

APPENDIX E – Extract from Commons Select Committee – Feeding the Nation

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Commons Select Committee

Government statistics inadequate for the needs of agriculture

Download the report

Read the report

27 April 2017

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee publishes its report into the agriculture and horticulture labour markets.

- ✦ Read the conclusions and recommendations
- ✦ Read the full report: Feeding the nation: labour constraints

Feeding the nation: labour constraints

The Report, *Feeding the nation: labour constraints*, was launched following claims that labour shortages could see food rotting in the fields. These labour shortages had reportedly got worse following the UK's vote to leave the EU.

The Committee's inquiry found that:

- ✦ The current problems facing the sector could become a crisis if urgent measures are not taken to fill gaps in the labour supply;
- ✦ Government statistics are inadequate for measuring agriculture's labour needs, particularly around seasonal migrant workers.
- ✦ The reintroduction of a Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme is "under review" and could be introduced in "five or six months" if the Government identified a need.

Chair's comment

Neil Parish MP, Chair of the Environment Food, and Rural Affairs Committee, said:

"Without sufficient labour, both from the UK and overseas, agricultural and horticultural businesses cannot function. For a long time the industry has relied on foreign workers to perform temporary and permanent roles to make good shortages in the availability of UK labour; UK agriculture could not function without foreign labour. The period since 23 June 2016 has seen increased difficulties for businesses recruiting foreign labour and has presented severe challenges for the industry.

Government statistics do not properly measure the problem and should be reviewed so that the sector is confident that post-Brexit immigration policies are based on an accurate assessment of agriculture's demand for, and supply of, foreign labour."

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