

WHAT CHANCES FOR SUSTAINABLE UK AGRICULTURE POLICIES AFTER BREXIT?

DEPARTMENT OF LAND ECONOMY

Environment, Law, and Economics

{WHERE} Mill Lane Lecture Room 4

{WHEN} Wednesday 2 November, 4-5pm

{SPEAKER}
Professor Janet Dwyer,
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{ABOUT THE SPEAKER}

Janet is Professor of Rural Policy and Director of the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire, UK, which is a specialist social science group researching a wide range of topics in rural/agri-policy and rural change. Her career includes 7 years working for a government environmental agency in England and 4 years at the environmental think-tank IEEP, based in London and Brussels, as well as time in academia. She is an experienced policy evaluator of EU agriculture, rural development and environmental policies, with expertise in integrated approaches, environmental sustainability, CAP reform, innovation and institutional adaptation. Current projects include the ex-post evaluation of England's Rural Development Programme, the preparation of Malta's new RDP, and a major pan-EU study on public goods and ecosystem services from farming and forestry. She is also a founder member of the Uplands Alliance, in England and fellow of the RSA.

The Brexit vote in June this year sets a considerable challenge to those seeking a more sustainable farm sector in the UK, in economic, environmental and social terms. Financially we can anticipate reduced direct support, particularly under the current Basic Payment Scheme (pillar 1). In respect of support explicitly targeted to environmental management and rural development, as well as support for the hills and uplands, less dramatic cuts may be foreseen. New trading relations might nevertheless cause significant upheaval in many sectors. It thus seems likely that policy and market developments will precipitate structural change, particularly in sectors most heavily dependent upon BSP such as sheep and beef, and a fair proportion of arable. There could be opportunities for expansion in currently under-served sectors such as horticulture and higher-value crops. The changes will expose UK farmers even more to the strategic choices of major food retailers and processors. If a post-Brexit UK positions itself as a 'beacon of free trade', UK food sector buying patterns will be critical to UK farming fortunes as a whole. The pursuit of sustainable agriculture might therefore require much more focus on food choices, CSR and producer bargaining power in future, in contrast to the dominance of its past emphasis upon agri-environment schemes and the mantra of 'public payments for public goods'.

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