

Farmers Motion

This Council notes that we currently only produce 60% of the food that we need here in the UK. Food imports already outnumber exports by £33.2 billion. A reduction in the food that we produce will only increase our vulnerability to international factors outside our control - we have already felt this impact in the energy market.

This Council also notes that:

- According to the NFU: 7,419 people are directly employed in agriculture in Gloucestershire, that's 12.1% of the South West's farm workers
- Gross Output = £318 million, GVA = £128 million
- Of the 85,397.1 Hectares of arable farmland, 63.2% (53,965.1Ha) is cereal crops, that's 24.1% of Gloucestershire's farmed area and 18% of all the South West's cereal production.
- The National Farmers Union calculates that 75% of commercial family farms will fall above the £1 million threshold across the UK.
- Over the past 60 years the proportion of household income spent on food in the UK has halved, from 33% in 1957, 11.8% in 2022. Food prices have come down, farmers' income from food production has come down and supermarket profits have ballooned.
- neither DEFRA, the Government's own department, nor industry experts in the farming sector were consulted before the chancellor made her announcement. DEFRA did not even know about the decision until after the chancellor's announcement.

This Council believes that

- proper consultation with farmers and industry experts could have led to fairer and more appropriate solutions that are not detrimental to family farms or the wider industry. The changes were rushed out and have not been subject to due diligence or proper consideration.
- If hard-pressed farmers are forced to sell their farms because they can't afford to carry on due to a huge tax burden, the land is less likely to stay in food production.
- Large farms are being bought by businesses so that they can take advantage of the 20% tax advantage, and small pockets of land which farmers sell off to cover tax burdens are often re-purposed for example dog walking fields, equestrian or amenity land such as re-wilding, but not put back into food production
- Tax discount to businesses or individuals buying agricultural land to avoid tax should be abolished

This Council resolves to:

1. Agree to support Cotswold farmers by campaigning against IHT reforms for farms.
2. Request that the Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging her to scrap the IHT reform imposed on farmers.