



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Sir Mark Spencer MP
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Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 5 March to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents about the future of farming. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The Government is undertaking the most significant reform of agricultural policy and spending in England in decades as we move from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy to our environmental land management (ELM) schemes, designed for our countryside and environment. The Government understands that this change can be difficult for farmers, and I would like to reassure your constituent that we are working hard to support the farming community in England as these changes take place. Our aim is to strengthen our environment and support our thriving food and farming sector, and we have made sure that all farm types, regardless of size, location, ownership, or the systems they use, can access funding and support that works for them.

Farmers know their farms best, and many have already moved to this way of thinking and operating. We in the Government need to get behind those who are leading the way and help others to get involved by making sure our policies and schemes build on what is already there and works well for farm businesses, food production and the natural environment. As your constituent notes, these reforms are essential to help us grow and maintain a resilient, productive agriculture sector over the long term and at the same time achieve our ambitious targets for the environment and climate, playing our role in tackling these huge, global challenges. Balancing and integrating food production with ELM will support efficient and sustainable land use without offshoring harms associated with lower production standards.

On 26 January 2023, the Government published further information on the growth and rollout of the ELM schemes. We have set out all the future actions we will pay for through the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship schemes. These include sustainable farming practices that will help improve water quality by reducing nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agricultural activities, as well as an integrated pest management standard that will help farmers and land managers plan how to adopt a range of sustainable crop protection methods. Please read our [blog post about the announcement](#) for more information; or the [full document here](#). We have since provided further information in our [Agricultural Transition Plan update on 4 January 2024](#). This sets out where we are offering farmers more money to deliver change. It also sets out where we are offering farmers more choice, ensuring there is something for every farm regardless of where they are and whether they own or rent their land; and ensuring we get the scale and ambition we need to achieve our targets.

As well as the ELM schemes, we are offering support through other schemes and grants. For example, through the Farming Investment Fund, we have launched funding for equipment, technology, and infrastructure that improves farm productivity and benefits the environment.

We are also offering support to drive adoption of new innovation by farmers and growers to ensure it can make a real difference. We have launched the Farming Innovation Programme, which encourages groups of farmers, growers, businesses and researchers to get involved in collaborative research and development.

Our Environmental Improvement Plan, [published on 31 January 2023](#), sets out how the Government will deliver each of our goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help us restore nature, reduce environmental pollution and increase the prosperity of our country. We published a [progress report](#) on the plan in January 2024.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Sir Mark Spencer MP