

# Flagship Agriculture Bill moves a step forward

Legislation that will transform British farming moves a step forward today, with Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers leading the Second Reading of the Agriculture Bill in the House of Commons.

The Bill was introduced on 16 January and will replace the EU's flawed Common Agriculture Policy with a system where farmers are rewarded with public money for public goods, such as cleaner air and water or improved animal welfare standards. At the same time, it will help to boost productivity and maximise the potential of land for sustainable food production.

Today, just under three weeks after the Bill was introduced, the primary legislation is being brought forward for Second Reading in the House of Commons. This is the first opportunity for the new Bill to be debated by MPs.

The Environment Secretary will open the session with a speech setting out how the Bill will help safeguard nature in England and protect our countryside, with the future Environmental Land Management scheme already being tested and trialled with farmers in many parts of the country.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

I am delighted to move the Agriculture Bill forward to Second Reading, for debate and discussion in the House of Commons.

Today is the first working day after our historic exit from the EU and this Bill will enable us to seize the one of the most important opportunities from being an independent nation – the freedom to write our own rules about how we farm and manage our land.

For farmers, it will signal that the Common Agricultural Policy is on the way out, to be replaced by a better system of public money for public goods. I look forward to working with parliamentary colleagues to progress this Bill and write our new agricultural legislation into law.

The Second Reading of the Agriculture Bill will conclude this evening. The Bill will then go to Committee Stage, with Report Stage and Third Reading following this, before transferring to the House of Lords for further scrutiny.

Please see GOV.UK for further detail on the [Agriculture Bill](#).

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# Parents urged to look beyond apprenticeship misconceptions

Too many parents are unaware of the range of opportunities apprenticeships can offer according to a new survey by the parent website Mumsnet.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has urged parents to move on from outdated stereotypes when giving their children advice about their future career paths so they are not missing out on the chance to pursue their dream career.

According to the [research](#) published today to mark the start of National Apprenticeship Week, more than 60% of parents of children aged 13-18 surveyed said they were concerned their child would be stuck 'making the tea' if they were to choose an apprenticeship.

Other findings highlighted that more than a third (35%) of parents said they still associate apprenticeships with manual jobs, like plumbing and carpentry, and 45% are unaware they go right up to degree level.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This research shows that outdated views are holding young people back from pursuing their dream career.

Every parent wants the best for their children and when they ask you for advice about their futures, it's incredibly daunting. But I know that when I'm asked for help by my children I will absolutely encourage them to consider an apprenticeship.

So as we celebrate the life changing potential of apprenticeships I would urge all parents to do the same and look beyond stereotypes and embrace every opportunity.

Mumsnet Founder Justine Roberts said:

Our research shows that parents on Mumsnet are interested in the idea of apprenticeships and don't dismiss them out of hand, but some of our users are not very confident about explaining the opportunities on offer, and in some cases perhaps haven't yet fully understood the range of qualifications and the doors they can open with employers.

The world of education and training has changed a great deal over the past ten years and it's obviously taking some of us a little while to catch up – on the bright side, you could say this is a great example of lifelong learning.

48% of parents surveyed said they weren't worried about the future earning potential of their child should they choose an apprenticeship, but there were still concerns with almost half (45%) saying they didn't think apprenticeships were valued as highly as a university degree by the UK's top employers.

The government has transformed apprenticeships, working closely with top employers like BT, BAE Systems and Greene King to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities so that apprentices gain the skills they need to secure a great job and that provide industry with the workforce they need now and in the future.

Apprenticeships offer the chance to kick start a well-paid career in a wide range of exciting professions such as cyber security and aerospace engineering with options to train right up to degree level. There are many positive benefits apprenticeships are bringing to individuals and workplaces across the country. Research has highlighted that:

Lynne Craddock, whose daughter Lucy is a Data Science Degree Apprentice, added:

My daughter is able to get real experience, build her confidence, and network with professionals in the industry at a very young age. She's at the forefront of technology with brilliant career prospects, paying for her own car and able to save for her first house since she was 18.

I was very nervous at first as I didn't know how apprenticeships worked. She was leaving home, having to do everything by herself – and the process was very hard – but when she started working I knew it was the best decision she ever made. My advice is to other parents is to give your children a lot of support, especially when they are not always successful in applying. It's a great opportunity which means it takes a lot of work and resilience to get through.

Neha Swaly, Senior manager and apprenticeship ambassador, Accenture said:

To any parents whose children are thinking about taking an apprenticeship, I'd say support them. Your child will not only have the opportunity to gain real experience working in an organisation, but will also embark on an educational journey. If they chose one of the degree apprenticeships, they will also gain a degree from a UK university as well. An apprenticeship opens up a number of opportunities for your child, and as an organisation we have seen our apprentices grow and succeed in their careers, creating their own paths and identities as they progress.

To help challenge outdated attitudes, last year the government launched the

'Fire It Up' campaign and [website](#) . The campaign aims to overhaul the perception of apprenticeships, and to position them as world-class.

It showcases apprentices who follow their passions, and who have a natural energy and enthusiasm that rubs off on everyone around them.

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## **Bank of England Governor Appointment**

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## **HM The Queen recognises Newfoundlander volunteer with Commonwealth Points of Light award**

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has today recognized Edmonton resident, Aatif Baskanderi, as the Canadian award winner of the Commonwealth Points of Light in honour of his exceptional voluntary service advocating for community cohesion and interfaith understanding.

Inspired by his own experience growing up as a Muslim in Newfoundland, Aatif set out on a journey to recount his story of pluralism and tolerance, sharing with thousands of people a message of social inclusion and the importance of empowering people's unique identity, particularly young people. His tour was documented in a short film 'Salaam B'y – A Story of a Muslim Newfoundlander' which has received global recognition and has been screened in almost 30 cities around the world. Aatif is now sharing his message of kindness in Canadian schools, with his story now part of the school curriculum in Newfoundland.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London 2018, Her Majesty The Queen – as Head of the Commonwealth – is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 53 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country every week.

By sharing these stories of service, the Commonwealth Points of Light awards celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of our time.

Each Commonwealth Point of Light will receive a personalised certificate signed by Her Majesty The Queen as Head of the Commonwealth. The award for Aatif will be presented on 3 February 2020 at McDougall Centre by Her Honour, the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and British Consul General, Caroline Saunders.

Aatif said:

I am honoured to receive this award alongside a group of amazing global community leaders who give their time and effort to make the world a better place. The Points of Light brings to the stage the kindness that is in the world, which is especially needed these days when society seems so fragmented. However, what you find is when you enter these communities, there are countless wonderful people putting kindness to action through all sorts of ways. I have found this as I travelled across Canada and the world, and the Points of Light does just that – highlighting kindness around the world.

Her Honour, the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lt. Governor of Alberta said:

The wonderful Canadian and Commonwealth values of partnership, diversity and understanding that Aatif's film brings to light are a reminder of the strength that comes from communities and nations working together in peace and friendship. His film is something that speaks to us all, and I'm very proud of the work he is doing to share his very important and timely message with audiences around the world.

The Commonwealth is a diverse community of 53 nations that work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace. The Heads of Government meeting brought together leaders from all the 53 Member countries to reaffirm common values, address shared global challenges and agree how to work to create a better future for all citizens, especially young people. Voluntary service is a vital part of this agenda, which is why Her Majesty The Queen has chosen to recognise outstanding volunteers across the Commonwealth in this special way.

Please see Aatif's recognition on the Commonwealth Points of Light website [here](#).

## **Media Contact**

Please contact Alyssa Perron at [alyssa.perron@fco.gov.uk](mailto:alyssa.perron@fco.gov.uk).

## **Further Information**

### **About the Commonwealth Points of Light award**

1. The Points of Light awards recognise outstanding volunteers every day of the week – people whose service is making a difference in their communities and whose story can inspire others to creative innovative solutions to social challenges in their own communities and beyond.
2. Points of Light began in America under President George H. W. Bush and today over 6,000 US Points of Light have been recognised. The scheme has the support of all living US Presidents.
3. Since 2014 the UK Prime Minister has been recognising a daily Point of Light from the UK, with over 1,200 volunteers now recognised.
4. Commonwealth Points of Light is a continuation of this programme with a special series of awards recognising inspirational volunteers throughout the Commonwealth, coinciding with the UK being the Commonwealth's Chair-in-Office of for the next two years. One volunteer from each of the 53 Commonwealth countries was recognised in the days leading up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April 2018. Following the success of this programme, Her Majesty The Queen decided to continue this work and award one volunteer from each Commonwealth country every week.
5. More information, including details of other Commonwealth Points of Light recipients, can be found on the website: [www.pointsoflight.gov.uk](http://www.pointsoflight.gov.uk)

## **About the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**

In April 2018 the UK hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, where leaders from across the Commonwealth gathered in London and Windsor. With the theme of 'Towards a Common Future' they will work to create a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair future for the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens, particularly its young people.

For further information visit [www.chogm2018.org.uk](http://www.chogm2018.org.uk) or follow on Twitter [@commonwealth18](https://twitter.com/commonwealth18).

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## **Party representations**

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