

New report shows pilot scheme farmers boost environment outcomes

The first major assessment of a “Payment by Results” pilot has shown the project is boosting local wildlife and motivating farmers to develop nature-friendly practices.

Unlike the prescriptive approach of the current national agri-environment schemes – which pay a flat rate for actions taken rather than results achieved – the 34 farmers taking part in the Payment by Results pilot have had the freedom to choose how they manage their land to enhance the environment.

A new report published today by project partners Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority shows these farmers have recorded 43% increased score for number and diversity of seed bearing plants than nearby sites under conventional funding schemes – providing a rich food source for farmland birds during the winter months.

The trial areas for species-rich meadows also recorded a greater number of important plant species, such as pignut and eyebright, benefitting bumblebees, butterflies and birds. Participating farmers have also reported they felt more motivated to manage their land in a way that enhances the environment.

The report concludes the result-based approach has “considerable potential” for the design of the future Environmental Land Management scheme – the government’s future vision for farming outside the EU.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

I am greatly encouraged by how well the results-based approach has worked under this pilot. It sends a clear message we should be giving farmers and land managers greater flexibility and autonomy to deliver the best results for the environment that go hand in hand with their farming business.

For too long our farmers have been subject to the red tape of the Common Agricultural Policy which has impeded innovation and stifled productivity. As we leave the EU we have a fantastic opportunity to create an ambitious new system that rewards farmers for public goods we all value.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

Today’s report shows that if we support our farmers with the right kind of training and guidance then we can achieve really positive

results for wildlife. Farmers must be front and centre in efforts to restore the natural environment and these results reveal huge potential for the future.

Meeting farmers in Wensleydale today I have been struck by the resourcefulness and passion this pilot has inspired to deliver for nature on working farms.

The results-based approach has seen clear objectives being met and exceeded by farmers who have worked in the way that works best for their whole farm.

The pilot was rolled out at the start of 2016 across two areas in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire and in Norfolk and Suffolk in the east of England with clear environmental objectives to match the needs of each area. Through the pilot, advice and training sessions have been provided by Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Deputy Chair and farmer Neil Heseltine said:

This report shows that a “payment by results” approach can produce fantastic environmental benefits as well as strengthening trust between farmers and government agencies.

The project has demonstrated just how important it is to have trusted local advisers who can provide the training and support to empower and incentivise the farmers, enabling them to farm in a way that’s a success for their business and for nature.

We’re absolutely delighted that Defra is now directly funding an extension of the original EU-funded pilots for a further two and a half years. That will give time to refine the approach and to use the expertise of farmers in the Yorkshire Dales to help to shape future environmental policy.

Home Office announces first wave of 20,000 police officer uplift

The Home Office has today confirmed the officer recruitment targets for every police force in England and Wales for the first year of the unprecedented drive to increase their ranks by 20,000 over the next three years.

Strengthening police numbers is a priority for the Government, which is

providing £750 million to support forces to recruit up to 6,000 additional officers onto our streets by the end of 2020-21, the first stage in this new uplift. This is thanks to the additional funding announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review.

The Home Secretary set out her vision for policing yesterday (8th October) when she chaired the second meeting of the National Policing Board, involving representatives of frontline officers and police leaders.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The public are clear they want to see more police officers on their streets, whether they live in the city or the countryside.

This is the people's priority and it is exactly what the Government is delivering.

Every single police force in England and Wales will be able to recruit additional officers this year to help keep all of our communities safer.

All officers recruited as part of the 20,000 uplift will be additional to those hired to fill existing vacancies. They are also on top of the extra officers already being recruited because of the £1 billion increase in police funding for 2019-20, which includes money from council tax and for serious violence.

Government funding for recruitment in 2020-21 will cover all associated costs, including training and kit.

The National Policing Board, set up by the Prime Minister in July to drive progress in recruitment and other major policing issues, yesterday heard that all forces are accelerating their recruitment already recruiting and the website for the campaign, 'Be a Force For All', has been visited more than 215,000 times.

The Police Federation and the Police Superintendents' Association attended the board for the first time, honouring the Home Secretary's commitment for front line officers and their senior managers to be represented.

John Apter, National Chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales said:

Yesterday's meeting was constructive and it is important that we, as the largest police staff association, were at the table to ensure our members were represented.

Investment in policing is long overdue and for the first time we now have the actual number of officers each local force will increase by in the next year.

These figures have been based on the current funding formula models and while this method is not perfect, I accept it is the only solution available to deliver the numbers quickly in year one.

We now need to ensure that the formula is revisited for future years to ensure a fairer allocation of officers across all forces, but this is certainly a positive start and will provide a much-needed boost to my members and the communities they serve.

Today's recruitment targets announcement follows the establishment of a £25 million Safer Streets Fund.

Police and Crime Commissioners can bid for funding to prevent burglary and theft in crime hotspots through initiatives that could include interventions to improve home security, such as installing better locks and gating alleyways, and making streets better lit at night, for example.

It also follows the Home Office extending a pilot to make it simpler for forces to use Section 60 serious violence stop and search powers and announcing a £20 million package of actions cracking down on county lines drug gangs.

The Home Office has also announced £10 million of funding to increase the number of officers carrying Taser to keep themselves and the public safe and confirmed plans for a police covenant will focus on the physical protection of officers, their health and wellbeing and support for their families.

Police force area	First year recruitment target
Avon & Somerset	137
Bedfordshire	54
Cambridgeshire	62
Cheshire	90
Cleveland	72
Cumbria	51
Derbyshire	85
Devon & Cornwall	141
Dorset	50
Durham	68
Dyfed-Powys	42
Essex	135
Gloucestershire	46
Greater Manchester	347
Gwent	62
Hampshire	156
Hertfordshire	91
Humberside	97
Kent	147
Lancashire	153

Police force area	First year recruitment target
Leicestershire	89
Lincolnshire	50
London, City of	44
Merseyside	200
Metropolitan Police	1,369
Norfolk	67
North Wales	62
North Yorkshire	58
Northamptonshire	57
Northumbria	185
Nottinghamshire	107
South Wales	136
South Yorkshire	151
Staffordshire	90
Suffolk	54
Surrey	78
Sussex	129
Thames Valley	183
Warwickshire	41
West Mercia	93
West Midlands	366
West Yorkshire	256
Wiltshire	49
England and Wales total	6,000

Trade Secretary lays groundwork for independent seat at WTO

The UK is finalising preparations to become an independent member of World Trade Organization (WTO), taking back control of its trade policy for the first time in 46 years.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss is attending the WTO Public Forum in Geneva today (Wednesday 9 October) to meet with business leaders and senior trade figures including WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo.

Ms Truss will speak at an event hosted by the International Chamber Commerce, attended by British businesses including BT and Anglo American, and representative organisations like Make UK.

She will urge British business leaders to engage more with the WTO to

continue improving the global trade rules and ensure the organisation continues to support an open and predictable global trading environment.

The government's top priorities at the WTO after Brexit include working with other members to agree new rules on issues that matter to British businesses and households, like digital trade; improving transparency so that British businesses have the information they need on other members' trade rules; and working to make sure trade disputes are settled in the most effective way to provide certainty and stability for world trade.

The UK has been amongst the most vocal supporters of free trade and has made the case for WTO reform at both the G7 and G20 this year.

Speaking ahead of the visit, International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

After 46 years, Britain is on the verge of taking back control of its trade policy and will take its own seat at the table. We live in an increasingly protectionist world and it is vitally important – now more than ever – that Britain and other WTO members fly the flag for free trade.

Britain is back and we will be undeterred in making the case for lower barriers to trade, for lower tariffs and the rules-based system. This approach will see our citizens across the globe prosper.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss' first WTO address, at the International Chamber of Commerce Global Dialogue on Trade Reform.

Britain & free trade

We know that free trade, facilitated by the rules based multilateral trading system, is an engine of global growth and prosperity.

When the UK leaves the EU later this month, we will have a golden opportunity to determine our own trade policy for the first time in almost half a century and retake our seat at the WTO as a fully independent, sovereign nation.

And we will use our new-found freedom to champion free, fair, rules-based international trade with the WTO at its centre.

Because there is no greater ally of the WTO than the United Kingdom.

From the repeal of the corn laws in 1846, to hosting the world's first industrial revolution, to being one of the original signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, signed here in Geneva in 1947, the UK has long been a champion of free trade and trade liberalisation.

For those of you worried about where we might have been for 45 years, let me reassure you Britain is back.

Some may be content to live in a world of rising trade tensions and tit-for-tat tariffs, a world in which, for example, the good people of America are deprived of the chance to sample excellent Scotch whisky.

But this is not a world that I want to see, and when we take our independent seat around the WTO table, I can assure you we will be unapologetic in fighting the forces of protectionism, in favour of genuinely free trade.

Reforming and modernising the WTO

Since its inception, the WTO has been the ultimate heavyweight freedom fighter for a multilateral approach to trade liberalisation and a more prosperous world.

But though successful in many bouts, the WTO now needs to prepare for the new battles of the modern globalised world.

I would like to see reform of the dispute settlement system, and I was encouraged that at both of the major G20 and G7 summits this year, world leaders committed to addressing this issue.

President Trump has said he wants the WTO to modernise, and I agree. We must work together to resolve the Appellate Body impasse and we fully support the Walker process aimed at finding solutions that all members can be happy with.

In particular, we should look to ensure that time limits are met for Appellate Body adjudication on appeals to avoid future unauthorised overrunning of cases.

And clarification must be made that the Appellate Body's role in jurisdiction should be constrained to issues of law, and not drift into reviewing issues of fact.

There is also an urgent need to strengthen the rules on industrial subsidies, state-owned enterprises and forced technology transfer. Addressing these issues will not only level the playing field for the vast majority of member states, it will help tackle the underlying tensions which threaten the survival of our global trading norms.

And as the world's second largest services exporter, and Europe's preeminent destination for tech investment, it will come as no surprise that the UK is particularly interested in the WTO's work in services and digital trade.

We believe it is high time to reform digital trade rules so that they are fit for the 21st century, reducing restrictions to market access to support e-commerce and ensure the free flow of data across borders.

We also want to see progress in the fisheries subsidies negotiation, tackling the causes of illegal fisheries, over-fishing and overcapacity.

As an island nation of seafarers and fishermen, the UK has a strong interest in this area. Indeed, one of the key arguments made for leaving the EU was to reinvigorate our fishing industries— and we want to see fair and effective

rules in force.

We also intend to work with all WTO Members to foster greater transparency in our global system, as part of our commitment to free and fair cross-border trade.

We would like to see more progress on domestic regulation in services, investment facilitation, supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and especially on advancing e-commerce.

And we intend to engage meaningfully with our partners in each of these areas prior to the next WTO Ministerial Conference in Kazakhstan in June 2020.

Delivering on our aims

So there is much to do – and in the UK, the WTO has a steadfast friend. Britain can be relied upon to be a strong voice in all these discussions: both here in Geneva and through our global networks.

We will be leveraging our strong bilateral relationships with other major world powers and we will be using our leading roles in international fora to drive the change we want to see.

For instance, tomorrow in London, I will be making the case that the Commonwealth can be a powerful voice in supporting the rules-based international system.

The Commonwealth's 53 member states comprise 2.4 billion people with a shared heritage, shared values and a shared desire to drive prosperity. I believe this historic organisation represents a real opportunity to remake the case for free trade within the multilateral system that we all depend on.

Working together

It is up to all of us not to pull our punches, and fight the siren calls of protectionism with all our might.

But Governments can't do it alone. That's why the work of the International Chamber of Commerce is vital in championing this cause.

Whether it's setting rules for buyers and sellers around the world; providing leadership on the biggest global issues like climate change and sustainability; or your important role as the leading arbitration institution, the ICC is on the front line in the world's trading battles.

It will take time, energy and determination, but by working together, I am confident we can deliver a knockout blow to the forces of protectionism and usher in a new golden era of free trade. In all these fights ahead, Britain is in your corner.

PM meeting with President Sassoli of the European Parliament: 8 October 2019

The Prime Minister welcomed President Sassoli of the European Parliament to Downing Street this afternoon.

The Prime Minister stated his preference for leaving the EU with a deal. He emphasised that the UK's proposal represents a significant step and a reasonable compromise which respects the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the Single Market and provides for democratic consent in Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister set out how there is little time remaining to negotiate a new agreement, and so we need to move quickly and work together to agree a deal. He reiterated that if we did not reach an agreement then the UK will leave without a deal on the 31st October.

The leaders discussed the need to approve any revised Withdrawal Agreement in both parliaments.

The Prime Minister also spoke about the generous offer that the UK has made on citizens' rights and called for other member states to reciprocate the offer for UK citizens living in the EU.

Minister for the Middle East's comments on proposed Turkish military action in north east Syria

Speaking in Parliament earlier today Minister for the Middle East, Dr Murrison, made the following remarks:

We have been consistently clear with Turkey that unilateral military action must be avoided as it would destabilise the region and threaten efforts to secure the lasting defeat of Daesh.

As members of the Global Coalition, our focus remains on securing the enduring defeat of Daesh.

We will continue to work with the US and other international partners to this end.