

Farm payment reforms “represent a handful of lifeboats launched in the face of an oncoming tsunami”



Green Party

26 January 2023

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay responds to the government’s farming payment reform announcement [1].

Adrian Ramsay says:

“The government’s long-delayed replacement for EU farm payments represents an admission of failure.

“Government has failed to grasp the scale of the nature emergency, the climate emergency and the food poverty emergency. These seismic crises threaten the very existence of our farmers and the security of our food supply.

“Never has farming been more important and yet the government has yet again failed to grasp the opportunity to make the radical yet pragmatic reforms that would help the agricultural sector meet its environmental obligations.

“Farming and food produce nearly one-third of greenhouse gases and are the biggest driver of wildlife loss. Rising food prices worsen the cost-of-living catastrophe.

“The Green Party’s joined-up vision would use the billions of pounds we already spend in subsidies to tackle these related crises, and ensure farmers are valued and supported.

“For instance, we would refocus farm subsidies to help farmers transition to more sustainable, diverse and environmentally friendly forms of land use, including organic farming, agroforestry and mixed farming, and away from intensive livestock farming.

“We would provide farmers with grants to allow replacement of old high-emitting carbon farming machinery with low carbon machinery, and we would legislate to give farmers greater security of tenure, so that they can invest in sustainable improvements.

“The government’s national food strategy ignored the recommendations of its own advisers [2] and we ended up with a fragmented and diluted response to the needs of farmers and consumers. Now, after months of unforgivable delay, we have a repeat performance on payments.

“Farmers want to do the right thing for climate and nature – but they need a vision, and they need sensible, targeted support – and that is what is missing. Too many of the small, innovative farmers are already on the brink of bankruptcy.

“Of the 280 measures announced today, there are a few welcome individual steps, but they do not lead to a sustainable future. They represent a handful of lifeboats launched in the face of an oncoming tsunami.”

NOTES:

[1]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/therese-coffey-farmers-central-to-food-production-and-environmental-action>

[2]

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/13/food-plan-for-england-condemned-by-its-own-lead-adviser>

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