



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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Future Agricultural Policy

Thank you for contacting me about the future of agriculture.

Food and farming is a bedrock of our economy and environment, generating £112 billion a year and helping shape some of our finest habitats and landscapes. I am pleased that the Government has pledged to continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament, expected in 2022. Structural fund projects, including agri-environment schemes, signed before our departure will be honoured for their lifetime.

Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) means we can do much more for our environment. In England the Government plans to move to a system of paying farmers public money for actions that benefit the whole population especially environmental enhancement. Bureaucracy will be minimised and application processes made easier; the system will also provide flexibility, putting more management decisions in the hands of farmers. We must take the opportunity of being outside the CAP to use public money to reward environmentally-responsible land use, while maintaining and enhancing high standards of animal welfare. There will be a smooth transition to this new system over a number of years to give farmers time to adapt.

The Environment Secretary has published a Command Paper and is consulting widely with farmers and other interested parties. In particular, the Government are keenly aware of the importance of seasonal labour, so will work with the industry to ensure it has the right people with the right skills.

Ministers will work closely with the devolved administrations on an approach that works for the whole of the UK.

I am convinced that we will harness the many exciting opportunities that lie ahead and ensure that our best days as a food and farming nation lie ahead of us.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP