



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Daniel Zeichner MP
Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our Ref: LB00685

3 April 2025

Dear Minister

Re: Family Farm Community Concerns

I recently met with a group of constituents from the farming community and spent time listening to their concerns about the challenges our rural populations face. I wish to share these real-life case studies with you for your deliberation and considered response. Those I met were deeply concerned about the economic, social and environmental impacts of proposed changes in government policy for their individual families and for the farming industry.

Inheritance Tax

██████████ is a 3rd generation farmer with a relatively small amount of land. His 82-year-old father currently owns the farm and intended for it to be passed onto his son. However, they now find themselves in the position of having to potentially sell the farm to pay the future inheritance tax bill. Current income is tied up in assets such as machinery, their annual profit is minimal, and they therefore have no cash reserve to pay a future IHT.

Similarly, ██████████, a sole trader farmer who is 63 and in poor health anticipates a £600,000 IHT bill which her son will be unable to afford without selling the family farm. Even when interest free payments over 10 years are factored in, the very tight profit margins under which the business operates, would mean the farm would no longer be viable.

██████████, a farmer from Brigstock, finds himself in the same position. His father and uncle currently own the farm and could pass to him now, but they are fearful of taking a gamble that if they die within 7 years the farm will no longer be viable in lieu of IHT.

Younger constituents representing Young Farmers voiced additional concerns that only larger corporations or those with cash reserves will be able to buy farmland sold because of unaffordable inheritance tax bills, which will deprive the younger generation of farmers their future, will place the landscape at risk and threaten national food security.

Sudden removal of SFI

██████████, a local family farmer is deeply concerned that hundreds of hours of preparation and planning together with significant financial investment has been lost, due to the sudden removal of SFI for new applications. Some farmers described themselves as 'lucky' as they had submitted their SFI application, others were yet to submit and have now lost hours of labour and future income factored into their long-term business plans.

Imported Goods and Welfare Standards

██████████ farms in Apethorpe and is concerned about welfare standards given the loophole in the law which permits the UK to import cheaper food which does not meet the welfare standards upheld by UK farmers. Other farmers shared this view that it is both unfair and unethical that cheaper products such as oil seed rape are imported, despite being grown using products banned in the UK, which undercuts local farmers and threatens welfare.

I, along with others, have continued to raise these real-life concerns, but Treasury officials seem to have their minds closed to anything other than their own views. In addition, the Treasury analysis of the impact on farmers is heavily disputed by those who face the changes. The NFU have put forward a proposal which will carry the industry with us, and I urge government to seek to find a resolution that will have the support of farmers and reach Treasury aims, like the 'clawback' offer on the table.

I would like to invite you to visit my constituency to meet the rural communities associated with smaller family farms who are genuinely concerned for their future livelihoods and the broader impacts on the farming industry and national food security. My hope is that you will listen to their views and offer reassurances that the impacts on family farms have been duly considered and share mitigation strategies government intends to enact to protect these communities

Yours sincerely



Lee Barron MP
Member of Parliament for Corby and East Northamptonshire