

Support for Welsh farming after Brexit

Page 1: General questions

Please indicate whether you are responding as:

b. On behalf of an organisation

Please indicate which of these best represent you or your organisation

h. Third sector

Question 1 of 20 From Chapter 4: Land Management Programme We propose a new Land Management Programme consisting of an Economic Resilience scheme and a Public Goods scheme. Do you agree these schemes are the best way to deliver against the principles?

No

If NO, what alternatives would be best?

We are supportive of a 'public money for public goods' approach. We also understand that economic resilience is also hugely important, but we fear that separating out the delivery of public goods from economic resilience of individual farms may be counter-productive. Ultimately the two are intertwined - a farm can not be financially viable in the long-run unless it has e.g. healthy soils and well managed water catchments. Food production and environmental stewardship should not be thought of as mutually exclusive. Hence we would prefer an integrated measure of support, with the primary focus being on rewarding the delivery of a range of environmental - and other - public goods. This might mean a basket of outcomes for farmers to deliver on, where they can be rewarded for delivering some of those public goods, with certain minima needing to be achieved in order to trigger financial payments. Alongside environmental measures like tackling climate change, we believe it is vital that aspects of good farm animal welfare and public health delivery are treated as public goods - and are rewarded appropriately. In a morally progressive society, good farm animal welfare is an important end in itself, but it is also essential if we are to deliver in-the-round environmental progress. It is extremely difficult to achieve good environmental outcomes while continuing to keep farm animals in the most intensive systems, which rely heavily on high protein feeds produced in arable monocultures, on high levels of fossil fuel and water use, and on routine medications, often including human-critical antibiotics. We strongly recommend that the Welsh government uses this opportunity to standardise key sustainability metrics. Public health measures might include - but not be limited to - contributing to healthy sustainable diets; better household food security; improved nutritional profile of agricultural products; ending prophylactic use of antibiotics in livestock farming; reduction of pesticide use; and policy & contractual requirements for fresh, healthy and sustainably produced food in public sector institutions (as called for by Sustain in relation to the UK Agriculture Bill).

Question 2 of 20 From Chapter 4: Land Management Programme Does the Welsh Government need to take action to ensure tenants can access new schemes?

Unsure

Question 5 of 20 From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience Are the five proposed areas of support the right ones to improve economic resilience?

Unsure

Are there any areas which should be included but currently are not?

As noted above, we fear that developing a separate 'pillar of support' for economic resilience may be counterproductive, rather than taking an integrated approach. If for example there is too much emphasis given to narrow interpretations of 'improving productivity' in the short-term, this could result in significant environmental damage - which would damage long-term productivity. We support the importance of knowledge exchange, skills and innovation - but we do not believe the focus should be on productivity alone, as this risks unintended consequences. We would urge the Welsh government to read our recent publication - 'For whom? Questioning the food and farming research agenda' [https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/uploads/For%20whom%20-%20questioning%20the%20food%20and%20farming%20research%20agenda_FINAL_1.pdf]. This argues that the 'status quo' industrial research paradigm needs an overhaul. We support initiatives like the Innovative Farmers Network that encourage farmers to learn from each other and to take existing 'solutions', rather than solely relying on high-tech 'silver bullets'.

Question 7 of 20 From Chapter 5: Economic Resilience Should we be investing in people, for example to bring in new ideas, skills and people into land management and the supply chain in Wales?

Yes

If YES, how should we look to do this?

Investing in people working on food value chains is vitally important. We recommend our Business Forum report entitled 'Food Makers 2030' [https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/uploads/publications/170328%20Food%20Makers%202030_FINAL.pdf] which sets out insights from discussions with business figures in food and farming on how we can make food and farming a more attractive sector in future. While this is not specific to Wales, the general points apply. We recommend our landmark publication 'Food Justice: the report of the Food and Fairness Inquiry' [<https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/uploads/publications/2010%20FoodJustice.pdf>] on issues relating to fairness in food value chains. This sets out three perspectives on social justice: 'fair shares', or equality of outcome; 'fair play' or equality of opportunity; and 'fair say', or autonomy and voice.

Question 8 of 20 From Chapter 6: Public Goods We have set out our proposed parameters for the Public Goods scheme. Are they appropriate?

Yes

Would you change anything?

Yes

If YES, what?

We welcome the proposed shift towards rewarding delivery of public goods. We broadly support the public goods identified in the consultation paper. However, we believe that the scope of the scheme should be extended, in terms of the public goods that are supported. Alongside the measures listed (like decarbonisation and climate change adaptation), we believe it is vital that good farm animal welfare and public health delivery are treated as public goods - and are rewarded appropriately. See section below for further information.

Question 10 of 20 From Chapter 6: Public Goods Are there any other public goods which you think should be supported?

Yes

If YES, why?

In addition to the public goods under consideration, we believe it is vital that good farm animal welfare and public health are treated as public goods - and are rewarded appropriately. Firstly, good farm animal welfare should be treated as a public good. In a morally progressive society, good farm animal welfare is an important end in itself, but it is also essential if we are to deliver in-the-round environmental progress. It is extremely difficult to achieve good environmental outcomes while continuing to keep farm animals in the most intensive systems, which rely heavily on high protein feeds produced in arable monocultures, on high levels of fossil fuel and water use, and on routine medications, often including human-critical antibiotics. We strongly recommend that the Welsh government uses this opportunity to standardise key sustainability metrics. In relation to farm animals, this should be done on a species-by-species basis. Public health measures might include - but not be limited to - contributing to healthy sustainable diets; better household food security; improved nutritional profile of agricultural products; ending prophylactic use of antibiotics in livestock farming; reduction of pesticide use; and policy & contractual requirements for fresh, healthy and sustainably produced food in public sector institutions (as called for by Sustain in relation to the UK Agriculture Bill).

Question 12 of 20 From Chapter 6: Public Goods A collaborative approach to delivering public goods may in some instances provide better value for money than isolated activity. How could the scheme facilitate this approach? How could public and private bodies contribute to such partnerships?

We agree that a collaborative approach to delivering public goods may in some instances provide better value for money and be more effective than isolated activity.

We support the principle of developing bottom-up solutions and co-ordinated effort, albeit under an overarching regulatory framework. It is vital that initiatives are citizen-led and farmer-led, and that lessons are learned from initiatives such as the Burren programme in Ireland.

Question 20 of 20 Do you wish to make any further comments?

The Food Ethics Council is a registered charity whose mission is to build fair and resilient food systems that respect people, animals and the planet. We are considered by stakeholders to be experts on fairness and sustainability, and the leader on ethical food issues. The Food Ethics Council is an expert body consisting of 16 Council members, leaders in their fields, bringing extensive networks and a range of expertise from academic research and ethics through to practical knowledge of farming, business and policy.

There is much to welcome in the 'Brexit and our land' consultation. We in particular welcome the proposed shift towards public money for public goods. We do however believe that a more integrated approach would be more effective, and we would support the inclusion of public health measures as public goods. We also believe that the focus should be on the future of food systems, rather than a narrower focus on how to support farmers to deliver public goods. The risk of failing to take a systems perspective is that policy solutions may be designed and implemented that deliver unintended consequences and/or that lock us into a largely industrialised model where a high proportion of food is ultra-processed.

Considering a new approach to farmer support is vitally important. However, alongside that, we would like to see mechanisms introduced to ensure that farmers and food producers get a fairer share of the value along food supply chains. We would also like to see greater investment in democratising the food and farming research agenda, including more support for farmer-to-farmer learning.

Citizens have a vested interest in the long-term health and wellbeing of food and farming. We need to accelerate the shift from a Consumer mindset to a Citizenship mindset in food and farming. This would give people and organisations greater agency to shape - and participate in - fair, healthy, humane and environmentally sustainable food systems.

We would urge the Welsh government to build on its proud food culture and its world-leading legislation such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. We are supportive of the idea of a Wales Food Manifesto based on principles of citizenship and shared values.

We want the Welsh government to take an ethical approach in tackling the food issues we face. It should consider as best as possible what the values it wants to promote as a country are, what the most contentious issues are and what the consequences from particular courses of action are likely to be (including who are likely to be the biggest winners and losers). It should then weigh them up to try to decide what is right, 'all things considered'.

Note - We have only provided comments on selected consultation questions that we feel qualified to comment on.

Page 3: Survey submission

Please provide your name

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Name | Dan Crossley |
| Organisation (if applicable) | Food Ethics Council |
| I prefer to remain anonymous | - |
| | - |

If you want to receive a receipt of your response, please provide an email address. Email address

dan@foodethicscouncil.org

Responses to consultations may be made public. If you are happy for your response to be made public (this may include email addresses) please tick the box.

I am happy for my response to be made public