

## Response ID ANON-N63Y-ZYA1-N

Submitted to **Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit**

Submitted on **2018-05-08 15:14:17**

### Introduction

**1 Would you like your response to be confidential?**

No

If you answered Yes to this question please give your reason.:

### Your details

**1 Are you responding as:**

Part of any other type of organisation in an official capacity (e.g. NGO, local authority, community group, university)?

### Your details (continued)

**1 Please tick the box that best describes the organisation:**

Other (please specify)

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)' please describe your organisation in the space provided.:

Rural affairs organisation

**2 What is your name?**

Please respond in the space provided.:

James Somerville-Meikle

**3 What is the name of your organisation?**

Please respond in the space provided.:

Countryside Alliance

**4 Approximately how many people does the organisation represent?**

Please select:

>100,000

**5 What is your job title?**

Please respond in the space provided.:

Political Relations Manager

**6 What is the postcode of your workplace? The postcode will enable us to map the geographic spread of responses.**

Please respond in the space provided.:

SE11 5AN

**7 What region is your workplace in?**

Please select:

England (London)

**8 Is the organisation in a rural or urban area?**

Urban

**9 What is your age?**

Please select:

25-34 years old

**10 What is your gender?**

Please select:

Male

## Reform within CAP

1 Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating the three options which are most appealing to you. Please rank your choices by order of preference (from 1 as your most preferred to 3 as your least preferred):

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating which option is most appealing to you - a. Develop further simplified packages:

3

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating which option is most appealing to you - b. Simplify the application form:

1

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating which option is most appealing to you - c. Expand the online offer:

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating which option is most appealing to you - d. Reduce evidence requirements in the rest of the scheme:

2

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating which option is most appealing to you - e. Other (please specify):

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)' please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

2 Would you like to respond to further questions on reform within CAP?

Yes

## Reform within CAP (continued)

1 How can we improve the delivery of the current Countryside Stewardship scheme and increase uptake by farmers and land managers to help achieve valuable environmental outcomes?

Please respond in the text box provided::

Lack of digital connectivity and skills in the countryside are a major obstacle to simplification of the current CAP, which is why we do not think expanding the online offer should be a priority for the Government at this present time.

The administration of the new agricultural policy, and any changes to the current CAP, must recognise the fact that many farmers are still unable to receive high speed broadband and those who are connected do not always have the skills to be able to use it to full advantage. Applications must be able to be made by post as well as online for as long as universal connectivity is lacking.

It is not just agricultural policy where digital connectivity and skills are needed by farmers. HMRC expect tax returns and PAYE to be completed online, and recruitment and research is increasing done on the internet. Improvements in digital infrastructure must be priority for the Government which is why at this time of change it is essential that we have joined up government delivering connectivity to rural areas. However, in the most recent consultation by Ofcom on 'Improving mobile coverage' we see a contradiction in government policy. The Government in their 5G digital strategy, published at the end of last year, set coverage obligations to be 95 per cent geographic coverage of the UK by the end of 2022 but in Ofcom's consultation coverage targets were set for 92 per cent by 2023.

The Government should be doing more to support the rural economy and communities and this lack of consistency between connectivity targets is unhelpful. The countryside and rural businesses need clarity on coverage delivery not confusion, particularly with the uncertainties created by leaving the EU.

2 Do you have any further comments?

Please respond in the text box provided::

N/A

## An 'agricultural transition'

1 What is the best way of applying reductions to Direct Payments? Please select your preferred option from the following:

a. Apply progressive reductions, with higher percentage reductions applied to amounts in higher payment bands

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please provide views on the payment bands and percentage reductions we should apply::

No comment.

**2 What conditions should be attached to Direct Payments during the 'agricultural transition'? Please select your preferred options from the following:**

b. Retain and simplify cross compliance rules and their enforcement

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your preferences: :

No comment.

**3 Would you like to respond to further questions on reducing Direct Payments?**

No

### **A successful future for farming: farming excellence and profitability**

**1 How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank your top three options by order of preference (from 1 as your most preferred to 3 as your least preferred):**

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - a.

Encouraging benchmarking and farmer-to-farmer learning:

3

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - b.

Working with industry to improve standards and coordination:

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - c. Better access to skills providers and resources:

1

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - d.

Developing formal incentives to encourage training and career development:

2

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - e.

Making Continuing Professional Development (CPD) a condition of any future grants or loans:

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank the following by order of preference - f. Other (please specify):

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

**2 What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve animal and plant health on-farm? Please rank your top three options by order of the biggest issues (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - a. Insufficient access to support and advice:

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - b. Uncertainty about the future and where to target new investment:

2

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - c. Difficulties with securing finance from private lenders:

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - d. Investments in buildings, innovation or new equipment, are prohibitively expensive:

3

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - e. Underlying profitability of the business:

1

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - f. 'Social' issues (such as lack of succession or security of tenure):

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve plant and animal health on-farm? Please rank the below by order of the biggest issues - g. Other (please specify):

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

**3 Would you like to respond to further questions on farming excellence and profitability?**

No

### **A successful future for farming: agricultural technology and research**

**1 What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency? Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - a. Plant and animal breeding and genetics:

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - b. Crop and livestock health and animal welfare:

2

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - c. Data driven smart and precision agriculture:

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - d. Managing resources sustainably, including agro-chemicals:

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - e. Improving environmental performance, including soil health:

3

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - f. Safety and trust in the supply chain:

1

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency?  
Please rank the below in order of importance: - g. Other (please specify):

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

**2 How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? - a. Encouraging a stronger focus on near-market applied agricultural R&D:

3

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? - b. Bringing groups of farms together in research syndicates to deliver practical solutions:

2

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? - c. Accelerating the 'proof of concept' testing of novel approaches to agricultural constraints:

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? - d. Giving the farming industry a greater say in setting the strategic direction for research funding:

1

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? - e. Other (please specify):

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

**3 Would you like to respond to further questions on agricultural technology and research?**

No

### **A successful future for farming: labour - a skilled workforce**

**1 What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - a. Business/financial:**

3

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - b. Risk management:**

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - c. Leadership:**

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - d. Engineering:**

2

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - e. Manufacturing:**

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - f. Research:**

**What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? - g. Other (please specify):**

1

**If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::**

Digital skills

**Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::**

**2 Would you like to respond to further questions on labour - a skilled workforce?**

Yes

## **Labour - a skilled workforce (continued)**

**1 What can industry do to help make agriculture and land management a great career choice?**

**Please respond in the text box provided::**

Promoting outdoor education is an important way in which young people, who perhaps do not come from a farming background, can explore career paths in land-based employment.

Outdoor learning is good for children and young people. It helps them gain a practical understanding of the world around them, build self-confidence, test their abilities, take sensible risks, and develop a sense of responsibility and tolerance to places and people.

The body of research showing the considerable health and well-being benefits of spending time in natural green spaces is growing. In addition, outdoor learning can help children and young people understand subjects, like maths or science, through real world examples and first-hand experience. While academic achievement is important, outdoor education can play a significant role helping pupils develop soft skills like good communication, team work and leadership that are essential to a well-rounded education vital for life beyond the classroom. Yet the countryside still remains an enigma for far too many.

The reasons for this are complex but include a lack of opportunity to visit the countryside and parental fears around child safety. It is understandable that every parent wants their child to be safe, but reluctance to let them explore natural places in their leisure time is limiting their exposure to the countryside and reducing their hands on knowledge of the natural world around them.

For these reasons we believe outdoor education must be included in the National Curriculum to give all children the chance to experience the considerable health, personal development and educational benefits of outdoor learning. We also believe outdoor education has a major role to play in reconnecting children and young people with the countryside and the many food and natural resources it provides. By gaining a practical understanding of the countryside, they are engaged in protecting its future and more likely to consider land-based employment opportunities.

There are some really exciting career opportunities in the land based and rural sector and it is important the Government gives it the right support to ensure these careers are valued.

The Countryside Alliance is demonstrating our commitment to ensuring there are career opportunities in the land based sector by securing the future of gamekeeping. We are working to develop an apprenticeship for new underkeepers as it is vital for the future of shooting that we have a high quality apprenticeship to help young people get started. Our proposal will ensure that the new apprenticeship reflects the skills employers want their gamekeepers to have. Gamekeeping rewards anyone with a passion for conservation and the countryside and the apprenticeship standards will provide an excellent opportunity for ambitious individuals to develop appropriate skills.

**2 How can government support industry to build the resilience of the agricultural sector to meet labour demand?**

**Please respond in the text box provided::**

More and more of the economic and social life of our country is moving online. Access to high speed broadband is now widely recognised as an essential service alongside water, electricity and gas. It has been a challenge to this, and previous, governments to roll out broadband in the countryside.

However, though investing in digital infrastructure is of great importance, it is not in itself enough to ensure the future prosperity of rural communities. A key challenge that needs to be addressed is the lack of skills and confidence to use digital technology within rural communities. This is a key stumbling block that unless addressed will prevent rural communities from making the most of the opportunities that will come about as a result of the Government's investment in digital infrastructure.

Digital skills are now necessary life skills and we must aspire for the whole population, including farmers and land managers, to achieve the level of digital literacy needed to fully participate in social and economic life. A parliamentary inquiry in 2016 reported that "there is a digital divide where up to 12.6 million of the adult UK population lack basic digital skills. An estimated 5.8 million people have never used the internet at all. This digital skills gap is costing the UK economy an estimated £63 billion a year in lost additional GDP."

Despite the aim of creating a leading digital economy, a Government report in 2016 concluded that "currently, 72% of large companies and 49% of SMEs are suffering tech skill gaps... There is an increasing range of activities and occupations where digital skills are needed but supply is not adequate."

The reality is that our social and economic life is moving online faster than people are able to use the internet. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the countryside. In order to prevent the digital divide between town and country growing ever wider we must address how this exclusion can be tackled, and challenge whether "digital by default" is the best approach.

The Government has committed public money through the Digital Economy Act to provide basic digital skills training to adults in England who need it. However, the question still remains about how this training is going to be delivered, particularly in rural areas.

The Government needs to stop seeing the digital skills agenda as a "fringe issue", if it is not addressed then the Government will not achieve the results it desires through its investment into digital infrastructure. We need a coherent strategy for tackling the deficiency of digital skills as it is vital that those who live and work in the countryside have the confidence and the skills to realise the opportunities there will be in a post-Brexit world.

Developing a clear strategy for taking forward the digital skills agenda may not be as sexy as expanding "full-fibre connections" and 5G but without one the Government will fall well short in its goals for our rural communities.

**3 Do you have any further comments?**

**Please respond in the text box provided::**

N/A

**Public money for public goods**

**1 Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? Please rank your top three options by order of importance:**

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - a.**

**Improved soil health:**

2

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - b.**

**Improved water quality:**

3

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - c.**

**Better air quality:**

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - d.**

**Increased biodiversity:**

1

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - e.**

**Climate change mitigation:**

**Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - f.**

**Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment:**

**Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::**

**2 Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support?**

**Please rank your top three options by order of importance:**

**Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - a. World-class animal welfare:**

Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - b. High animal health standards:

3

Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - c. Protection of crops, tree, plant and bee health:

Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - d. Improved productivity and competitiveness:

2

Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - e. Preserving rural resilience and traditional farming and landscapes in the uplands:

1

Of the other options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? - f. Public access to the countryside:

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences: :

**3 Are there any other public goods which you think the government should support?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

We believe there is an argument to be made for including certain types of food production within the definition of public good, and we are disappointed that the Government has not allowed proper consideration of this as part of the consultation.

## Enhancing our environment

**1 From the list below, please select which outcomes would be best achieved by incentivising action across a number of farms or other land parcels in a future environmental land management system:**

b. Water quality, c. Flood mitigation, d. Habitat restoration

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)' please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your preferences::

**2 Would you like to respond to further questions on enhancing our environment?**

No

## Fulfilling our responsibility to animals

**1 Do you think there is a strong case for government funding pilots and other schemes which incentivise and deliver improved welfare?**

Yes

Please give a short explanation as to your preference::

**2 Should government set further standards to ensure greater consistency and understanding of welfare information at the point of purchase? Please indicate a single preference from the below options:**

b. Yes, as long as it does not present an unreasonable burden to farmers

If you have answered 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your preference. If you answered 'perhaps in some areas', please elaborate::

**3 What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? Please rank your top 3 choices from the below list, in order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - a. Use of regulation to ensure action is taken:

What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - b. Use of financial incentives to support action:

What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - c. Supporting vets to provide targeted animal health advice on farm:

3

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - d. Making it easier for retailers and other parts of the supply chain to recognise and reward higher standards of animal health:**

2

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - e. An industry body with responsibility for promoting animal health:**

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - f. Research and knowledge exchange:**

1

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - g. Transparent and easily accessible data:**

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - h. An understanding of animal health standards on comparable farms:**

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - i. Other (please specify):**

**What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? - j. N/A – Cannot rank as they are all equally important.:**

**If you have selected 'Other (please specify)' please explain your preferred alternative.:**

**Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences.:**

**4 Would you like to respond to further questions on fulfilling our responsibility to animals?**

No

## **Supporting rural communities and remote farming**

**1 How should farming, land management and rural communities continue to be supported to deliver environmental, social and cultural benefits in the uplands?**

**Please respond in the text box provided.:**

Farming and traditional land management in the uplands play a vital role in conservation and are central to the economic and social life of many communities in upland areas, so it is imperative that the Government seeks to support marginal farming outside of the EU.

Farming in the UK has developed within the framework of the CAP for the last 40 years and therefore the introduction of a new agricultural policy will need to include transitional arrangements to ensure that farm businesses in the UK are able to adjust as decisions often need to be taken many years in advance. Farmers, particularly in upland and marginal areas, are often small to medium sized enterprises and a sudden change in agricultural policy would risk the sustainability of some of these businesses which are often dependent upon support payments.

Farmers in the uplands areas are limited to low intensity grazing which has small profit margins and is often more exposed to market volatility than other sectors of the industry. Their work, however, often provides the most amount of public good in creating and maintaining some of our most iconic rural landscapes, which are so important to our cultural heritage and provide the recreational opportunities people value so much. A new agricultural policy should target support payments to those farmers who are providing the most amount of public good but not being rewarded for this by the market. This also means ensuring that support is provided to the people and businesses that have the task of carrying out this work on a daily basis.

Despite best efforts and incentives to improve competitiveness, there will continue to be some parts of the UK where farmers cannot survive on the profits of food production alone and this needs to be addressed in a new agricultural policy as well as continued efforts to support diversification. Many forms of diversified income, such as tourism, depend on the farming side of the business so this should not be seen as an alternative to a thriving food and farming sector. It is also important to note that rural tourism in the UK benefits from visa-free travel between countries within the EU and it is important that this continues for short leisure and business trips after we leave the EU. Any additional bureaucracy or costs on travel to the UK from the EU would place the UK at a disadvantage with other European tourist destinations as far as EU nationals are concerned.

Farmers also play a vital role in conservation. Using the skills and experience of farmers is often the best way to improve biodiversity and secure the future of our vital natural resources. If farming in upland and other marginal areas were to be abandoned because of changes to support payments, there would be detrimental effects on the habitat in these areas and the species they support.

The conservation work of farmers is often supported by other forms of land management such as the work of grouse moor managers. Management of moorland for grouse shooting has been carried out for over 150 years and provides a valuable habitat for a variety of species. More than 80 per cent of English grouse moors fall within a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are popular for outdoor pursuits. Grouse moors are sustainably managed, largely through private investment by their owners who spend approximately £52.5 million every year on moorland management and support the equivalent of 1,500 full-time jobs. Grouse moors also bolster the economy of upland areas by attracting tourists and boosting tourism-related revenue. Income generated from grouse shooting supports future land management, remote rural communities and the maintenance of traditional moorland skills. Any new agricultural policy should seek to accommodate and work with other upland land management practices, including shooting.

We are concerned by suggestions that existing management should be withdrawn or scaled back as part of a policy of 'rewilding'. Supporters of 'rewilding' often



see farming as an obstacle to conservation but this ignores its benefit in many areas. For example, low intensity grazing plays a valuable role in preserving the Lake District's environment, which is home to extensive areas of rare habitat, internationally important rivers and lakes, and a key source of drinking water for cities in the North West of England. If remote areas in the UK were to be abandoned as part of a policy of 'rewilding' they would soon revert to scrub or woodland which would threaten some of our rarest moorland and grassland habitats

In many cases, 'rewilding' land management practices result in the loss of agricultural land or a reduction in its productivity. Land that is flooded as part of managed river and coastal flooding will be difficult to restore if there is a change in policy and the reintroduction of apex predators such as lynx and wolves can also make the land less productive by increasing predation. The economic advantages of 'rewilding' do not outweigh the potential loss of income to existing businesses or the social impact resulting from a loss of traditional employment.

Farming is central to the economic and social life of some of our most rural communities. As well as support payments helping to keep livestock on the hills, they also help to keep the local school open and provide employment in the wider rural economy from shops and garages to hotels and pubs. The importance of support payments to rural communities needs to be recognised when developing a new agricultural policy as without this support many of the most rural communities face the prospect of becoming unsustainable.

As well as establishing a new agricultural policy to replace the CAP, farming and traditional land management in the uplands are also reliant upon our trade policy. Farmers in the uplands, and other marginal areas, are not in fair competition with global producers who are operating in very different environments, often with fewer safety and animal welfare laws to comply with, meaning their production costs are significantly lower. There must be recognition of these differences in any new trade deals to avoid downward harmonisation and a lowering of our high standards which could lead to a 'race to the bottom' scenario. Flooding the domestic market with cheaper imports would put UK farmers at a competitive disadvantage and ultimately risk putting many out of business.

Food labelling is vitally important in enabling UK farmers to compete fairly and in giving consumers the ability and confidence to 'buy British'. The UK has a wide range of regional and speciality food producers which should be promoted at home and abroad. The quality and authenticity of these products is often recognised in their labelling, such as 'Lakeland Herdwick' lamb and mutton, from pure breed Herdwick sheep in the Lake District. For producers, these labels help to add value to their products, which often have high costs of production, and ensure their standards are maintained. The Government must seek to maintain and develop the protected food name system outside of the EU in recognition of their benefit to both producers and consumers.

**2 There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - a. Broadband coverage:**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - b. Mobile phone coverage:**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - c. Access to finance:**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - d. Affordable housing:**

3

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - e. Availability of suitable business accommodation:**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - f. Access to skilled labour:**

2

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - g. Transport connectivity:**

**There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. - h. Other (please specify):**

1

**If you have selected 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::**

Digital connectivity

**Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::**

**3 Would you like to respond to further questions on supporting rural communities and remote farming?**

Yes

### **Supporting rural communities and remote farming (continued)**

**1 With reference to the way you have ranked your answer to the previous question, what should government do to address the challenges faced by rural communities and businesses post-EU Exit?**

**Please respond in the text box provided::**

It is important for rural communities and businesses to have digital connectivity, whether that is via mobile or broadband technologies, which is why we ranked 'digital connectivity' as the most important challenge that needs to be addressed. The Health and Harmony consultation should not differentiate between technologies but focus on delivering connectivity. There will not be one single technology to deliver connectivity, so support for all technologies is important.

A successful rural economy is vital for maintaining a living and working countryside. Without it there would not be the rural communities and landscapes as we know them today. It is therefore essential that the people who live and work in the countryside are able to engage fully in the economic life of the country.

Leaving the EU and establishing new trade deals with countries around the world will increase the need for UK businesses to be competitive. This means it is more important than ever that the UK Government invests in digital connectivity and skills.

It is unacceptable that 960,000 homes in rural areas still cannot access download speeds greater than 10Mbit/s. With the drive for digital by default and the ambition for the UK to have a world leading digital economy we must get the basics right by ensuring that people in the countryside have access to reliable high speed broadband.

Most of the existing Broadband UK delivery contracts are only designed to run until 2018/19 and few currently involve substantial funding from the EU. However, previous broadband delivery programmes have benefitted from EU funding, including the Superfast Cornwall programme which received over £53 million from the EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF) between 2011- 2015. The existing programme which is due to be completed by the end of 2017 still receives funding from the ERDF and there are other programmes which also currently benefit from EU funding. Many farmers have benefitted from broadband investment under the EU Rural Development Programme which co-finances programmes with Member States. It is vital that the UK Government guarantees existing levels of EU funding for broadband programmes and develops its own programmes after we leave the EU.

Outside of the EU and the Digital Single Market, there is the potential for a greater divergence between digital connectivity in the UK and countries within the EU. If the EU sets a future target for the rollout of 'ultrafast' broadband (100Mbit/s) beyond 2020, which is widely expected to happen, then the UK Government could choose to ignore it and be less ambitious. We believe that the UK Government should seek to be at least as ambitious as the EU in digital connectivity in future and where possible look to exceed EU targets.

The UK Government must also consider how our future relationship with the EU will enable people to travel to this country to work in our food and farming industry, particularly at important times of the year. UK farmers and producers employ over 80,000 seasonal workers every year, the vast majority of these people come from countries within the EU.

Whilst the Government must look at ways of reducing the need for migrant workers through improvements in technology and training the domestic workforce, there must be recognition of the immediate need for labour in the rural economy. Businesses from game rearing to fruit farming rely on seasonal workers and the Government must ensure that these businesses continue to have access to the EU labour market post Brexit. It is essential we have an immigration policy that reflects the needs and interests of business across the rural supply chain.

The UK Government should re-establish the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), or similar scheme, which allows a person to enter a country to undertake a specific role with a specific employer for a set period of time. The UK Government removed the SAWS in 2013 following the removal of freedom of movement restrictions on people from Romania and Bulgaria. The reintroduction of the SAWS, or similar scheme, could be one way to help UK farmers outside of the EU.

Any new travel scheme for agricultural workers should also include the requirements of other land-based industries such as forestry, shooting and game farming. Game farmers are not included in the definition of 'agriculture' in the Agriculture Act 1947, so any new scheme will need to adopt a broader definition of 'agriculture' to ensure that people from the EU can continue to work on UK game farms.

There is also the on-going challenge of providing affordable homes in rural areas. The shortage of affordable housing is one of the greatest challenges for communities across the country including in rural areas. It is vital that the planning system is efficient and planning policies achieve a balance between delivering sustainable housing development, supporting local businesses, and protecting the amenity of the countryside.

The Countryside Alliance believes that homes should be built which meet the needs of the country while not losing large swathes of the countryside. We also believe the Government should implement a number of proposals, consulted on by the last Labour Government, to incentivise landowners to bring forward land for affordable housing.

Most farms are family businesses and the lack of affordable housing is a problem in many parts of the country for the next generation of farmers.

## **2 Do you have any further comments?**

**Please respond in the text box provided::**

N/A

## **Changing regulatory culture**

### **1 How can we improve inspections for environmental, animal health and welfare standards? Please indicate any of your preferred options below (Select as many options as you wish).**

Greater use of risk-based targeting, Greater use of earned recognition, for instance for membership of assurance schemes, Better data sharing amongst government agencies

**If you have selected 'Other (please specify)', please explain your preferred alternative::**

**Please give a short explanation as to your preferences::**

### **2 Would you like to respond to further questions on changing regulatory culture?**

No

## Risk management and resilience

1 What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions on whether to buy agricultural insurance? Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - a. Desire to protect themselves from general risks (e.g. revenue protection):

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - b. Desire to protect themselves from specific risks (e.g. flooding, pests or disease):

1

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - c. Provision of government compensation for some risks:

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - d. Cost of insurance:

2

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - e. Complexity and administrative burden of insurance:

3

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - f. Availability of relevant insurance products:

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions whether to buy agricultural insurance? - g. Other (please specify):

If you have selected 'Other (please specify)' please explain your preferred alternative:

Please give a short explanation as to your given ranking of preferences:

2 Would you like to respond to further questions on risk management and resilience?

No

## Ensuring fairness in the supply chain

1 How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? Please rank your top three options by order of importance (from 1 as your most important to 3 as your least important):

How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? - a. Promoting Producer Organisations and other formal structures?:

2

How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? - b. Introducing statutory codes of conduct?:

3

How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? - c. Improving the provision of data on volumes, stocks and prices etc.?:

1

How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? - d. Other (please specify):

If you have selected 'Other (please specify)' please explain your preferred alternative::

Please give a short explanation as to your ranking preferences::

2 Would you like to respond to further questions on ensuring fairness in the supply chain?

No

## Protecting crop, tree, plant and bee health

1 Where there are insufficient commercial drivers, how far do you agree or disagree that government should play a role in supporting:

a. Industry, woodland owners and others to respond collaboratively and swiftly to outbreaks of priority pests and diseases in trees?:

Agree

b. Landscape recovery following pest and disease outbreaks, and the development of more resilient trees?:

Agree

c. The development of a bio-secure supply chain across the forestry, horticulture and beekeeping sectors?:

Agree

Please give a short explanation as to your preferences::

**2 Would you like to respond to further questions on protecting crop, tree, plant and bee health?**

No

### **Devolution: maintaining cohesion and flexibility**

**1 With reference to the principles set out by JMC(EN) and listed in the devolution chapter, what are the agriculture and land management policy areas where a common approach across the UK is necessary?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

No comment.

**2 What are the likely impacts on cross-border farms if each administration can tailor its own agriculture and land management policy?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

No comment.

**3 Do you have any further comments?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

N/A

### **International Trade**

**1 How far do you agree or disagree with the broad priorities set out in the trade chapter?**

Please choose one of the options from the dropdown list::

Agree

**2 How can government and industry work together to open up new markets?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

No comment.

**3 How can we best protect and promote our brand, remaining global leaders in environmental protection, food safety, and in standards of production and animal welfare?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

No comment.

**4 Do you have any further comments?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

N/A

### **Legislation: the Agriculture Bill**

**1 How far do you agree with the proposed powers of the Agriculture Bill?**

Please choose one of the options from the dropdown list::

Agree

**2 What other measures might we need in the Agriculture Bill to achieve our objectives?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

No comment.

**3 Do you have any further comments?**

Please respond in the text box provided::

N/A