



# Policy Insight Report

## EDITION 5

## ANALYSIS

- New [Food Strategy Advisory Board](#) includes Food Foundation's Anna Taylor (Mandala/Fix our Food) alongside other experts, will be co-chaired by IGD and is accompanied by a cross-ministerial strategy group including DEFRA, DfE, MCHLG and DBT.
- DEFRA suspends SFI payments, with questions emerging about DEFRA farm support budgets.

## POLITICAL INSIGHTS

- Over 50 farming and environmental organisations have presented recommendations to the Treasury regarding DEFRA budget allocations in a [joint appeal](#).
- DEFRA [paused](#) new SFI applications as the allocated budget has been fully committed. [New data on uptake of agri-environment business schemes](#) and [agricultural land use statistics](#) were also published.
- Natural England will gain compulsory purchase powers over farmland and other green spaces for nature restoration projects in new [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#).
- DEFRA has also released the first [UK Pesticides National Action Plan](#) in a decade.
- Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill amendments on auto-enrolment for free school meals were withdrawn after Schools Minister Catherine McKinnell [indicated](#) DfE is exploring ways with DWP and Government Data Services to maximise uptake. Peter Lamb's [Private Members' Bill on auto-enrolment](#) was debated, then adjourned to 11 July.
- Parliament debated the [future of farming](#) on 13 March, with Norfolk MP Terry Jermy appealing against UK farming industrialization, ahead of Cranswick's proposal to redevelop pig and poultry mega farms in Methwold, which was [rejected](#) by the local council on 4 April.
- EFRA Committee wrote to Minister Daniel Zeichner MP about [supply chain fairness](#) (and has followed-up on 1 April oral session), while Alistair Carmichael MP tabled a new [Food Supply Chain Fairness Bill](#).
- House of Lords debated impact of [Soft Drinks Industry Levy](#) and potential future regulation for healthier food environments.

## MEDIA INSIGHTS

- Sarah Dyke MP wrote in the [Farmers Guardian](#) about farmers' concerns following DEFRA's decision to close SFI applications.
- Chancellor Rachel Reeves [dismissed rumours](#) that DfE is considering cutting Universal Infant Free School Meals as part of budget reductions, originally reported by [the Times](#).
- Barnardo's survey showed almost one in five UK parents buy unhealthy food weekly due to affordability constraints, as covered in [News and Star](#) and the [Mirror](#).
- [The Big Issue](#) spotlighted School Food Matters research revealing 1 in 4 teachers personally fund pupils' meals.

## CIVIL SOCIETY UPDATES

- Twenty-five NGOs including Sustain and the Food Foundation published [joint policy briefing](#) on public procurement for health and sustainability.
- Food Farming Countryside Commission report "[Paying the Price](#)" revealed UK farmers' incomes stagnant since 1970s.
- [Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation](#) warns factory farming undermines UK food security, threatening farmers' livelihoods and increasing import reliance.
- British Society of Soil Science launched "[Soil Matters](#)" podcast addressing critical soil health challenges.

