



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

CPRE's policy on food & farming

CPRE's position

Farming is of national strategic importance, in terms of primary production of food, energy and commodities, through its crucial role in managing water and soil resources and in shaping and managing landscape and habitat. The rich character of the English countryside is largely derived from farming and the future of agriculture will play a major role in determining its future. The farming community retains professional knowledge and a skill base which will be vital to the future of productive land management in the future.

Key food & farming issues

Ensuring the multifunctional role of farming and securing the future for a viable farming industry requires a combination of appropriate regulation and realistic levels of incentive. Government needs to respond to global competitive pressures to prevent the abandonment of marginal farming systems which provide huge public benefits as well as preventing damaging environmental effects of intensification. The advent of a changing climate will require farming to adapt to changing conditions. Society needs to engage in the debate over investment in biotechnology and other agricultural systems, whether organic or through genetic modification.

Establishing more extensive connections between consumers and the production of their food is a key element in building a more sustainable food chain. Farming needs to play its part by seeking closer relationships with customers through good communications and high production and welfare standards, with Government support. Local shops, supermarkets and the catering industry should source high quality, affordable local food which wherever possible comes from the nearby countryside, and is produced in way that benefits the environment.

Key issues for the countryside

Pressing challenges for farming and the countryside include:

- securing adequate funding for agri-environment schemes from 2013 onwards;
- preventing abandonment of upland farming systems which deliver public benefits;

- extending local food webs of producers, processors, distributors and shops;
- responding to climate change in ways which protect biodiversity and landscape.

What CPRE wants

- Future changes in funding for agriculture to take account of farmers' landscape and habitat management and their role in natural resource protection.
- Environmentally beneficial production to be rewarded through support from agri-environment schemes.
- Transparency in pricing and supply. The dairy and pig farming sectors are suffering particularly at present.
- Improved food labelling legislation, to show how and where food is produced.
- Planning guidelines and retail policies that recognise the importance of local food producers and retailers, and protect local retail outlets from supermarket domination.
- Better support for critical local food infrastructure, such as abattoirs.
- Increased funding for the local food sector through the England Rural Development Programme and Regional Development Agencies.

What people can do

1. Fill in an NFU *Why Beef and Sheep Farming Matters* campaign postcard and hand it in to stores and supermarkets to persuade them to give farmers a fair deal.
2. Buy local products direct from local shops, farmers' markets and other local markets.

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