

Press release: Landmark Agriculture Bill to deliver a Green Brexit

Legislation to deliver a cleaner and healthier environment for future generations after nearly half a century under EU rules is being introduced into Parliament today (12 September).

The Agriculture Bill sets out how farmers and land managers will in future be paid for “public goods”, such as better air and water quality, improved soil health, higher animal welfare standards, public access to the countryside and measures to reduce flooding.

This will replace the current subsidy system of Direct Payments, which is ineffective and pays farmers based on the total amount of land farmed. These payments are skewed towards the largest landowners and are not linked to any specific public benefits. The top 10% of recipients currently receive almost 50% of total payments, while the bottom 20% receive just 2%.

In its place, a new Environmental Land Management system will start from next year. The government will work together with farmers to design, develop and trial the new approach. Under the new system, farmers and land managers who provide the greatest environmental benefits will secure the largest rewards, laying the foundations for a Green Brexit.

The Bill will also be underpinned by measures to increase productivity and invest in (R&D).

For example, there will be funding available for farmers to come together to develop and get the research projects that they want and need, whether that be on soil health or sustainable livestock farming . This will lead to practical gains for farmers that help them become more profitable and reduce their environmental footprint.

The government will also be able to make payments during the seven year transition period for farmers to invest in new technologies and methods that boost productivity.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The introduction of the Agriculture Bill is an historic moment as we leave the EU and move towards a brighter future for farming.

After nearly 50 years of being tied to burdensome and outdated EU rules, we have an opportunity to deliver a Green Brexit.

This Bill will allow us to reward farmers who protect our environment, leaving the countryside in a cleaner, greener and healthier state for future generations.

Critically, we will also provide the smooth and gradual transition that farmers and land managers need to plan ahead.

Farmers will be supported over a seven year transition period as we leave the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

For 2019, Direct Payments will be made on the same basis as now, subject to simplifications where possible. Direct Payments for 2020 will also be made in much the same way as now. Simplifications will be made as soon as possible, subject to the terms of the overall Brexit implementation period. There will then be an agricultural transition period in England between 2021 and 2027 as payments are gradually phased out.

During consultation, there was a widespread support for applying reductions to Direct Payments more widely. All farmers will therefore see some reduction to their payments from the start of the transition, although those who receive the highest payments will see bigger reductions initially. This will free up funds to invest in public goods.

To help new entrants get into the sector and give farmers flexibility to plan for the future, Direct Payments during the agricultural transition period up until 2027 will be "delinked" from the requirement to farm the land.

These payments, which may be calculated according to money received in previous years, can be used by farmers to invest in their business, diversify their activities or else retire from farming and give way for new people to enter.

The Bill also sets out how the government will strengthen transparency in the supply chain to help farmers get a better deal in the marketplace.

By collecting data from across the supply chain, the government will help food producers strengthen their negotiating position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return.

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[Press release: New flu vaccine available this winter for those aged 65 and over](#)

Delegates at the Public Health England (PHE) conference heard that a more

effective flu vaccine for those aged 65 and over this winter has the potential to prevent deaths and significantly reduce the burden on the NHS.

The vaccine, available for the first time this year in the UK for those aged 65 and over, could reduce GP consultations by 30,000, hospitalisations by over 2,000 and prevent over 700 hospital deaths from flu in England, alleviating some of the health burden that seasonal flu places on the population, workplaces and the NHS.

The newly available 'adjuvanted' vaccine is expected to significantly boost effectiveness by improving the body's immune response to the vaccine. This is important because typically, older adults' bodies do not respond as well to the flu vaccine due to their naturally weaker immune systems. Older adults are also more likely to suffer complications from flu.

The broader flu vaccination programme will also be improved by offering all eligible adults under 65, including pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions, the 'quadrivalent' vaccine in injected form.

This protects against a total of four strains of flu; two strains of flu A and two strains of flu B.

Professor Paul Cosford, Medical Director at PHE, said:

Flu is potentially a very serious illness, and we know adults over 65 are more likely to catch and have complications from flu so have the most to gain from an improved vaccine. By introducing an enhanced flu vaccine for this age group they will be better protected as well as helping to reduce the spread of flu to those around them.

Further protection will be gained by offering flu vaccine to more children this year and giving a vaccine that provides protection against 4 strains of flu to all eligible people under the age of 65. We encourage everyone who is eligible to get the flu vaccine from their general practice or pharmacy before the end of November.

The vaccination programme will also be improved by extending the nasal spray vaccine to primary school children in year 5 (650,000 extra children), meaning the vaccine will be offered to children in years reception, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The programme will eventually roll out to all primary school children.

When this happens, evidence suggests that an additional 63,000 GP consultations could be prevented each year. Due to having typically poorer hand hygiene than adults, children tend to be 'super-spreaders' of flu, so protecting them is crucial for protecting the rest of the population.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies said:

Getting the flu vaccine is the single best way to protect yourself against this potentially fatal illness, and this year the NHS is offering it to 24 million people across the country.

In addition to this – a newly available vaccine that is more effective will be offered to over-65s. This could prevent hundreds of deaths and save thousands of GP and hospital hours – I strongly encourage everyone in vulnerable groups to get the life-saving vaccine as we head into winter.

Professor Jane Cummings, Chief Nurse for England, said:

Faced with the worst flu season in a decade, NHS staff last winter did a remarkable job providing care for patients.

This year, the public will be better protected from flu than ever before, with at-risk groups being offered the most effective vaccine available and every member of NHS staff expected to get their job.

The flu vaccine will be available from early October. PHE's annual flu marketing campaign will launch on 8 October (to tie in with vaccine availability) and will target at-risk audiences including pregnant women, parents of children aged 2 to 3 and adults with long-term conditions.

The campaign will be one of the first to roll out under the newly launched 'Help Us Help You' brand. 'Help Us Help You' is based on the concept of reciprocity, encouraging people to take appropriate actions (be that getting the flu vaccination or accessing the appropriate service) to better enable the NHS to help them.

Eligible adults are encouraged to get their free vaccine from their local general practice or pharmacy before the end of November to protect themselves and their families before flu reaches its seasonal peak. It is the single best way to protect against a potentially very serious illness.

As well as getting the vaccine, practising good hand hygiene by catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue, throwing it away and washing your hands after can help limit its spread – catch it, bin it, kill it.

People who are eligible for the flu vaccine this year include:

- adults aged 65 and over
- adults aged 18 to 64 with a long term health condition
- children aged 2 to 3 at their GP practice
- school children in years reception, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- pregnant women
- health and social care workers
- carers
- morbidly obese people

1. [Summary of data to support the choice of influenza vaccination for adults in primary care](#) is available online.
2. Adults with chronic conditions need the flu vaccine because people with respiratory diseases like COPD, emphysema or asthma are seven times more likely to die if they catch flu, and people with cardiovascular problems like chronic heart disease or angina, or have had a stroke, are 11 times more likely to die. The risk is far worse for those with chronic liver disease, who are 48 times more likely to die if they get flu. (Source: [Green Book chapter 19](#))
3. Flu is a viral infection that is spread through coughs and sneezes. Most people recover with rest in a week, but people with chronic conditions or who are over 65 should call NHS 111. Doctors may prescribe antivirals in some cases which can help speed up recovery but is not a cure.
4. There is no cure for flu. Getting the vaccine if you are eligible and practising good hand hygiene is the best way to prevent yourself from getting flu.
5. The flu vaccine typically becomes available in early October. The vaccine is offered through local GPs and pharmacies.
6. We cannot predict with certainty which strains will circulate in the UK this winter. The WHO makes recommendations for the composition of the northern hemisphere flu vaccine every year; and this is published six months in advance to allow for vaccine production times.
7. The adjuvanted aTIV vaccine which PHE and the NHS are recommending this year for people aged 65 and over was licenced for use in this age group in September 2017. It has previously been used in other countries.

Help Us Help You

'Help Us Help You' is an overarching brand which unifies a family of campaigns incorporating messages about flu, staying well in winter, NHS11, pharmacy and GP extended hours. The campaigns will consist of TV, radio and digital advertising supported by search and partnership activity and will be targeted to pregnant women, parents of children aged 2 to 3 and people with long-term conditions.

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[News story: Eddystone and Red Eagle report published](#)



MAIB's report of the unintentional release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from fixed fire-extinguishing system on board the roll on, roll off (ro-ro) cargo vessel Eddystone in June 2016 and a similar incident on board the ro-ro passenger

ferry Red Eagle in July 2017, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendation made: [read more](#).

Published 12 September 2018