

Press release: PM: We will deliver a farming policy which supports agriculture and improves the environment

The UK will maintain environmental protections, safeguard animal welfare and support the production of high quality food, the Prime Minister will say tomorrow as she meets farmers and food producers at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanelwedd, Powys.

Theresa May will set out the government's plans for a post-Brexit farming policy which works for farmers and food producers, while improving the environment, by replacing the EU's Common Agricultural Policy – which awards subsidies based on the amount of land farmed – with a new system of public money for public goods.

In a roundtable with farmers and agricultural organisations including the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, Farmers Union Wales, NFU Cymru and the CLA, the Prime Minister will also reiterate her commitment to maintaining current funding levels until the end of this Parliament to ensure farmers have the certainty they need to plan for their business.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

This Government is committed to supporting the half a million people who work in agriculture and growing our world leading food and drinks sector, which contributes over £100 billion to the UK economy. But we also need to protect the farmed environment for future generations.

Leaving the EU presents us with a unique opportunity to transform our food, farming and environmental policies so we can have a healthy and prosperous agricultural industry that is fit for the future, and helps us to leave the environment in a better place than we found it.

Scrapping the Common Agricultural Policy, and introducing a simpler system which provides funds in return for public goods, like improving water quality, reducing emissions and planting wild flower meadows to boost biodiversity, is fundamental to our new approach.

I want to make the most of the freedoms provided by Brexit to design a new scheme that is less bureaucratic, and does away with the overly prescriptive information farmers currently have to provide to apply for grants.

I commend our hard working farmers up and down the country, and here in Wales, who deserve better than the fundamentally flawed CAP system. That is why I want to hear from them today about what they need so we deliver a farming policy which supports the whole industry.

And while our proposals are for England only, I look forward to working with the Farming unions, Welsh Government and stakeholders to best serve our farmers here as they develop a scheme specific to Wales.

During her visit the Prime Minister will also meet with the Wales Young Farmers Club, and stall-holders in the Food Hall, sponsored by Food is GREAT, alongside setting out measures from the 25 Year Environment Plan to protect the nation's countryside and steps to bring forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years.

Press release: 44 mile public path opens up North East coastline

Natural England will today open the latest stretch of the [England Coast Path](#), giving walkers uninterrupted access to 44 miles of beautiful coastline between South Bents and Amble and providing a boost for the local economy.

With walking one of the most popular pastimes at the coast, Tyneside and Northumberland's first open section of the England Coast Path will enable people to explore the coast around the river Tyne and into Northumberland, linking the wild beaches and dunes of Druridge Bay to the resorts and ports further south.

Visitors and locals will find improved access and signposting along the route to allow them to enjoy numerous towns, villages and historic sites such as North Shields, Whitley Bay and Druridge Bay. Walkers will also be able to access [11 bathing waters](#), eight of which are rated as 'excellent' including Blyth's South Beach.

The South Tyneside, North Tyneside and Northumberland stretch is the tenth section of Natural England's flagship England Coast Path project to open and offers local shops, pubs and hotels the opportunity to benefit from the £381 million spent each year by visitors to English coastal paths.

It coincides with new data from Natural England, showing that over 29 million leisure walking trips took place on English coastal paths in 2017 – supporting over 6,000 full time jobs.

Rural Minister Lord Gardiner, who is attending today's event at Souter Lighthouse, said:

England's stunning coastline is a national treasure. The England Coast Path is already playing a significant role in opening up access to our most spectacular sites, ensuring sensitivity to the environment while making a valuable contribution to our rural economy.

With Northumberland home to some of the country's most breath-taking coastal scenery, the new path makes it easy for all to access this beautiful area.

Natural England Chairman Andrew Sells said:

The England Coast Path brings people closer to our magnificent wildlife, landscapes and seascapes. I am delighted that it has now reached Northumberland – one of our most beautiful and unspoiled counties.

South Bents to Amble is the tenth stretch to open and a significant milestone in our ambition to create the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world.

The new path takes account of the area's important coastal habitats, and was designed to complement the existing trails and management in place, providing a clear, well maintained and high quality route, whilst ensuring that the area's important bird species are safeguarded. An example of this is on the north bank of the river Blyth where the route was designed to avoid sensitive roost areas.

Natural England is working to establish a 2,700-mile path around the entire English coastline and work is now under way on all of the route. When completed, it will be the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world. It will also become a National Trail – the nation's finest and most popular long-distance paths.

The England Coast Path plays a vital role in helping the government fulfil its aim to connect more people with the environment and nature, as outlined in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#).

Press release: Yellow fish remind people how they can reduce sea pollution

The Environment Agency is using yellow fish to alert people on the Kent coast to what happens when they pour fat, oils or other waste down their yard drains or road gullies.

Teams visited Walpole Bay in Margate and Viking Bay in Broadstairs where they painted yellow fish symbols next to drains carrying surface water into the sea. Their aim is to remind residents and business owners how pollution can travel directly into the ocean.

Working with Thanet District Council and Southern Water, on 13 July they stencilled the fish symbols on and around the covers of road drains along the towns' promenades.

It is part of a national campaign by the Environment Agency to raise awareness of the importance of keeping the country's bathing waters clean, supported by the mantra 'Only rain down the drain!'

Initiatives like these have contributed to the great strides made in improving the quality of bathing water over the last 20 years. It is thanks to the hard work of the Environment Agency, Defra, water companies, councils, local communities, farmers and environmental organisations.

The Environment Agency continues to remind the public that everyone has an important part to play in protecting the seas and improving the quality of the country's bathing waters.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

It has been great having the opportunity to work with local people, who also use and enjoy the local bathing waters. The Yellow Fish campaign is a simple and effective way of showing everyone that by making small changes we can all help to reduce pollution entering our rivers and seas which in turn helps to keep the local bathing water clean.

Councillor Jason Savage, Deputy Leader for Thanet District Council, said:

Our partnership work with the Environment Agency and Southern Water has enabled us to highlight the important role that residents, visitors and businesses play in keeping Thanet's beaches clean. The Yellow Fish campaign is a fantastic way to help get this message across.

Rob Butson, Bathing Water Manager for Southern Water, said:

It's vital we all work together to protect our beautiful beaches and bathing waters. Campaigns like Yellow Fish really help engage the community and spread the message that only rain should go down the drain!

We're proud to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Council to help play our part in improving bathing water quality across our region.

Press release: Poultry keepers urged to be vigilant of Newcastle Disease

Poultry keepers across the United Kingdom have been urged to be vigilant of [Newcastle Disease](#) following reported cases in flocks across Europe.

Recent cases in Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg have led to [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#) experts to advise that the risk of the disease in UK flocks has risen from 'low' to 'medium'.

Newcastle Disease is caused by a virulent strain of paramyxovirus and can be spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected birds. It can cause severe losses in certain poultry species, including:

- commercial and specialist breeds
- pet chickens
- other captive birds, including racing pigeons.

[Public Health England](#) advises the risk of Newcastle Disease affecting people is very low.

Christine Middlemiss, UK Chief Veterinary Officer, said:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency experts have advised that the risk of disease has risen to 'medium' following reports of Newcastle Disease in mainland Europe.

I urge all poultry keepers – whether of commercial, smallholder flocks or specialist breeds or pet chickens – to remain vigilant to the clinical signs of this disease, and urge them to put in place strong biosecurity measures to ensure the health and welfare of their birds.

Poultry species that are affected by Newcastle Disease may show the following clinical signs:

- Respiratory distress, such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling and rattling
- Nervous behaviour, such as tremors, paralysis and twisting of the neck
- Unusually watery faeces that are yellowish-green in colour
- Depression and a lack of appetite
- Produce fewer eggs which could be misshapen and soft-shelled

If a bird keeper suspects that their birds may be infected with Newcastle Disease, they should contact their private vet and the APHA immediately.

There are several precautions poultry keepers can follow to further minimise the risk to their birds, including:

- Ensuring, where appropriate, their birds have been vaccinated against the disease.
- Implementing strict biosecurity measures on their premises, including using disinfectant foot baths and reducing visitors to the birds.
- Thoroughly cleaning vehicles, equipment, clothing, boots that have been in contact with birds.
- Feeding and watering should be under cover and kept away from wild birds.
- Washing their hands with soap and water after handling their own birds.

For APHA contact details visit [here](#)

Corporate report: Accord between Forestry Commission (England) and National Parks England

The Accord, a statement of a shared ambition between the Forestry Commission and National Parks England, will bring together decision makers to ensure woodland is managed sustainably and in line with a natural capital approach. This will take into account the environmental, social and economic impact of trees and forests and the statutory purposes of our National Parks.