

# Let's talk about all land use



The UK government has been consulting on policy proposals for how to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after Brexit. **Eleanor Harris** reports on Confor's response.

Since before the Brexit vote, Confor has been engaged in discussion with the sector, politicians, and other stakeholders. We have produced analyses of the implications of Brexit for the forestry and timber sector regarding funding, trade, environmental regulations, labour, plant health and land. These can be found on our website along with our policy papers *A Common Countryside Policy* and *Plant Health and Brexit* on our website.

Confor is engaging in detailed discussions around the UK on what might replace the CAP after Brexit. In particular, we issued a detailed response to the UK Government's major Health and Harmony consultation on the subject. Our focus has been to stress that the debate must be about all land uses, not just agriculture. This was reflected in our response, which was prepared after gathering feedback from members, and in a Twitter campaign using the hashtag #woodforpublicgood.

The issue was also discussed at the most recent meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry, attended by senior Defra officials Guy Horsington and Fiona Harrison.

Confor's consultation response, one of 44,000 received by Defra, has been shared with stakeholders from the forestry sector, politics and a wide range of farming and environmental organisations. It is the latest and most detailed Confor contribution to the Brexit debate. We have produced analyses of the implications of Brexit for the forestry and timber sector regarding funding, trade, environmental regulations, labour, plant health and land. These can all be found on our website in the News section, under the Brexit heading. The consultation response is also in our Resources section, under both Publications and Consultations.

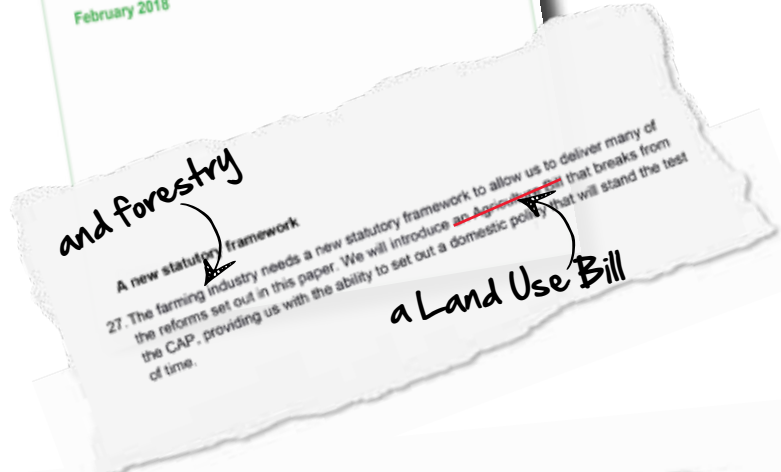
Confor continues to engage with the widest possible range of stakeholders to ensure the forestry and wood voice is heard as the consultation responses are analysed and future policy takes shape.

## Confor welcomes

- The proposal to phase out Direct Payments, which disadvantage forestry
- The commitment to excellence in plant health standards
- The commitment to increased productivity and competitiveness in the countryside
- The principles of 'public money for public goods' and 'polluter pays'

## Confor asks for...

1 An appropriately named bill



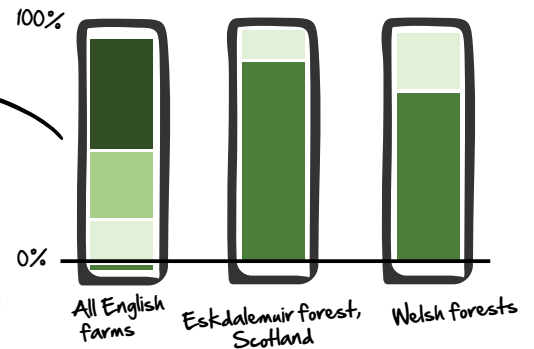
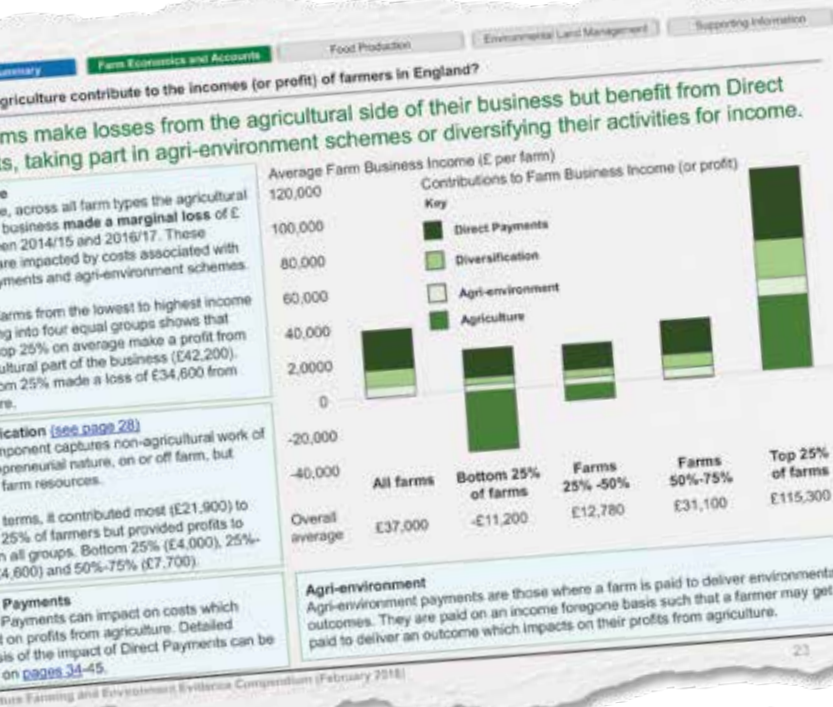
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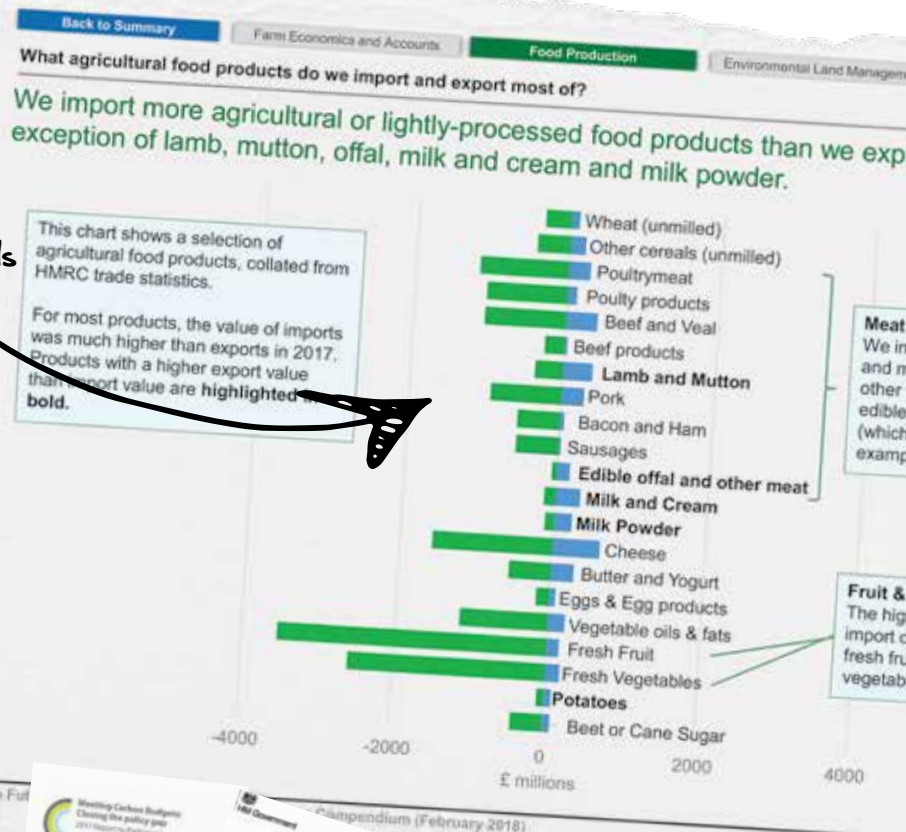
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## Defra evidence compendium

Evidence on forestry and timber, for example in any detailed comparisons of productivity, profitability, employment, trade and professionalism, must be included alongside the other crops and livestock data when future policy decisions are made.



Source of income by percentage, for all English farms (taken from the Defra report), compared to two studies of forestry in Scotland and Wales



- paper
- sawn wood
- wood-based panels
- wood pellets
- other wood

If timber products are added into Defra's graph it becomes apparent that the top categories are not fresh fruit and veg but fresh fruit and paper. We also import more sawn wood, wood-based panels and wood pellets than any sort of food other than fruit, vegetables and cheese

Policy must be based on an integrated analysis of current and potential delivery of public goods (carbon balance, pollution, biodiversity, landscape, recreation, culture and community) and look beyond farming to include forestry. Many of the public goods provided by modern forestry, in particular carbon capture, are intrinsic to the production of timber. Provision of these public goods must not be disincentivised by a farm-focused policy which provides payment only for 'additional' public goods. Join the conversation on twitter: #Wood4PublicGood

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## Land use policy must be linked to other policies



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As many of the decisions taken in England will impact the whole UK, the consultation needs to take place in the devolved administrations as well.

And foresters, horticulturalists and members of the public

# What are others saying in response to the consultation?



## Royal Forestry Society

"Although references to forestry in this consultation are welcome, the almost exclusive focus of the consultation on the future of agriculture, belies the evidence that many of the opportunities to meet the government's rural land use policy objectives lie in a larger, more profitable and resilient forestry sector."



## Institute of Chartered Foresters

"Most of the wider post-planting benefits that society gains from a forestry programme in the UK are financed from commercial activity and charitable donations. For example, consumers are assured that wood used in the UK comes from sustainable sources through certification schemes developed by international bodies such as FSC and PEFC."



## CLA

"The command paper makes no reference to commercial forestry and the potential contribution this could make to remote rural areas. If effectively incentivised and supported with advice there is huge potential for responsible commercial afforestation to compensate for reduced agricultural incomes."



WOODLAND TRUST

## Woodland Trust

"The Woodland Trust strongly welcomes the clear indication that future payments will need to be much more focused on the payment of public money for the delivery and care of public goods. This is an un-

land use



#Wood4PublicGood

precedented opportunity to break down the barriers that have artificially divided farming and forestry for so long, and bring these mutually beneficial areas together through integrated thinking and delivery."

**THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE**  
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands

## Uplands Alliance

"The Uplands are too often perceived as a contested area [but] the four workshops we held exposed substantial common ground be-

tween diverse stakeholders. While farming is the predominate form of land management currently covering 70% of the uplands it is not the only type of land management. Forestry, water provision, carbon stewardship, management for wild game and conservation interests are also important land uses."

## What happens next?

The UK government will analyse the consultation responses over the summer, with a view to bringing forward legislation in the autumn.

Meanwhile, Confor will be feeding in to a range of related discussions:

- The Welsh Government is holding a series of stakeholder meetings to discuss land use policy in Wales.
- In Scotland, the future policy framework for farming and forestry will depend on the implementation of the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act recently passed by the Scottish Parliament. It is essential that the new structures facilitate integrated land-use policymaking.
- The Committee on Climate Change are preparing a report on the Health and Harmony proposals over the summer.
- Defra have launched a new consultation

on a proposed Environmental Principles and Governance Bill, to ensure environmental protections are not weakened as we leave the EU. Whether future environmental regulation UK-wide or devolved is one of the questions for discussion.

- Confor will be closely engaged in all these discussions over the coming months, to ensure that Brexit does not result in forestry and timber being further disadvantaged in rural policy. Please get in touch with your National Manager or with Eleanor Harris if you would like to find out more or if you have issues you think we should raise.

Join the conversation on twitter with the Defra and Confor hashtags: #FutureFarming and #Wood4PublicGood.