as grasslands, food waste and by-products.¹¹ This research shows that the environmental pressures from livestock production could be lessened by reducing the use of human-edible crops as animal feed.

Bajželj *et al* (2014) identify grazing on pasture and the use of crop residues and processing co-products as efficient forms of feed.¹² They say that "together these support about 30% of current [global] livestock production; the remaining 70% has to be seen as a very inefficient use of land to produce food".

With nearly two-thirds of its agricultural land being pasture, Britain has the opportunity to become a leading player in the production of pasture-fed and pasture-raised livestock, which in itself would help relieve the pressure of demand on cereals for animal feed.

Consumption: Policies should encourage the adoption of balanced diets with less but better quality meat and dairy products. This would produce multiple benefits.

Health

Lower consumption of red and processed meat would reduce the incidence of heart disease, obesity and certain cancers.^{13 14 15} The new *Eatwell Guide* produced by Public Health England advises: "Eat less red and processed meat".¹⁶

Environment

Because feeding crops to animals is so inefficient, more ground- and surface- water is used and polluted and more arable land and energy are needed to produce a unit of nutrition from industrially reared livestock (with their grain-based diet) than from animals reared on pasture or on mixed farms.¹⁷

A move away from grain-based animal production coupled with a reduction in meat consumption would allow land to be farmed less intensively. This would result in less use of

artificial fertilisers and pesticides: reduced degradation of water, soil and air; lower use of water, land and energy: reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and biodiversity gains.

Climate change

Studies show that without a substantial reduction in meat and dairy consumption, our diets alone will take us over the Paris Agreement's target of limiting temperature rises to 'well below 2°C'.^{18 19}

Animal welfare

Reduced consumption of meat and dairy products would further increase the scope for animals to be farmed extensively using higher welfare standards.

End the routine preventive use of antibiotics

The use of antibiotics in farming contributes to the transfer of resistant bacteria to people. Antibiotics are used regularly in industrial pig and poultry farms to forestall the diseases that would otherwise be inevitable in the crowded conditions. 'Health-orientated systems' should be developed for rearing animals which would not need recourse to regular preventive use of antibiotics. Such systems would avoid overcrowding and excessive group size; reduce stress; ensure animals can perform their natural behaviours; end early weaning of pigs; move away from genetic selection for extreme growth rates and yields as these place animals on a metabolic knife edge making them susceptible to poor health. These systems should be based on the principles of higher welfare husbandry, with lower stocking densities, environmental enrichment and, wherever possible, outdoor access.

SECTION 4: INSTRUMENTS NEEDED TO SUPPORT THESE POLICIES

Public information and education:

The Government should develop programmes to increase public awareness of the implications of different livestock farming methods and consumption levels for human health, the environment, food security and animal welfare. These programmes should emphasise the need for the consumption of less but better quality meat and dairy products.

Honest labelling

Consumers should be empowered to play a greater part in driving improvements in animal welfare. Mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to method of production would enable consumers to make informed choices when buying food. Most milk is pooled together making it impossible to distinguish intensive and pasture-based milk. The industry must separate pasture-based and zero-grazed milk and dairy products (as is already done for organic) so that they each can be labelled.

Public procurement: taking the lead, setting the standard

Public sector bodies should, when buying meat, dairy products and eggs, use their buying power to augment the market for food produced to high nutritional, environmental and animal welfare standards. Public bodies' commitment to quality will help change our attitude to food.

Develop policies that provide access to affordable, nutritious food for all

In recent years healthy foods have been consistently more expensive than less healthy ones with a growing gap between them. The Faculty of Public Health states: "In the UK, the poorer people are, the worse their diet, and the more diet-related diseases they suffer from".²⁰ Food policy should ensure that everyone is able to access healthy food irrespective of their income. This will require proper integration between food and social equity policies.

Getting prices right - internalising negative externalities

Olivier De Schutter, former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, stresses that “any society where a healthy diet is more expensive than an unhealthy diet is a society that must mend its price system.”²¹ This applies equally to a society where environmentally damaging, low animal welfare food is cheaper than food that respects natural resources and animals’ well-being.

Livestock production, in particular industrial production, produces a range of costly ‘negative externalities’ including damage to the environment and health. These negative externalities represent a market failure as the costs associated with them are borne by third parties or society as a whole and are not included in the prices paid by consumers. In some cases the costs are borne by no-one and key resources such as soil and biodiversity are allowed to deteriorate undermining the ability of future generations to feed themselves. Mechanisms are needed to enable the negative externalities of livestock production (including poor animal welfare) to be included in prices thereby reflecting the true cost of using resources and their environmental impacts.

Tax measures and subsidies to reduce the cost of sustainable food and farming

CAP payments, which are primarily a subsidy for land ownership, should be replaced by post Brexit payments for ecosystem services and high animal welfare standards. These payments should support a move to pasture-fed and land-based animal farming.

Taxation should entail two intertwined approaches. Taxes can be levied equal to a particular negative externality. Taxes should also be used to lower the cost of quality food and farming for both farmers and consumers. Farmers adopting high standards could be given generous capital allowances and an extra tranche of tax-free income.

The cost of high quality food could be reduced for consumers in two ways. Income generated by taxes levied to internalise negative externalities could be used to subsidise quality food such as meat raised to high welfare standards, fruit and vegetables. UK policy on charging VAT on food is inconsistent. Where it is charged, a zero rate should be placed on healthy food that respects the environment and animal welfare.

Creation of a new food culture

The current food culture gives great weight to factors such as low prices and convenience. There is no part of this culture that invites consumers to think about how low-cost meat, eggs and milk are produced. A new food culture must be created which cares about the nutritional quality of food and values farming methods that protect the environment and animals.

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³ <http://www.360farrower.com/news-and-press> Accessed 12 August 2016

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- ⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/372755/UK_Wild_birds_1970-2013_final_-_revision_2.pdf
- ¹⁰ Reversing insect pollinator decline. <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/POST-PN-442/reversing-insect-pollinator-decline>
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