



Insight Report

EDITION 3

ANALYSIS

- Amid ongoing farmer protests over inheritance tax changes, DEFRA faces mounting industry concern about Sustainable Farming Incentive funding and the recent closure of capital grant schemes due to budget constraints.
- School food policy remains a key political battleground – from the Children’s Wellbeing Bill amendments to Scotland’s meal debt cancellation and the Holiday Activities and Food programme extension.

POLITICAL INSIGHTS

- DEFRA announced £7 million investment across five food security projects at [TUKFS’ Annual Conference](#) in York, bringing together DEFRA, FSA, FSS, and key stakeholders to address systemic food challenges, with Minister Daniel Zeichner MP announcing an expanded funding framework.
- Secretary of State Steve Reed MP’s [Oxford Farming Conference speech](#) restated DEFRA’s £5 billion commitment to support farmers’ transition to nature-friendly methods, and announced new monitoring of public sector food procurement with a 50% British, local, and environmental sourcing target.
- Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill [progressed](#) to committee stage, with amendments tabled on universal primary school meals, secondary breakfast clubs and auto-registration for free school meals. DfE [published](#) guidance for early adopter breakfast clubs.
- Committees for Advertising Practice (CAP) will now [strengthen industry guidance](#) ahead of October watershed implementation for food and drink advertising, triggering a further consultation phase.
- The Office for Environmental Protection’s latest progress report [highlights](#) slowing environmental progress, emphasising nature-friendly farming as top priority and calls for a Land Use Framework.
- EFRA Committee [launched](#) dual scrutiny initiatives, accepting evidence on fairness in food supply chains until 24 January, while conducting a second oral evidence session with DEFRA officials on farming future.
- Around 30 MPs [engaged](#) in backbench debate on the impact of food and diet on healthy weight, building on Lords’ inquiry report.

MEDIA INSIGHTS

- Farmer protests continued to dominate media coverage of government’s “[New Deal for Farmers](#)”.
- Scottish Greens’ [£3 million school meal debt cancellation](#) sparked UK-wide debate on school food policy implications.
- Keir Starmer and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson came under fresh pressure over children missing out on free meals, with MPs questioning the [exclusion of auto-enrolment](#) in the new Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- HFSS advertising regulations and obesity debate receives [increased attention](#) following parliamentary discussions and strengthened guidance announcements.
- [The Observer reported](#) that DfE will continue funding the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

CIVIL SOCIETY UPDATES

- Health coalition of 80+ organisations [call](#) for improvements to Healthy Start scheme, backed by high-profile support from chef [Tom Kerridge](#).
- Several environmental charities [expressed concern over loosening planning regulations](#) to support expansion of megafarms and intensive production units.
- New “[Bridging the Gap](#)” film launched showcasing successful projects integrating organic and local produce into low-income communities and schools.
- Lidl GB became the first UK supermarket to [commit](#) to increasing fibre as part of new healthy sustainable goals by 2030.
- Migrant farmworkers [staged](#) first London protests over labour conditions under the Seasonal Worker scheme.

