

Society of Biology response to EFRA enquiry "Greening the common agricultural policy"

Released on 25 November 2011

Summary (the full response can be downloaded as a PDF from this page)

1. The first responsibility of those developing and delivering the Common Agricultural Policy should be "do no harm".
2. A definition of permanent pasture/grassland is required which would differentiate between high nature value permanent grasslands, which are seriously threatened, and low nature value but high agricultural value intensively managed and reseeded grasslands.
3. High nature value grasslands require a clear definition and specific protection within the Common Agricultural Policy, which is lacking in the current proposals.
4. The benefits of proposed measures depend crucially on how they are implemented. Measures more clearly targeted on environmental outcomes are likely to be more effective.
5. We support significant investment through the CAP into research on and dissemination of methods for sustainable intensification.
6. If pillar one includes effective greening measures, this will free up well-targeted agri-environment schemes and budgets to address specific regional and ecological priorities.
7. While intensive farms should certainly be required to provide environmental benefits in return for support by the European taxpayer, much more effort needs to be made to develop policy instruments which also protect the most environmentally valuable farmland from intensification or abandonment.
8. Specific support for high nature value farming would be a big improvement to the current proposals.

9. Approaches such as paying the full costs of management for land which would otherwise be abandoned should be explicitly encouraged.