

**To: NFU Suffolk, British Sugar, Suffolk Agricultural Association, Country Landowners Association**

June 10<sup>th</sup> 2024

**Suffolk Lib Dems**  
**Agricultural Manifesto**

**Brexit Rules & Botched Trade Deals have Created a 'Perfect Storm' for Suffolk Farmers in 2024 say Suffolk Lib Dems.**



West Suffolk Parliamentary Candidate Henry Batchelor (left) talking with a local farmer in Hawkedon.

Suffolk Parliamentary Candidates Henry Batchelor and Peter McDonald believe Brexit and botched trade deals are piling more pain on top of a drop in farm incomes as a result of commodity prices and spring flooding.

Farming is a corner-stone of the Suffolk economy. Norfolk & Suffolk together grow 12% of the UK's cereals, 17% of the fruit & vegetables and 60% of the UK's sugar. This is as well as raising 23% of the

Published and promoted by Zigurds Kronbergs on behalf of Henry Batchelor (Liberal Democrats) both at 43 The Green, Barrow, IP29 5AA

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UK's pigs, 18% of the poultry, and not to mention a huge sheep population. Source: \*Source: Norfolk & Suffolk Unlimited.

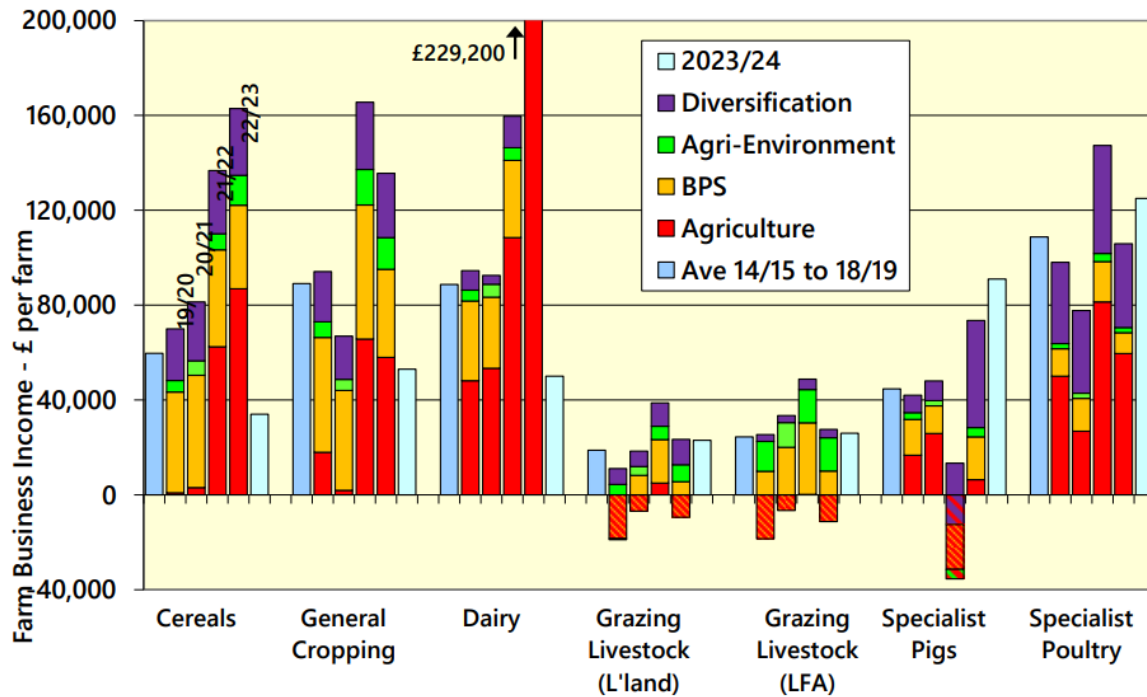
In an official statement, Liberal Democrats Henry Batchelor and Peter McDonald, Parliamentary Candidates for West Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds + Stowmarket respectively, reflected on this: "Suffolk Farmers are gradually losing their EU Basic Payment which was £210/ha and the funds available from the Government Sustainable Farm Incentive and Environmental Land Management Schemes are far from replacing this."

They add: "the impact of Brexit on the fruit & veg sector with limited immigration visas, the impact on pig production from lack of butchers, the limitation on European vets for certifications and the botched trade deals which impact on lamb pricing have together created a perfect storm for Suffolk farmers".

UK Farm incomes overall have fallen dramatically, as reported by the national agricultural advisers Andersons in their April 2024 update:

<https://theandersonscentre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Farming-In-Focus-03-2024.pdf>

## Farm Incomes by Sector 2019/20 to 2022/23



Additionally in March 2024, the Andersons Centre predicted a 10.5% drop in economic output from the UK sheep sector, which is a backbone of Suffolk farming.

Spring flooding has led to huge potential crop losses, as reported by Andrew Blenkiron (previously from Euston Estate) in March 2024.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-68456818>

The Lib Dem Agricultural Manifesto proposed an additional £970m for the UK Agriculture Budget overall and above the current £2.6bn by the end of the Parliament and includes:

- Introducing a range of other 'public money for public goods' programmes, such as nature recovery, planting trees and protecting wildlife, contingent on farmers and land managers opting into an Environmental Land Management scheme.
- Exploring additional funding options to ensure an intelligent transition to better farming practices.
- Investing in rural and coastal infrastructure and services, including local abattoirs, so that communities are viable and can attract and retain workers, particularly from younger age groups.
- Using public procurement policy to support the consumption of food produced to high standards of environmental and social sustainability, and which is nutritious, healthy and locally and seasonally sourced.

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- Renegotiating the Australia and New Zealand trade agreements in line with our objectives for health, environmental and animal welfare standards, withdrawing from them if that cannot be achieved.
- Ensuring immigrants who have waited over 3 months for their claim to be processed can access short-term work visas to allow to temporarily fill shortages such as those in the agriculture industry.
- Signing veterinary and phytosanitary agreements with the European Union to reduce trade friction affecting many farmers at present.

We will ensure our farming and food system is on an environmentally sustainable footing by:

- Ensuring farmers receive proper, independent advice about how to transition to new environmental farm payments schemes, with proper funding for advice services.
- Supporting farmers to reduce the pollution of rivers, streams and lakes.
- Working with and rewarding farmers to reduce the use of costly imported and environmentally harmful artificial fertilisers and pesticides, helping to protect bees and other pollinators.
- Introducing a Research and Innovation Fund to support new and emerging technologies in the sector including the development of alternative proteins in which the UK can become a world leader.

#### **Primary Contact for this Manifesto:**

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