

The Editor
The Times

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Dear Sir

The EU Commissioners had the opportunity to recommend much needed reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. This vital opportunity has been squandered under the influence of groups intent on keeping the status quo.

The proposals made by the Commission in July last year were progressive and brave. Two fundamental elements were: the movement of funds from subsidising intensive agriculture across to more environmental, animal welfare and rural development measures; and, the severing of the link between subsidies and production, which would remove incentives for farmers to overproduce surplus food to dump on world markets. They also would have required all farmers to meet environmental and animal welfare standards before they could receive public funds.

The Commission's resolve for reform has weakened, the new package is unlikely to make much difference for our beleaguered wildlife, heritage, countryside and rural economies.

This government has championed the reform of the CAP; we urge them to continue to do this. To fail to achieve reform now will not only affect the environment, livelihoods and health of people across Europe, but also those of others around the world.

Yours

Amy Coyte	Bat Conservation Trust
Matt Shardlow	Buglife, the Invertebrate Conservation Trust
Duncan Green	CAFOD
Kevan Bundell	Christian Aid
Tim Lang	City University
Joyce D'Silva	Compassion in World Farming
George Lambrick	Council for British Archaeology
Vicki Elcoate	Council for National Parks
Kate Parminter	CPRE
Jeremy Faull	Ecological Foundation
Tim Lobstein	Food Commission
Tony Juniper	Friends of the Earth
Bill Vorley	Institute for International Environment and Development
Fiona Reynolds	National Trust
Elaine King	National Federation of Badger Groups
Kate Ashbrook	Open Spaces Society
Jane Smart	Plantlife
Nick Barrett	Ramblers' Association
Graham Wynne	RSPB
Mike Hart	Small and Family Farmers Alliance
Simon Lyster	The Wildlife Trusts
Tony Richardson	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Mike Townsend	Woodland Trust