



Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

balanceofcompetence.agri@defra.gsi.gov.uk

13 January 2014

Dear Sir / Madam,

Call for Evidence: Review of Balance of Competences – Agriculture

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to this review.

The Institute for Archaeologists

The Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) is a professional body for the study and care of the historic environment. It promotes best practice in archaeology and provides a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves.

IfA has over 3,000 members and more than 70 registered practices across the United Kingdom. Its members work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, planning advice, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors.

IfA's evidence focuses on the EU's effect on the management and protection of the historic environment.

Review of Balance of Competences – Agriculture

General

The 'historic environment' comprises:

'All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed dra .' (English Heritage: *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008), page 71)

This includes both terrestrial and marine heritage assets¹. Moreover, those assets can be either designated (for instance, through the scheduling of an ancient monument or the listing of a building) or undesignated. It is important to note that the vast majority of the historic environment (around 95%) is undesignated and regulated primarily through the planning regime (which recognises the impact of development upon the historic environment as a material consideration). However, the use of land for agriculture or forestry does not constitute development within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning Acts and much agricultural activity (which can have a significant impact upon the historic environment: see, for instance, *Ripping Up History* (English Heritage) <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/ripping-up-history-archaeology-under-the-plough/030725rippinguphistory.pdf/>) falls outside the planning regime or is deemed to have

consent. Indeed, even in the case of designated assets, such as scheduled monuments, *'current heritage legislation permits essentially uncontrolled cultivation of otherwise protected monuments' (Ripping Up History)*. This is why support which the Common Agricultural Policy currently gives to the historic environment (in particular, through Pillar 2 and the provisions of agri-environment schemes facilitating the management of the historic environment) is crucial (see, for instance, <http://www.helm.org.uk/managing-and-protecting/sites-in-farmland/>).

The Common Agricultural Policy has delivered very significant benefits for the historic environment. For instance, the High Level Stewardship scheme in England

'...has been able to bring together the management of key aspects of the environment (both natural and historic) on a whole farm basis to deliver protection for some of our most important archaeological monuments and historic landscape features, removing them from inappropriate cultivation, managing vegetation and dealing with erosion. Many thousands of hectares of land have in this way been brought into beneficial management, delivering significant conservation benefits over the lifetime of the schemes, and helping to discharge the UK's national and international obligations – for example under the European Landscape Convention.' (letter, Mike Heyworth, Council for British Archaeology to Defra, 28 June 2013)

However, that support cannot be guaranteed in future. For example, IfA and others have very real concerns that the proposals in England for the next generation of agri-environment schemes (NELMS) may marginalise support for the historic environment. It would be helpful in this regard if the management of the historic environment were more clearly recognised within the core objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy both at a European and national level. At present, funding is provided largely on the basis that the historic environment is an integral part of 'landscape' (a view which we wholly support), but it would be better if, in addition, the environment (which CAP seeks to support) were expressly acknowledged at the highest level to include both the natural and the historic environment.

Specific Questions

General

1. Should the EU have competence for agriculture and plant health?

1.1 Yes, in view of the very significant benefits for the historic environment delivered by the Common Agricultural Policy (see above). In theory such support could be replicated at a national level, but in practice it is unlikely that this would happen.

Advantages and disadvantages

2. What evidence is there that the EU approach to agriculture:

i. benefits the UK national interest?

2.1 The improved management and protection of the historic environment (as outlined above) benefits the UK national interest. This is recognised in England in *The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010* which sets out a vision

'That the value of the historic environment is recognised by all who have the power to shape it; that Government gives it proper recognition and that it is managed intelligently and in a way that fully realises its contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the nation.'

Those sentiments continue broadly to be echoed by all administrations throughout the United Kingdom.

ii. disadvantages the UK national interest?

2.2 IfA agrees with Defra that *'rewarding farmers for the environmental goods they provide is a much better use of taxpayers' money than providing direct subsidy'* (paragraph 6.2, page 54 of the

consultation document, *Implementing CAP Reform in England* (2013)). Too great an emphasis upon Pillar 1 payments (notwithstanding greening and cross-compliance) may disadvantage the UK national interest by providing insufficient public benefit when compared to the cost of subsidy. This is not to ignore the important stewardship role which the farming sector plays.

3. Do you think the UK's ability to champion a competitive food and farming sector would benefit from more or less EU action? Please provide evidence or examples to illustrate your point.

3.1 No comment.

4. How far do the benefits of access to the single market outweigh the risks to UK biosecurity resulting from the free trade in plant products?

4.1 No comment.

5. What evidence is there that current competence over forestry policy:

i. benefits the UK national interest?

ii. disadvantages the UK national interest?

5.1 No comment.

Where should decisions be made?

6. How might the UK national interest be better served by action being taken on agriculture and plant health at a different level of governance - either in addition to or as an alternative to EU action? For example regionally, nationally or internationally.

6.1 The ability already exists at a national level to support the management and protection of the historic environment (for instance, through the implementation of agri-environment schemes on a national basis) in pursuance of EU policies. However, as noted above in respect of NELMS, such support is by no means guaranteed in the future. Although such support could in theory be provided without European action, it is questionable whether this would happen, particularly in a time of recession. IfA would prefer to see the management and protection of the historic environment more clearly embedded in the core objectives of CAP at a European level in order to ensure that this objective is achieved at a national level (through a rural development programme of which the management and protection of the historic environment is an integral part).

7. What evidence is there that the balance of decision making between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on the areas covered in this report:

i. benefits the UK national interest

ii. disadvantages the UK national interest?

7.1 No comment.

The external dimension

8. Agreements with non-EU countries (multilateral and bilateral free trade agreements) play a significant role in UK agriculture. How do these agreements and the EU's role in negotiating them help or hinder the UK national interest?

8.1 No Comment.

Single market and economic growth

9. Considering the single Common Market Organisation:

i. How successful are current arrangements in striking the right balance between the goal of a level playing field and the flexibility to meet local and national needs?

ii. How could they be improved?

9.1 No comment.

10. What evidence is there that access to EU markets and adherence to common standards on agriculture, plant reproductive materials and plant health benefits or hinders UK consumers and businesses both domestically and when exporting abroad?

10.1 No comment.

11. What evidence can you provide which shows the effect, or lack of effect, of EU biofuel support policies on agricultural commodity markets and food prices?

11.1 No comment.

Funding

12. How far do rules around support to UK farmers and growers through EU funds help or hinder the UK in meeting its objectives for the sector? You may wish to focus your answer around one or more of these areas specifically (i) direct payments (ii) single common market organisation (iii) rural development.

12.1 The management and protection of the historic environment should be more clearly embedded in rules around support to UK farmers and growers through EU funds (particularly in relation to rural development, but also in relation to direct payments through such mechanisms as greening and cross-compliance).

Future challenges and opportunities

13. What future challenges and opportunities do you think will affect sectors discussed in this report?

13.1 Budgetary restraint will no doubt remain the major challenge in the short to medium term.

13.2 The opportunities to achieve synergies (for instance, facilitating development and practices which promote the interests of farmers at the same time as safeguarding and improving the historic environment) should be fully explored. A sustainable approach should not see farming and social and economic interests as in conflict with environmental ones. Investment in the historic environment will deliver environmental, social and economic benefits, maximising value for money (see, for instance, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/social-and-economic-research/value-of-historic-environment/economic-value/>).

14. What is the right balance between action at Member State, EU and international levels to address the challenges and opportunities?

14.1 A clear lead should be given at a European level.

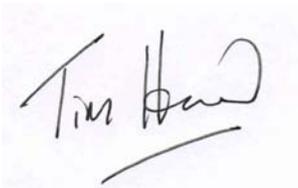
Anything else?

15. Are there any general points you wish to make which are not captured in any of the questions above?

15.1 No comment.

If there is anything further that I can do to assist please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Tim Howard LLB, Dip Prof Arch
Policy Advisor

¹ *Those elements of the historic environment – buildings, monuments, sites or landscapes – that have been positively identified as holding a degree of significance meriting consideration are called “heritage assets”, UK Marine Policy Statement (2011) paragraph 2.6.6.1. This is a planning policy definition.*