

Growing our food and farming industry

48 years in the Common Agricultural Policy did considerable damage to U.K. farming, and led to a sharp decline in the proportion of temperate food we grow for ourselves.

The BSE disease was used by the EU to help shrink our beef herds by prolonged bans after the disease had gone.

The U.K. was kept short of milk quota, forcing us to import milk or milk based value added products like yoghurt and cheese.

Grants were given to get the U.K. to grub up orchards to be replaced by French and Spanish imported fruit.

The Dutch flower industry had advantages which took out much U.K. production.

The Spanish vegetable industry took market shares away from U.K. market gardens.

Now we are out of the EU the U.K. could replicate some of the subsidies, favourable pricing, lower energy costs and regulations that have benefitted continental competitors to U.K. growers. The farming budget needs to be reorganised away from granting subsidies to landowners not to farm to rewarding and supporting those who will invest in more U.K. food production. Modern vegetable and fruit growing can be done in controlled conditions minimising water and feed inputs, and protecting crops from weather and insect and animal attacks. This takes investment which the agriculture budget could assist with.

Growing more at home should also satisfy the greens, as it will mean less CO₂ generated by all those transport movements to import bulky food items and keep much of it refrigerated on the journey. It would mean growing less in countries with bad water shortages.