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**The Landworkers' Alliance**

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# NATURE-FRIENDLY FARMING MUST NOT BE SACRIFICED FOR UK FOOD SECURITY

- Ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on UK Food Security, agroecological farming union The Landworkers' Alliance (LWA) says food security does not have to come at the expense of environmental schemes on UK farms, and the solutions they offer to current and future crises.
- A Westminster Hall debate on UK Food Security is being held on Thursday, March 31 at 16.15 in Room 16, Westminster Palace. A Defra minister will give a government response.
- Dierdre Brock MP, (SNP) for Edinburgh North and Leith proposed the debate over concerns about food price and supply in the UK due to the war in Ukraine.

**Agroecological farming union The Landworkers' Alliance (LWA)** says food security does not have to come at the expense of environmental schemes on UK farms. It has released a statement ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on UK Food Security on Thursday March 31, prompted by the war in Ukraine.

**In proposing the debate, Deidre Brock, MP, (SNP) said:**

"I honestly feel that a debate on food security was needed even before the crisis in Ukraine, and it is now really urgent.... The crisis has also heightened existing concerns about the price and supply of food across the UK.... There has been a series of shocks in recent years, in terms of disrupted supply chains and new barriers to trade, so millions across the UK are already seeing their food bills escalate."

A Defra minister will give the government response at the Westminster Hall debate.

The LWA – a union representing over 2,000 small-scale agroecological farmers, foresters and land workers – says that calls to increase production and roll back environmental farming schemes will not increase the resilience of the UK food and farming sectors to future

shocks. It says the consequent environmental fallout would significantly outweigh any marginal increase in food output.

**The LWA [statement](#) on Concerns over UK Food Security in light of War in Ukraine says:**

*"The current global panic over food security sparked by the situation in Ukraine is a brutal reminder of the vulnerabilities which lie at the core of our globalised commodity food system; a system reliant on mass international trade, chemical inputs and fossil fuel power.*

*The Landworkers' Alliance wants to be clear that now more than ever we must be pushing for food and farming systems based on the principles of agroecology and food sovereignty. Measures to improve short-term food security need not, and must not, compromise the longer-term need for environmentally sustainable and resilient food systems."*

**Full statement here:**

<https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/LWA-Statement-on-Food-Security-in-light-of-Ukraine-War-1-1.pdf>

The LWA is asking for reassurances from Defra and devolved ministries in Wales and Scotland that they will stick to implementing the necessary schemes to boost environmental sustainability and resilience on UK farms as part of their Agricultural Transition plans, despite valid concerns over food price and supply.

**Rebecca Laughton, Campaigns Coordinator at the LWA, says:**

*"At the Landworkers' Alliance, we welcome the move from land-based payments to payments based solely on the delivery of public goods, as the protection and restoration of our soils, water, biodiversity and climate are critical to our future food security and resilience.*

*If anything we should be moving faster, and more boldly, towards a payment system that rewards only those farmers who are combining environmental stewardship with food production. Now, more than ever, farmers need certainty around policy and payments so that they can make decisions about the future of their farms with confidence, so we urge MPs and policy-makers not to be deflected from implementing the full Environmental Land Management Scheme as soon as possible."*

**Notes to editors:**

- The LWA statement follows responses from other farming unions over concerns about food security. The National Farmers Union in Scotland have called for a moratorium on support scheme rules which would allow for land designated as 'Ecological Focus Areas' to be planted with crops and legumes in response to the threat of food shortages.
- In England, there are concerns over whether or not Defra will remain true to their word in implementing the Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMS) which have been designed to foster more environmentally sustainable farming practices, but have been unfairly criticised by the NFU and others as posing a threat to agricultural productivity.

- The Landworkers' Alliance is a grassroots union of farmers, foresters and land-based workers in the UK. <https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/>
- Link with more information and to watch the debate live: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/202/backbench-business-committee/news/165135/westminster-hall-to-hold-a-general-debate-on-food-security/>
- The Landworkers' Alliance have also added their signature to this letter to Defra from Sustain, the alliance for food and farming, which was published in the Times on Saturday March 26: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/00055a18-ac5c-11ec-8da7-c2b9b8c9eee5?shareToken=bd4a022e1e35f7b7401d3490e013f7a9>