

24th February 2016

Defra sentences UK agriculture to 25 years:

Why Compassion in World Farming's staff are dressed as prisoners outside Defra today

Holding a ball and chain etched with the words '25 Year Plan', dressed in prisoners outfits and holding mug-shot style signs, [Compassion in World Farming had a team of 10](#) standing outside Defra offices in central London today.



Compassion was holding a stunt to represent the 25 year sentence that UK agriculture will receive should Defra's proposed 25 year food and farming plan go ahead. The plan will serve as a long-term strategy for UK agriculture, determining how Defra will use public money and future policies to develop the food and farming sector. The plan is understood to focus on increasing productivity, competitiveness and agri-tech. It will promote further industrialisation thereby convicting UK citizens to a food and farming system that is detrimental to health, the environment and animal welfare.

Daphne Rieder, Compassion's Campaign Manager, who organised and took part in the Defra prison stunt, says: "Today, we are dressed as prisoners because we believe that Defra's 25 year plan is sentencing UK agriculture to 25 years:

- 25 years of factory farming
- 25 years of animal suffering
- 25 years of wrecking the countryside
- 25 years of endangering human health
- And 25 years of fueling climate change!

“Defra’s plan will do nothing to tackle the poor levels of animal welfare that are still common in parts of England’s pig, poultry and dairy sectors.

“We urge Defra, even at this late hour, to put the draft plan on hold and work with all stakeholders rather than just the industry to develop a plan that addresses all the objectives of a good food and farming system.”

Defra’s officials say that their 25 year plan will be published within the next few weeks.

Today, Compassion in World Farming has delivered its own [25 year plan](#) which we believe would pave the way for genuinely healthy, sustainable and high animal welfare food and farming.

Compassion’s plan advises Defra to develop a UK food and farming strategy away from harmful practices and towards a system that is sustainable and includes animal welfare.

Peter Stevenson, Compassion’s Chief Policy Advisor, wrote to George Eustice, MP earlier this month. He says: *“We are here to urge Defra to develop a plan that will facilitate the production of higher welfare, sustainable and healthy food.*

“I fear that the plan as it stands, will promote further industrialisation thereby taking food and farming in completely the wrong direction.

“Defra’s public statements so far suggest that the plan will strongly focus on economic aspects of agricultural development, whilst not taking into account the environmental, health and animal welfare implications of our current farming system. Not addressing problems faced due to unsustainable farming practices such as the degradation of our soils, the growing antibiotic resistance, the declining population of birds and bees and the big issue of animal suffering, will make it difficult for future generations to feed themselves.”

“Compassion’s alternative 25 year plan will help transform UK agriculture into a system of high welfare, sustainable and healthy food production. I urge Defra to give it serious consideration.”

Ends

Notes to editors

Please find a selection of high resolution images from [today’s stunt here](#)

Click [here](#) to read Compassion in World Farming’s alternative 25 Year Plan.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Lara Richardson, Head of Media, 01483 521 995 lara.richardson@ciwf.org

Defra's public statement on its proposed plan can be found [here](#). As agricultural policy is a devolved issue and set separately in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, any policies arising from the final Plan will only directly relate to England. However, our view is that policy decisions in England are likely to influence those in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa.