



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP2016-0177, 14 October 2016

Brexit's effect on agriculture and fisheries in South West England

A Westminster Hall debate has been tabled on the effect of the UK leaving the EU on agriculture and fishing in the South West. The debate at 4.30pm on 19 October 2016 will be led by Scott Mann.

This debate pack includes some press and Parliamentary material, and further reading on the implications of Brexit for UK agriculture and fisheries.

Further background is available in other Commons and Lords Library briefings:

- [Brexit: Impact across policy areas](#) (CBP 07213, 26 August 2016)
- [Brexit: What next for UK fisheries?](#) (CBP 07669, 27 July 2016)
- [Troubled waters? Negotiating fish quotas post-Brexit](#) (*Second Reading* blog, 7 October 2016)
- [EU Referendum: Impact on UK Agriculture Policy](#) (CBP 07602, 26 May 2016)
- [Sources of Statistics: Agriculture and Fisheries](#) (SN 03835, 13 July 2016)
- [Agricultural incomes and subsidies](#) (SN/SG/2613, 14 October 2016)
- [British Farmers: Impact of Leaving the European Union](#) (July 2016)

Current Parliamentary material is available on Parliament's topics pages for [agriculture](#) and [fisheries](#).

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Economic summary of the agriculture sector in South West England

In South West England, the agriculture industry contributes more to the regional economy than the UK average, as the following summary table shows.

The agricultural industry in the UK is small, accounting for 0.7% of employees and economic output.

Agricultural industry	South West		UK
	Total	%	%
	Economic output	£1.4 billion	1.2%
Employees	27,300	1.2%	0.7%
Businesses	8,800	7.0%	4.0%

Sources: Economic output: ONS, *Regional GVA*

Employment: ONS, *Business register and employment data*

Businesses: BEIS, *Business population estimates*

Notes: Economic out is Gross Value Added and refers to 2014; Employment refers to 2015; Businesses refers to 2016; Agriculture includes all agriculture, forestry and fishing activity

The agricultural industry contributed £1.4 billion to the South West's economic output, 1.2% of the total. This compares to 0.7% of UK output.

There are 8,800 agricultural businesses in the South West, with 27,300 employees. As the following chart shows, the South West is one of the largest regions or countries of Great Britain in terms of agricultural employees.

Employees in agriculture by region/country
2015, 1000s



1.1 EU nationals employed in agriculture

There are no estimates of the number of EU nationals employed in the agricultural industry in the South West.

1.2 CAP payments to farms in South West England

According to House of Commons Library analysis of Defra data, farmers in the South West received £427m under the Common Agricultural Policy in 2015. This includes £337m under the Basic Payment Scheme and £90m under the Rural Development Programme.¹

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) comprises two “pillars”: Pillar 1 (direct subsidies such as the Basic Payment Scheme or BPS) and Pillar 2 (rural development programmes). 2015 was the first year of the new BPS, which includes complicated ‘greening’ measures and requires detailed mapping of farm features.

The European Commission’s [CAP after 2013 web page](#) provides a helpful overview and links to the implementing regulations, which are directly applicable.

The [Rural Payments Agency](#) administers the BPS and also inspects farms for compliance.

¹ Source: Defra/UK Coordinating Body, [CAP Payment search](#) (accessed 14 October 2016). The figures above relates to farms in postcode districts which fall entirely within the South West region. A small number of postcode districts straddle two regions. This means that a small number of farms located in the South West but close to the regional border may be excluded.

2. What might Brexit mean for agriculture and fisheries in South West England?

In an exchange in the Commons in July 2016, debating the policy implications of Brexit, Kerry McCarthy suggested that jobs in South West England might be at risk, while the food and farming sector might find it hard to recruit:

On the one hand, Lush cosmetics has just announced that it is going to move most of its production overseas, because it says that its workers do not feel welcome here, while on the other hand there are those in the food and farming sector, 38% of whose workforce comes from overseas, who are saying that they could go out of business because they will not be able to find people to employ.²

In reply, Stephen Crabb (then the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) said that the department had contingency plans, but (he argued) it was important also to recognise the potential benefits of new trade deals and investment:

The Department has clear plans in place for any significant increase in unemployment, whether in a particular local region or right across the UK. We have contingency plans for dealing with up-ticks in unemployment. However, we need to be really careful that we do not exaggerate the bad news that the hon. Lady might think is out there. There are opportunities for this country in terms of trade deals and of securing new investment, such as the investment from Boeing that was announced today. There are also serious risks and challenges, and we need to be clear-sighted and prepared for those.³

² [HC Deb 11 July 2016, c11](#)

³ [HC Deb 11 July 2016, c11](#)

3. Possible effects of Brexit on agriculture and fisheries

The law firm Ashfords has described Brexit as a “watershed” for UK agriculture and the rural economy and identified some [common themes in post-Brexit literature](#) from the National Farmers Union (NFU), Country Landowners' Association and the Campaign to Protect Rural England:

It is widely acknowledged that Brexit will, in one way or another, mark a watershed in the fortunes of the Agriculture Sector and the rural economy. After all, UK membership of the EU touches on the UK Agriculture Sector in all sorts of ways - tractors and other agriculture equipment can be imported tariff-free from EU manufacturers, agricultural product from the UK can be exported to the EU, farm owners benefit from the free movement of a seasonal workforce when the labour is needed - to name but a few.

(...)

- Establishing food security - part of a long-standing ambition to reduce dependencies on food imports.
- Securing energy security and carbon reduction - over the past 10 years UK farms have played an increasingly important role in the production of low carbon energy - be it wind, solar, anaerobic digestion or biomass (such as miscanthus).
- Protecting the environment - the proximity of farming operations to sensitive environmental receptors and rural settings in general have long tied environmental management with agriculture.
- Securing opportunities for growth in exports - aside from the clear benefits of selling produce to other countries, some expound the idea that opening up food export markets will have wider benefits to the UK economy, opening up markets in which the UK can sell its services.
- Increasing internal competition - with an estimated 34,000 fewer farms than a decade ago, there are fewer farming businesses in competition with each other.⁴

3.1 Agriculture

Although there is much speculation, it is too soon yet to say what the effect on the agriculture and fishing sector of the UK's leaving the EU might be, either at the national or regional level. As the Commons Library briefing papers (mentioned earlier) explain at more length, much will depend on whatever arrangements are negotiated between the UK and its former EU partners and, perhaps, on whether the UK opts for a 'hard' or 'soft' Brexit.

⁴ Ashfords, [What will the Post-Brexit UK Agriculture Sector Look Like?](#), 7 September 2016

Even so, in all scenarios Brexit means a departure from the CAP and its subsidy and regulatory regime. EU farm subsidies currently make up to around 50-60% of UK farm income.

This is in line with the current CAP funding period and hence the timescale over which farmers and regulators have already invested and planned. However, it is not clear what levels of support the UK Government will be willing to provide beyond this, or whether it will target funding in a different way.⁵

Before the referendum, the [NFU observed](#) that arriving at a post-Brexit settlement might not be straightforward:

The [Yorkshire Agricultural] Society concludes that a simple free trade agreement with the EU is probably the UK's most preferred option, but that this may be difficult to achieve. If no agreement on an FTA is possible then the default position would be for the UK and EU to trade with each other within the WTO system.⁶

In the Lords in July this year, the Earl of Sandwich suggested that farmers were dismayed that Brexit might jeopardise their farm payments:

Generally, I think there has been considerable dismay among farmers since Brexit simply because of the threat to their farm payments.⁷

Replying, junior Defra minister Lord Gardiner of Kimble emphasised that the Government would look carefully at how it continued to support (not subsidise) farmers:

I want to emphasise the word "support" because a number of speakers have used the word "subsidy". My view is that we provide support for what farmers do to help us, in so many ways, in the national and public interest. My honourable friend the Secretary of State has been very clear that this now needs to be looked at carefully.⁸

Farmers' Weekly has published its own analysis of [agricultural trade in a post-Brexit world](#).⁹

Although it has yet to produce a detailed policy paper, the NFU [has recently set out its vision](#) of a "progressive, profitable and competitive future" for British farming after Brexit:

NFU Council supports a bold, ambitious vision for British food and farming post-Brexit; one that ensures farm businesses are central to a dynamic food chain and deliver a countryside that works for everyone.

Over the past eight weeks the views of thousands of members on the future of farming have been gathered through questionnaires and a series of meetings nationwide. Today, NFU Council, the organisation's governing body, reviewed the results of the work to date and supported the next steps to develop a comprehensive

The UK Government has [guaranteed the current level of direct funding to 2020](#) "as part of the transition to new domestic arrangements".

⁵ HM Treasury, [News story: Chancellor Philip Hammond guarantees EU funding beyond date UK leaves the EU](#), 13 August 2016

⁶ NFU, [BREXIT 'may not be beneficial for UK farmers'](#), 4 February 2016

⁷ [HL Deb 21 July 2016, c791](#)

⁸ [HL Deb 21 July 2016, c797](#)

⁹ "[Analysis: Agricultural trade in a post-Brexit world](#)", *Farmers' Weekly*, 6 May 2016

framework. This will form the basis of those initial talks with government, at all levels, to ensure the country builds a progressive, profitable and competitive future for British farming post-Brexit.¹⁰

3.2 Fisheries

A recent article on the Commons Library's *Second Reading* blog - [Troubled waters? Negotiating fish quotas post-Brexit](#) - outlines some of the issues that are likely to arise in negotiations and considers whether "British fish for British fishers" is a goal that could be achieved.¹¹

Likewise, the implications of Brexit for fisheries remain highly uncertain.

3.3 Defra's plan for food and farming

Defra started work on developing a new 25 year food and farming strategy in conjunction with stakeholders in July 2015. Although it was expected to be published in early July 2016, it has not, but a consultation is due soon.¹²

¹⁰ NFU, [NFU Council's bold vision for post-Brexit farming](#), 11 October 2016

¹¹ 7 October 2016

¹² [PQ 46447, 12 October 2016](#)

4. Migrant workers in agriculture and fisheries

In the whole of the UK in Q1 2016 there were an estimated 25,000 EU nationals working in crop and animal production. This represented 8% of all UK agricultural workers.¹³

It is certainly the case that EU free movement law has ensured that UK employers have relatively easy access to labour from EU/EEA states, and that this has offset some of the obstacles to non-EU/EEA economic immigration imposed by the UK's Immigration Rules. For example, it has been assumed that any need for lower-skilled labour can be met by workers from within the UK and EU/EEA. If EU/EEA nationals became subject to similar controls as non-EU/EEA nationals (e.g. entry for skilled workers only), it is possible that there would be some pressure to relax some visa restrictions or expand certain categories (e.g. for seasonal agricultural workers), depending on the needs of the economy.

If the UK left the EU and EEA, it could impose its own controls on which EU/EEA citizens were admitted to the UK and under what circumstances (assuming that it did not negotiate a future agreement with EU/EEA Member States which required the continued application of free movement law).

There is no certainty at this stage about what those controls might look like – a range of different suggestions have been made by different interested parties. It is fair to assume that the UK's approach to controlling EU/EEA migration would be informed by broader considerations of the national interest, including the extent to which the UK wanted to continue to attract certain types of migrant to the UK.

4.1 How might the agricultural labour market be affected by Brexit?

Farmers' Weekly has outlined UK farming and horticulture's [reliance on migrant workers](#):

Across all industries, EU-born workers account for just 5% of the country's workforce, but in agriculture it's 65%, according to Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures – not including seasonal workers.

It's not just the labour-intensive horticulture sector that is reliant on migrant workers.

Pig and poultry units often employ migrant labour and a survey of dairy farmers, by the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers two years ago, found that a third had employed migrant staff – with over half from Poland.¹⁴

¹³ Source: *ONS Labour Force Survey Q1 2016* microdata analysis. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand. Not seasonally adjusted.

¹⁴ "[Analysis: Farming's access to labour if the UK left the EU](#)", *Farmers' Weekly*, 20 May 2016

An [article in the *Guardian*](#) in July this year quoted industry bodies such as the NFU and British Summer Fruits as suggesting that the future for some businesses might be perilous:

Suppliers of native crops – including cucumbers, apples, raspberries and blackberries – could go out of business because of potential bans on EU migrant workers.¹⁵

4.2 Seasonal agricultural workers

The [previous seasonal agricultural workers' scheme](#) closed at the end of 2013.¹⁶

Before the referendum, the NFU had voiced concerns about potential [shortfalls in seasonal agricultural workers](#) once the UK leaves the EU.¹⁷

Asked recently about what the Government is doing to ensure that farmers will continue to have access to sufficient seasonal labour, immigration minister Robert Goodwill said that the Home Office would be engaging with relevant stakeholders, including those in the agricultural industry.¹⁸

Questioned in July this year about the resilience of farming businesses, Defra minister George Eustice said that there were ways to ensure the availability of labour:

I am familiar with the challenges that certain agricultural sectors face with seasonal labour. (...) In recent years we have had models such as seasonal agricultural worker schemes, and there are ways to ensure that the required labour is available.¹⁹

Particular concerns have been raised about the availability of seasonal labour, post-Brexit.

¹⁵ "[British strawberries could be wiped out by Brexit, farming leaders warn](#)", *Guardian* online, 20 July 2016

¹⁶ Home Office, [Written statement to Parliament: Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme and the Food Processing Sectors Based Scheme](#), 12 September 2013

¹⁷ These concerns are discussed in the Commons Library briefing on [Brexit's impact on UK agriculture policy](#) (CBP 07602, 26 May 2016).

¹⁸ [PQ 46569, 10 October 2016](#)

¹⁹ [HC Deb 7 July 2016, c1020](#)

5. News items

Plymouth Herald

Foreign boats catch three-quarters of West Country fish

12 October 2016

<http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/foreign-boats-catch-three-quarters-of-westcountry-fish/story-29802740-detail/story.html#1BMIRUWXrwQ8VaJH.99>

Guardian

Walking into the unknown': rural England weighs up the reality of Brexit

The EU helped shape the UK landscape with both money and a swath of rules and directives. In places like Crediton, a picture-perfect corner of rural Devon, locals fear the change to come – but also smell opportunity

8 October 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/08/walking-into-the-unknown-rural-england-weighs-up-the-reality-of-brexit>

Horticulture Week

South West Growers hear horticulture vision

11 October 2016

<http://www.hortweek.com/south-west-growers-hear-horticulture-vision/ornamentals/article/1411728>

Plymouth Herald

#BackTheSouthWest: Now is the time to show full support for South West food producers

5 October 2016

<http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/backthesouthwest-now-is-the-time-to-show-full-support-for-south-west-food-producers/story-29779836-detail/story.html#oKIAABMetwiS0Rts.99>

Dorset Echo

CLA launches campaign urging MPs to remember rural businesses in Brexit deliberations

4 October 2016

<http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/14775230>. Brexit will lead to the single biggest change in the way we organise rural businesses across the countryside for generations let s champion a future that allows them to thrive /

Plymouth Herald

Thousands of farms at risk of closure unless EU funds extended

19 September 2016

<http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/thousands-of-farms-at-risk-of-closure-unless-eu-funds-extended/story-29730881-detail/story.html>

South West Farmer

Farms and rural businesses need certainty from Home Secretary on post-Brexit schemes for overseas workers, says CLA

12 September 2016

<http://www.southwestfarmer.co.uk/news/14736937>. Farms and rural businesses need certainty from Home Secretary on post Brexit schemes for overseas workers says CLA/?ref=mr&lp=6

Exeter Express and Echo

Devon fishing fleet hopeful of a brighter future outside EU

28 June 2016

<http://www.exeterexpressandecho.co.uk/devon-fishing-fleet-hopeful-of-a-brighter-future-outside-eu/story-29453808-detail/story.html#0t02rV5qzd4RLyZo.99>

ITV News

Brexit vote: 'This is an opportunity for UK fishermen'

24 June 2016

<http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2016-06-24/brexit-vote-this-is-an-opportunity-for-fisheries/>

6. Press releases

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

Brexit offers 'opportunity for radical change' says UK fisheries minister

9th September 2016

Brexit Takes Centre Stage at Fishing Industry Debate

The fishing industry has a once in a generation opportunity for radical change according to UK fisheries minister, George Eustice. Addressing a room full of fishermen, the minister went on to add that Brexit provided a unique chance to go back to first principles when re-establishing fishing policy.

The address took place at the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation's (NFFO) annual general meeting held in London on Thursday (8 September), where fishermen put their questions directly to the minister for the first time since the outcome of the Referendum was announced. These spanned industry involvement in exit negotiations for Brexit, the position on continued funding and how to attract young people into the industry.

During his address, the minister conveyed a strong belief that being outside the EU and therefore outside the CFP would provide "an opportunity to go back to first principles" and design management arrangements that are tailored specifically to UK fleets and fisheries. He contrasted this flexibility with the rigidity of the CFP which has proved incapable of producing the responsive, adaptive, approach required to manage modern, complex and diverse fisheries.

Although the Government's overall negotiating strategy for leaving the EU is still in gestation, the minister made it clear that leaving the EU would provide opportunities to renegotiate the UK's quota shares and access arrangements, whilst simultaneously retaining access to European markets on reasonable terms. He also made clear that the UK would be taking the lead in all aspects of the Brexit negotiations, whilst consulting closely with the devolved administrations.

The minister highlighted the elements of the CFP which in his view should "in principle" be retained. These included a commitment to Maximum Sustainable Yield, some form of the landing obligation and outside the EU, where there will still be a need for international agreements, continued cooperation on shared stocks and access rights.

He also expressed the wish to work with the fishing industry to design a better future and invited all those in the industry to submit their ideas on the changes that they would like to see to help set broad principles to guide future policy on UK fisheries.

The NFFO has already met with David Davis, the minister responsible for exiting the EU, in advance of the Cabinet meeting in Checkers which began to formulate the Government's Brexit negotiating positions. The

NFFO has prepared a detailed position paper on the transition to, and shape of, all aspects of the post-Brexit fisheries regime as well as giving oral evidence to a House of Lords committee investigating all fisheries aspects of Brexit. Further to this, the member body is expected to take a leading role in a round-table discussion led by Secretary of State for the Environment and Fisheries, Andrea Leadsom next week.

The NFFO's chief executive, Barrie Deas, said: "We expect to be closely engaged with DEFRA officials in working on the detail of our exit strategy from the EU. Our internal preparations for that engagement are well advanced, with contributions from all of the Federation's diverse interests invited, sector by sector, and these will be incorporated into the final document for Department for exiting the EU (Dexeu) and DEFRA.

"The feeling from our Executive and from the AGM was that the NFFO has made a very good start in positioning itself for the Brexit negotiations. The early meeting with David Davis and the scope for working closely with Dexeu and DEFRA provide us with a perhaps unique opportunity. However, this is the start of the process and Brexit negotiations will take a minimum of two years. It will be an ongoing challenge to ensure that fishing remains close to the top of the UK's negotiating priorities. The Federation is fully engaged in that task.

"The minister's view that Brexit is an opportunity to go back to first principles is a very welcome. The common fisheries policy has shown itself to inflexible and over-centralised, and Brexit offers the opportunity to design and implement an approach tailored to the contours of our fleets and our fisheries."

Over the last few decades British fishermen have worked successfully to improve the sustainability of their fishing methods and the health of stocks in the waters they fish. According to statistics released by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) earlier this year, there has been a 'dramatic reduction in fishing pressure' across the main commercial stocks.

The majority of commercial fish stocks are now at a level consistent with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) meaning levels are not only sustainable, but will also deliver high, long-term yields without jeopardising the future sustainability of stocks. Between 2006 and 2015, the number of stocks fished at MSY increased from 2 to 36.

For more information and to keep up to date with the NFFO's involvement in Brexit negotiations visit www.NFFO.org.uk or follow the NFFO on Twitter @NFFO_UK.

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

NFFO Working on Brexit Detail

10th August 2016

Since the referendum on leaving the EU took place on 23rd June, the Federation has been actively involved in work on the post-CFP management regime.

Our Executive Committee met on 12th of July in the wake of the Brexit vote and agreed the broad shape of our future policy:

- Brexit will mean that the UK will directly control the fisheries within its 200 mile exclusive economic zone (or out to the median line where appropriate.) This will offer opportunities to design a management regime that is much more closely tailored to the shape and operational patterns of our fleets.
- Brexit will provide an opportunity to address historic anomalies in quota allocations and to control how many non-UK vessels fish in our waters, how and where they fish. The principle of equal access will no longer apply.
- We recognize the reality that many of our stocks are shared with countries that will remain within the EU, and also with Norway and other countries outside the EU. Joint responsibility for these stocks will require careful management through negotiated arrangements.
- It will be important to maintain the whole range of our existing fishing opportunities, including those in EU and external waters.
- Sustainable fishing should remain at the heart of the UK's fishing policy but we should look for opportunities to develop high-yield, low-impact fishing strategies without the rigid and frequently counterproductive strictures of the CFP: we can take the best and ditch the worst
- Catching fish is one thing but it is also important to sell them under the most favorable conditions; market access will also be high in our considerations.
- We anticipate that our government will want to provide the same level of financial support for the industry to assist operators adjust to the new arrangements.

A working group has been set up by the Executive Committee to develop detailed policy on all of the key aspects of post-Brexit fisheries. The group has had its first meeting and will continue to work as long as is necessary. Some of the themes under discussion are:

- Access arrangements post Brexit
- Shared stocks and Relative Stability post-Brexit
- Addressing quota anomalies and maintaining external waters fishing opportunities post-Brexit
- Sustainable fishing policies outside the CFP

- Discard ban post-CFP
- Market access for UK fisheries products post-Brexit
- Industry funding post-EMFF

Negotiations

Brexit offers an opportunity but it is not without its risks for the fishing industry. In order that the UK government negotiates the best possible arrangements it is going to be important for us to work closely with the key UK negotiators until the shape of the new deal is clear. Fisheries will form an important strand - but only one strand – within the Brexit negotiations with the EU. It will be important to ensure that fishing is given the priority that it deserves and the way to do that will be to ensure our priorities are reflected in clear and cohesive negotiating positions.

NFU

'Answers being sought' to Euro questions

26 July 2016

One of Defra's top officials told a meeting organised by the South West Rural and Farming Network (SWRFN) and the NFU that 'answers were being sought' to questions about how Countryside Stewardship schemes would be administered in the light of the European referendum result.

Andrew Robinson, deputy director of rural development programme policy, said Defra needed to 'understand its liabilities' with regard to long-term schemes and he hoped an update on the position would be available soon.

The NFU's head of policy services Dr Andrea Graham told the meeting that whilst it was unlikely Brexit would result in a 'bonfire of red tape' it did present an opportunity to make sure that policies were put in place that would result in a resilient, competitive, sustainable farming sector that was better able to cope with volatility in world markets.

Other speakers at the meeting, which was chaired by SWRFN chairman David Fursdon, included Chris Head, executive director of the West of England Rural Network and Simon Hooton, director of Ash Futures.

University of Exeter

New research shows South West farmers concerned by Brexit

6 June 2016

Farmers have expressed concern about the unknown implications of Britain leaving the European Union, according to a new survey by experts at the University of Exeter.

Almost half (45.8 per cent) of those questioned said the interests of British agriculture will be best served by the UK remaining a member of the EU.

More than a third (35.5 per cent) indicated that it would be in the interest of British agriculture to leave the EU. The remaining 18.7 per cent were unable to give an answer. If this group is removed the proportion in favour of remain is 56.6 per cent while 43.4 per cent favour leaving.

The 1,251 farmers who took part in the postal survey, by the University of Exeter's Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute (LEEP), were also asked about future Government financial support for agriculture. Only 17.1 per cent thought it would remain at broadly similar levels in the event of a "Brexit", while 44.5 per cent thought it would not, and 38.4 per cent didn't know.

Older farmers were significantly more confident that support would be maintained if we left the EU compared to those who were younger.

LEEP Director [Professor Matt Lobley](#) said: "This is a robust survey of the views of farmers. The 1,251 respondents represent approximately 5 per cent of all farms in the South West and almost 9 per cent of the region's farmland.

"These findings suggest that some farmers feel the Common Agricultural Policy has an important role in supporting their work, and that they are concerned leaving the European Union could leave them more economically vulnerable than they are now."

LEEP Director [Professor Michael Winter](#) OBE said: "The UK is a highly urbanised nation. Our research shows that farmers are sceptical about whether the UK government outside the EU would maintain the same level of support for farmers as under the EU. History suggests that politicians would prefer to reform the Common Agricultural Policy."

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