

# **Sustaining Food, Sustaining Farmers 4th British German Environment Forum**

**British–German Environment Forum Conference Report**

BRITISH-GERMAN ENVIRONMENT FORUM  
DEUTSCH-BRITISCHES UMWELTFORUM



## 4th Conference of the British–German Environment Forum

*Royal College of Agriculture, Cirencester, UK*

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### **“Sustaining Food, Sustaining Farmers”**

What can Britain and Germany learn from each other in reforming agriculture for sustainable development?

Conference Report

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Anglo-German Foundation  
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UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)

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**British German Environment Forum (BGEF)**

The central issue of the coming decades is the need to reconcile industrial development with the protection and enhancement of our environment. The BGEF generates *action in this area*: a key goal is to develop the experience and insights of *practitioners* in business, local government and the voluntary sectors involved in designing and implementing initiatives at local and regional levels as well as the national level. The conference series reflects the acknowledgement by the UK and Germany of the significance of sustainable development, and the potential for each country to learn from the other in this area. It provides a forum for the exchange of views and lessons for good practice and innovations between two key European countries with distinctive strengths and weaknesses in environmental policy, and with different policy cultures in relation to the environment.

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## Summary

The fourth conference of the British–German Environment Forum brought together some fifty experts from government, farmers' associations, NGOs, universities and the media in both countries to explore issues of sustainability in agriculture and food production. A number of participants were also directly involved in agriculture as small-scale farmers.

The conference was timely. In the UK, the Curry Commission had recently produced its report on *Farming and Food: a sustainable future*, setting a new agenda for food and agriculture policy. In Germany, Renate Künast, the Green Minister of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, is spelling out an innovative, more sustainable, vision. Perhaps most significant of all, reform of the monolithic, production-oriented Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had now become a real prospect with the publication, in July 2002, of the Commission's mid-term review. This proposed to cut the link between production and direct payments, to increase support for rural development, and to develop higher environmental, animal welfare, food safety and occupational safety standards.

So 'sustainability' in all its many different aspects – environmental, economic, political, scientific, technological, cultural – had now achieved a high place on local, national, European and international agendas for the first time for many years. Forum participants were eager to take the debate forward, and to investigate the complex interconnections between agriculture, rural communities, and every part of the food production chain.

Discussions focused on three main topics that together form the building blocks of sustainability for farmers, consumers and the environment:

- achieving environmental sustainability for farming
- safeguarding diversity and local production in a globalising marketplace
- consumer confidence and food safety.

Broad (though by no means always unanimous) agreement was reached on a number of important topics. These included:

- positive support for the mid-term review of the CAP, and for directing resources away from subsidising production
- the potential dangers of globalisation for the agricultures of both Europe and the developing world
- the risk to food safety of governmental and commercial policies that concentrate on providing cheap food at the expense of quality and variety
- the dangers of arrogance in policy development, and of ignoring consumers' wishes, especially in relation to GM foods.

Specific suggestions that emerged from debate, informed by participants' wide-ranging expertise in and experience of food and agriculture, included:

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- the urgent need to re-establish trust in every aspect of the food chain: from scientific research through government policy and farming practice to the information supplied by retailers
- the importance of creating environmentally sustainable regional markets (and strengthening those that already exist) for produce, if necessary through publicly funded support schemes
- the need to create co-operative processing, marketing, distribution and promotional arrangements for farmers
- the growing division between an increasingly urbanised population and the land and those who work on it, and the consequent need to rekindle links and, through public education, to develop greater understanding of agriculture and food.

The broad similarity between the agricultural sectors of the UK and Germany, and the common nature of the problems each faces, means that each country can learn from initiatives undertaken in the other; both will benefit from co-operation in international and supra-national fora. Links forged or strengthened at the conference will help to take these processes forward.

## Introduction

Some of the bloodiest political battles of the next two years will be fought on the muddy fields of Europe's farmers. In the UK, the massed tweed jackets of the Countryside Alliance are only just retreating over the media horizon as they make their way back from the capital after taking part in a massive protest march that spread out from its original focus on the future of hunting to protest at perceived threats to the rural economy and way of life. In Germany, the shock of BSE was swiftly followed by scandals over tainted 'organic' food which severely dented the confidence of the new Green agriculture ministry as it trumpeted its agricultural 'revolution'. Battle lines are already forming over the proposals of the mid-term review of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Will it be possible to balance the often diverging interests of farmers and consumers, radical marketeers and protectionists, reformers and conservationists, rich (countries) and poor (countries)? If the CAP cannot be reformed, will the whole project of eastern enlargement collapse?

In both Britain and Germany, there is fresh political will to move at a faster pace towards sustainable agriculture, with greater sensitivity to consumer concerns. This has been expressed forcibly by Renate Künast, the Green agriculture minister in Germany, and in the recent Curry Commission report in the UK. Yet the impulse for change has revealed the challenges involved in converting the new approach into policies that deliver sustainable farming on the ground. This conference offered an opportunity for farmers, environmentalists, food policy experts and politicians from Britain and Germany as well as from the EU to learn from an exchange of views, experience and policy innovations as they seek to find a common way forward.

## Setting the context

The Forum opened with two stimulating addresses that provided the policy and public opinion contexts for the two days of debate that followed. David Hunter, Director of Agricultural Strategy, European Union and International Policy, at the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), gave a *tour d'horizon* of the British government's fast-developing views and policies on sustainability and agriculture. Then Robert Worcester, chairman of Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) and Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics, presented some of the latest data on public attitudes in Germany and Britain to farming and food safety.

### **David Hunter – 'What can agriculture do for sustainable development, and vice versa?'**

David Hunter was replacing Alun Michael, Minister of State for Rural Affairs at DEFRA, who, unavoidably detained in London because of urgent parliamentary business, sent his apologies to the Forum. Introducing his theme, Mr Hunter stressed that DEFRA's intention was, in the words of Secretary of State Margaret Beckett, 'to place sustainability at the heart of [its] actions'. The new Department, formed in June 2001, with its new range of responsibilities, has the opportunity to bring together farming, the food chain, rural affairs and the environment in a sustainable partnership.

DEFRA has identified four main objectives of sustainable development and, in its Sustainable Development Strategy, a suite of 22 key indicators ranging from access to key services in rural areas to animal welfare. Mr Hunter pointed to one of these – the population of wild birds, and in particular of farmland birds, which is especially relevant to agriculture and environmental sustainability – as an example of the positive way in which agricultural policy can deliver environmental benefits. The sharp decline in bird populations during the 1980s and 1990s caused by changes in farming practice is gradually being reversed by agri-environment schemes and Countryside Stewardships. DEFRA is also working closely with the farming industry both to develop baseline environmental standards that will meet consumers' demand for food that is not only safe but is also produced in ways consistent with the kind of landscape they value as an amenity and to ensure that these standards are easy to implement on individual farms.

Mr Hunter argued that DEFRA's sustainable framework contributes to the case for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – and in particular to the case for a shift from production-driven policies to policies that serve a wider range of rural and environmental objectives. The British Government believes that the CAP needs to be refocused so that it delivers 'the goods that the wider public – including taxpayers and consumers – demand.... We need to take full account of the interests of all stakeholders so that the CAP gives farmers a clear basis on which to plan while meeting the wishes of those who wish to protect and enhance the natural environment.' The Government believes that the Commission's mid-term review (MTR), published in July 2002, has the potential to do just



that. The proposal for 'decoupling' (breaking the link between agricultural subsidy and production) has 'considerable merit' – 'it would enable the EU to support farmers in a way which allows them to take decisions on a much more commercial basis than is the case at present... [and] would remove market distortions and the incentive that they inevitably create to maximise production, whether of crops or of animals, rather than to optimise it.'

The MTR's proposal for 'dynamic modulation' also opens up the possibility of dynamic change. Dynamic modulation would transfer money from the 1st Pillar of the CAP (i.e. traditional, production-linked support) to the 2nd Pillar (broader rural development and agri-environment policies). This would lead to increased devolution of responsibility to member states and regions and a better response to both market and environmental pressures. 'While there is much in the 2nd Pillar that we need to look at critically,... an increased shift from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 would be an important and positive move.'

Mr Hunter stressed that it would not be easy to find a way forward that commands support across the EU as a whole. 'But the UK has already started out in this direction and we will need to build on the start that we have made.'

Turning to the EU's global obligations, Mr Hunter argued that the liberalisation of trade policies was of crucial importance to developing countries: liberalisation would 'offer increased opportunities for the exporting industries of the developing countries and [would] help nurture the development of their own indigenous industries.' To secure sustainable agriculture in the developing countries, the EU must 'change its ways so that it is no longer dumping its own subsidised exports on world markets at the same time as severely limiting any access to the EU for the products of the developing countries'.

At home, the Rural White Paper, published in November 2000, set out the Government's long-term strategy for revitalising rural communities by focusing on access to basic services, the role of market towns as economic catalysts, and the need for a protected and enhanced environment. Over half the 200 recommendations in the White Paper have been implemented, and steady progress is being made on the remainder, especially on rural schools, post offices and public transport, which play an important role in rural life.

Sustainability was one of the key messages of *Farming and Food: a sustainable future* (the Curry Commission), set up following the foot and mouth crisis in 2001. Mr Hunter would not be drawn on the Government's response to the Commission's recommendations. [They were subsequently announced on 12 December.] However, he did suggest that sustainability will be an important theme in the response, and pointed out that the Government is already taking a number of initiatives to develop an integrated solution to the problems faced by agriculture. These are designed to 'develop smarter ways of regulation that concentrate on the processes that deliver our objectives – safe food and workplaces, healthy animals, thriving wildlife, clean air, pure water etc – rather than formal procedures'. There is no single, best way forward – for instance, both organic farming and integrated farm management contribute to sustainability. 'One thing is absolutely clear: sustainability will only be delivered by close co-operation between industry and government working in partnership.'

## **Robert Worcester – ‘Public Attitudes to Farming and Food Safety’**

Professor Robert Worcester’s wide-ranging survey set British and German attitudes towards farming and food safety in the context of recent opinion research across Europe and the USA on a range of international issues. Findings of particular relevance to the conference theme are:

- Across Europe generally, two in every three people oppose the use of biotechnology in agriculture and food production. Opposition is highest in Great Britain (69 per cent), lowest in the Netherlands (47 per cent), and runs at 63 per cent in Germany. Opposition to genetic manipulation totals 78 per cent in both Britain and Germany.
- Farmers and retailers are far less trusted on biosciences than medical and NGO professionals.
- Food shortage is seen as the most serious outcome of population growth.
- In 1996 relatively few people surveyed in either country – 2 per cent in Britain and 7 per cent in Germany – rated BSE as one of the two or three most important problems facing their country. Five years later, however, while only 1 per cent of people in Britain mentioned BSE, 63 per cent of Germans did so.
- Opinion in Britain is generally hostile to genetically manipulated food:
  - 39 per cent believe that its risks outweigh its benefits, while only 18 per cent believe the contrary
  - 76 per cent believe that it should be compulsory to identify GM products, and only 6 per cent the contrary
  - 67 per cent support the EU’s position in favour of the compulsory labelling of GM products; only 6 per cent support the US Government’s view that labelling should not be compulsory
  - 13 per cent support the US Government’s stance that the EU should speed up the licensing of GM food, while 50 per cent support the EU’s position
  - 62 per cent would oppose a GM crop trial being held in their local area, and only 24 per cent would support it.
- There is rising uncertainty in Germany about the benefits of organic food, and an increasing unwillingness to pay higher prices for it.

## Three challenges

The main part of the conference centred on three 'Challenges'. Each was launched by a pair of crisp 'Provocations': brief presentations from different sides of the debate designed, as their name suggests, to kick-start discussion and controversy. Having heard the two Provocations and briefly debated them, conference participants divided into three workshop groups to discuss each Challenge in greater depth, reassembling an hour later to report their findings in plenary session. The Challenges are reported here in note form in order to summarise the range and depth of the discussion in as accessible a form as possible and to show the widely contrasting views expressed.

Many of the views expressed aroused considerable disagreement; that they are noted here does not necessarily signify that they were generally accepted.

### **Challenge 1: Achieving environmental sustainability for farming**

#### **Provocation One – Jürgen Krönig, UK Correspondent, Die Zeit**

- While the public may dislike GM, UK policy elites support it in order to maintain the UK at the cutting edge of technological and industrial development.
- GM food, with the possibility of controlling food supplies, is perceived as the West's counter to its dependence on imported oil.
- Current scientific evidence about the use of GMOs is ambivalent – there are no clear positives or negatives.
- Many consumers, notably in the UK, have been 'industrialised' by intensive technology designed to produce cheap food. Subsidy policies are difficult to change because subsidies support lower-income groups.
- Major scandals have made little difference to policy on food and farming and to public attitudes to industrialised agriculture – at the peak of the BSE crisis, 65 per cent of people ate as much meat as they always had.
- Big business, big farmers and a large majority of consumers form a powerful alliance in favour of the *status quo*: 'when push comes to shove, society will disregard environmental factors.'

#### **Provocation Two – Jochen Dettmar, Secretary-General, German Farmers Federation (Germany)**

- Sustainable farming cannot be based on the further industrialisation of food and agriculture.
- Instead the focus should be on developing small-scale farming, based on family enterprises, with rewards for the ecological performance of agriculture.
- The future lies in regional markets rather than a single global market.

- Dialogue with consumers is essential, so that they can convert their desire for ecological sustainability into purchasing decisions.

### **Points from the workshop groups and debate**

- Society will not be well served if the potential scientific benefits arising from GM technology are pushed to one side.
- GMOs are essential to sustainable farming as they will help to ensure both food security and the competitiveness of UK agriculture – foreign competition threatens to make UK farming unsustainable.
- GM food is not essential to solve the global food problem – the starving can be fed by redistributing existing resources.
- The GM debate is essentially a political one – there will never be enough, or conclusive, scientific evidence.
- The large number of ‘industrial eaters’ – consumers of cheap, mass-produced foodstuffs – means that consumer pressure alone will never bring about a switch to sustainable agriculture. Eating habits can only be changed through long-term education, designed to improve understanding of food, overcome the expectation that food will be cheap, and to reconnect the general public with farmers and agriculture.
- Are we using to the full the flexibility that exists within the CAP for positive agri-environmental innovations, which can create employment, or is there no option other than to wait for more radical CAP reform? Should economic instruments, e.g. a pesticides tax, be used to limit inputs?
- Farmers today can only achieve a reasonable income through intensive farming – in contrast with the 1970s, when mixed farming was viable without harming the environment and landscape. How can farmers be ensured a decent income without eco-degradation and intensification?
- Imaginative links need to be created between retailers (very strong in the UK and, in the view of many delegates, almost equally powerful in Germany), farmers and NGOs on environmental stewardship.
- Projects to help people develop local attachments should be encouraged. However, the suggestion that global food movements should be restricted aroused considerable controversy.

## **Challenge 2: Safeguarding diversity and local production in a globalising marketplace**

### **Provocation One – Naomi Diamond, co-director, Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (UK)**

- The aim should be to increase food security, not food production and food flows around the world. Safe, affordable, nutritious food and job security in the food industry can only be achieved through the re-localisation of food supplies in both north and south: ‘local food first’.
- Longer-term building blocks towards this ideal include:
  - subsidies based on need and designed to foster good farming practice

- ecotaxes
- tariffs to protect home production
- an end to export subsidies to protect developing countries
- quotas to manage over-supply.
- Shorter-term aims should include:
  - more and better food education to develop culinary skills and enjoyment
  - more public procurement of local food (e.g. by schools, hospitals)
  - incentives for new entrants to farming
  - planning controls on the concentration of large retail outlets.
- Ultimately the sugar barons and the supermarket kings will have to be taken on and their power reduced.

### **Provocation Two – Hannelore Schmidt, Industrial Agricultural Association (Germany)**

- Globalisation enriches us. Its many benefits include:
  - a healthier and more diverse diet for consumers
  - security of supply; globalisation balances out price variations
  - access to new sources of raw materials
  - better quality food and innovative marketing.
- State support for local production tends to be ineffective and generates dependence on the part of farmers.
- Consumers in Europe are clearly signalling their preference for a global market.
- Globalising markets require global standards – varying standards distort competition. Standards are necessary to protect the environment and health, but should be applied on a scientific basis, not as a mechanism to exclude particular products from the market.

### **Points from the workshop groups and debate**

- The local food economy is an essential factor in maintaining the diversity of our cultural landscape. Failure of the local food economy to thrive will lead to intensification of production and possibly also to land abandonment.
- Europe should press the WTO to raise its environmental and animal welfare standards, and in return should be less defensive on trade barriers.
- The respective merits of eco taxes and transport taxes ('food miles') aroused controversy. The latter could disadvantage peripheral regions, but equally could encourage regional markets.
- There was concern about the role of the WTO. Some participants argued that it is becoming a marketing instrument for first-world industry and that an equivalent international agency is needed to challenge WTO on issues of international environmental governance and sustainability. Others believed that the WTO's task is to remove trade barriers while other agencies (e.g. WHO and UNEP) take responsibility for environmental standards.
- We have a global marketplace but no global rules: trans-national corporations should be required to meet international standards for social and environmental

sustainability. The power of governments to set rules, and their willingness to do so, is diminishing.

- Equally controversial was whether the EU should raise tariffs. Some participants argued that developing countries need tariffs in order to retain agricultural diversity and avoid becoming over-dependent on single-product exports; others that tariffs should be lowered to assist developing countries' exports to the rich world.
- EU aid rules should be modified to make it easier for individual member states to promote their own regional and local produce.
- Consumers should be educated on the importance of the seasonality of produce.
- Policies to 're-regionalise' agriculture are essential: links with regional development agencies and marketing campaigns – e.g. 'eat the view' – that brand the countryside and its produce as environmentally friendly and create demand for local/regional foods.

### **Challenge 3: Consumer confidence and food safety**

#### **Provocation One – Jutta Jaksche, Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Germany)**

- Consumer confidence means trusting the government and NGOs, not the product itself. According to one German survey, only 14 per cent of people think that policy-makers act in consumers' interests.
- Consumer confidence can't be won by creating new institutions. Creating more institutions doesn't itself make food safer.
- Do institutions set standards too high? Standards set for the global market can prevent small producers producing a product for the local market. Improving food safety doesn't necessarily result in more consumer confidence.
- Consumers want everything: low prices, long life, tastiness and freshness, year-round availability – plus sustainable agriculture and a pretty, natural landscape.
- Consumer organisations fight for more information and more rights for consumers – but the problem is that the more consumers believe that food is safe, the less likely they are to investigate what they are buying.

#### **Provocation Two – Hugh Raven, Policy Adviser (Scotland) to the Soil Association, and Environment Adviser to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**

The three main reasons for the loss of UK consumer confidence in the agriculture and food industries are

- poor application of science to the food chain
- cheap food policy
- consumer ignorance of food issues.
- Poor application of science:
  - agency capture: regulators and regulated are same people

- regulation and promotion conducted by same institutions, leading to low levels of public esteem and confidence
- salmonella, BSE and foot and mouth demonstrate lack of scientific understanding and undermine consumer confidence.
- Cheap food:
  - productionist mindset of government: public environmental and consumer concerns ignored until forced on to agenda in 1980s/90s by greens and consumer movements
  - farmers equally culpable, especially NFU
  - food scandals reveal realities of food production: public don't like what they see.
  - Consumer ignorance:
    - domestic science omitted from school core curriculum
    - decline in family occasions involving cookery, e.g. shared meals.
- Ways in which consumer confidence can be rekindled include:
  - separate the regulation and promotion of food, and shake up the cosy relationship between trade representatives and the Ministry
  - increase recognition of quality in food production by shortening food chains, realigning prices, allowing more devolution from CAP to take account of varying conditions in different member states
  - persuade politicians to take more interest in food.

### **Points from the workshop groups and debate**

- Can small producers meet global standards? Not always. However, recent food scandals have come from major producers, not small enterprises.
- What are labels trying to achieve? Information overload is a danger – what information does the consumer want/need?
- Whose labels are trusted – the state's or those originated by producers? State guarantees may not command as much trust as producer labels. But are farm assurance schemes merely promotional, or do they reflect basic food safety issues?
- Can labelling be used more aggressively? Why don't we insist that eggs from battery hens are labelled 'battery eggs', rather than only allowing positive labelling?
- How can consumer trust in GM technologies be built, when the public distrusts science and scientists and the GM corporations?
- Consumers want to feel in control and that risks are not being imposed (as with GM foods). Regionalisation of food chains can contribute to trust and enable consumers to undertake a reasonable risk assessment. UK food chain much more centralised than in Germany.
- Consumer confidence is generally high. Although it dips when there is a food scandal, it then recovers. However, this may be because of lack of an alternative ('you have to eat something') rather than because of positive trust.
- Is organic food a 'trust brand' or are its virtues overstated? Government support in Germany has led to over-production and to a drop in consumer confidence, following increasing media investigation into organic production.

## Plenary Session: Lessons for Germany and the UK

### **Helen Browning, organic farmer (UK)**

- Public money for public benefits is the theme in the UK. The Government is disengaging itself from supporting farmers *per se*, who, like any other industry, must now live and die by the market. The assumption is that much cheap food will be imported, and that there will be fewer, larger farms.
- Small farmers will only survive by positioning themselves outside the price-competitive rat race of supplying the supermarkets and catering industry.
- We need to establish a second supply chain that works for small-scale producers at local/regional level, is environmentally sustainable, and maintains convenience for consumers. This will require local processing and collaborative marketing and distribution – ‘farmers can’t be expected to do everything’.
- This collaboration should extend to small farmers across Europe, with linkages on research, marketing and distribution. Small farmers in different parts of Europe have more in common with each other than with the rest of the supply chain in their own country where they are powerless against the big retailers and processors, who can buy produce and raw materials wherever they choose.

### **Kilian Delbrück, Head of Agriculture and Forestry, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Germany)**

- The current key concerns are the Fischler proposals for CAP reform, including cross-compliance, reforms of the 2nd Pillar, and decoupling.
- Progress is likely to be slow. The UK and German governments are in broad agreement on the CAP review process, but other member states have deep misgivings about radical reforms to CAP.
- Looking beyond Fischler, the significant questions are:
  - should agriculture be local or global?
  - should we continue to expect cheap food?
  - how will consumer behaviour develop?

### **Rudolf Strohmeier, Directorate-General for Agriculture, European Commission**

- The conference has viewed the problems of farming and food from the perspective of northern Europe. In southern Europe perspectives are different and the dichotomies are not always so great; for example, supermarkets stock organic produce as normal, non-specialist lines.
- Despite some opposition, there is general support for the Fischler proposals. The EU must have a coherent position on subsidy reform and tariffs – otherwise WTO negotiations will fall apart.



- The UK and Germany must overcome internal contradictions. The UK will have to accept that the British budget rebate cannot be kept out of the negotiations if the support structure of the CAP is to be reformed successfully. Germany must move to supporting the 2nd Pillar at the expense of the 1st.
- Much of EU farming is uncompetitive. How do we square regional protection with dealing with problems of export access from developing countries and countries in crisis, such as Argentina?

### **Graham Harvey, author and agricultural story editor, *The Archers* (UK)**

- In the urbanised UK, many people know little about food production – and so it is assumed that they are not interested. However, a recent citizens' jury found strong support for fewer pesticides, more organic food at competitive prices and no GM crops.
- GM crops are being introduced in an arrogant way – consumers are the last group to be considered.
- *The Archers* – 5 million listeners daily, 300,000 website hits per week with many discussions on food and farming – plays a major role in educating an urban population about farming. Every effort is made to be accurate about farming and farming issues.
- There is a huge audience for information about and a relationship with issues around food and farming – for a reconnection with the countryside. For years farm policy has been a dialogue between policymakers and business, with the ordinary citizen excluded. 'Whatever policies are introduced to make farming more successful, they will not work unless the population is behind them.'

### **Points from debate**

- Price is an issue for lower-income consumers. How far should we ensure that people on low incomes can buy high-quality food?
- The implications of the EU's eastward expansion must be considered. The CAP will come under different pressures, and 'western' farmers will experience increased competition.
- Equally, without financial support to southern Europe it is difficult to see why those member states will be enthusiastic about decoupling.
- More money for the 2nd Pillar must come from the northern EU states. The UK and Germany are the engines of reform, which is why their misgivings about the specifics of reform need to be overcome.
- Local/regional farm schemes make an important contribution to diversity, but very few succeed without public funding. The lesson is that if society cares about them resources must be invested.
- Germany and the UK are at the forefront of innovative thinking, and have an important role to play in defining the criteria for a modern agricultural policy. The different types of agriculture need to be distinguished and the differences explained to consumers.
- In the UK farming and food issues are presented very inaccurately, and there is little understanding of the crisis of the countryside. Small and medium-size farmers cannot make a living. We have to decide whether we want to have a countryside

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populated by significant numbers of farmers, or whether we feel that farming culture is irrelevant.

Two days of vigorous debate and discussion were concluded by a visit to Duchy Home Farm, Highgrove, where participants were able to see how one of the UK's most distinguished farmers, the Prince of Wales, puts the principles of sustainability into practice.