

Land Business Update

Week commencing 29 October 2018

Environment

“Rapid and unprecedented changes” needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C

The report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), written by over 90 leading scientists from 40 countries, says that society must work together to reach zero emissions by the mid-century, and a 45% cut in global CO2 emissions by 2030 (from 2010 levels). The UK government supports the report's demand for greater cuts in emissions than in current targets, and has asked the Committee on Climate Change to report on what changes are needed for the UK to meet the 1.5% target.

Farming

Second round of Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme announced

Our farm management team worked with tens of farmers to identify equipment that increased their productivity and environmental performance, and which was available under the first round of this grant. The second round will open in early 2019 and its budget has been increased to £30m, which is positive news. Please speak to Seb Murray, who is our national coordinator, or your local farm management team.

Agronomy update

Winter Barley drilling is almost complete and first wheat drilling is well underway. Grassweed germination to date has been reasonable but dry conditions may limit control from pre emergence applications of herbicide. The effects of cabbage stem flea beetle on oilseed rape continue, with another week of potential crop loss in areas of low rainfall. Those growing Clearfield varieties may want to hold off the Cleranda or Cleravo applications until the weather induces another weed flush. Clethodim applications for blackgrass control should have now been applied. Please contact [Jock Willmott](#) about day-to-day and strategic agronomy. Looking back at the harvest, the drought led to a drop of 8% in total EU cereal production below the last five-year average.

Independent review into allocation of farm support between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

This review will advise on the amount and allocation of support from 2020 to 2022 (or the end of this Parliament), to ensure it is “fairly split”. The Government has said that the split should be based on each country's circumstances, including environmental, agricultural and socio-economic factors, including farm numbers and sizes (i.e., it will not be based purely on the Barnett formula). The review is being chaired by Lord Paul Bew and will report to the government in six months and is non-binding. The announcement has already sparked a lot of debate. The Scottish Government has restated its claim that it should be paid £160m of ‘convergence funding’ that was paid to the UK, but only because of circumstances in Scotland. NB Funding allocations have already been made up to 2020.

Disagreement over Minister's statement on effect of badger cull

A group of vets and animal welfare organisations have asked George Eustice to retract the statement he made in September that badger culling lowered bovine TB cases in cull zones, claiming that Defra had used data that was unstable over time. The vets claim that the prevalence of TB in cattle is no lower than it was before culling.

£15m pilot project to redistribute surplus food from retailers and manufacturers

The UK Government has funded this project which will focus on fresh food.

**Brexit: UK fails to get quick agreement on allocation of WTO tariffs**

Liam Fox has admitted, in a short written statement on 25 October, that the Government's hope for quickly agreeing the terms of the UK's membership of the WTO have failed. Instead the UK will have to negotiate with countries that have objected to the UK's proposal for reallocating quotas between the EU and the UK. These countries include the US, Australia, New Zealand and Russia. It is feared that the UK will have to allow greater access to goods from other countries in order to agree tariff rates for different quantities of goods. The news was not well received by the NFU.

Brexit: debate over whether gene editing will be allowed in the UK after Brexit is growing

Farm Minister George Eustice has been reported as saying that gene-editing is required to cut reliance on chemical pesticides and that a recent European Court of Justice ruling in July that gene-editing constitutes genetic modification should be ignored, during a fringe event at the Conservative Party conference. This would be a departure from current EU rules and so the implications for trade with the bloc should be explored. The Soil Association has said that gene-editing gives, "rise to similar uncertainties and risks as GM." A group of many of the major agricultural research bodies in the UK has separately written to Michael Gove asking for clarification of the UK's position on gene-editing technology.

Planning

Agricultural buildings can be converted into more houses, following GPDO changes

Permitted development rights that allow conversion of agricultural buildings to residential homes were amended in April, as part of changes to the General Permitted Development Order 2015. Now, up to 865m² of floor space can be converted into a maximum of 5 homes. It is also possible, once a permission has been granted under the permitted development rights, to submit a full application to create a bigger house. Please call [Nicola Bickerstaff](#) in our planning team for further details.

More than 12,350 acres cut from the greenbelt in the year to April 2018

This is six times the amount in the previous year and is due to councils redrawing the boundaries, according to the CPRE. Councils can allow development on greenbelt in 'exceptional circumstances', which means when all other reasonable options for needed development have been exhausted. The CPRE has challenged the erosion of the greenbelt, saying that there was enough brownfield land in England for more than a million homes and that it is more profitable for developers than utilising brownfield land.