

cedp

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH



From the Minister

nbpm  
DWB  
3/7

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 3EB

2 July 1984

Thank you for your letter of 22 June in response to mine of 14 June, about UK Environmental Achievements. I have also seen a copy of yours of 18 June to Nicholas Ridley.

I fear I am still left with the impression that you have not fully appreciated the very real changes which we have made in the past few years in order to achieve the right balance between agriculture and conservation. I am equally concerned at the impression which your letters give that the 1981 Act will be largely ineffective in achieving its intended goals. There is very little evidence that this is the case; indeed, it would be surprising if there were, given the fact that it has been in full operation for less than two years. Perhaps more significantly, I am worried by the absence of any real recognition of the increasingly important role which farmers themselves are playing in furthering conservation, often at considerable personal cost, and the fact that effective conservation cannot be achieved other than through the full co-operation and active participation of the farming industry.

By all means let us consider ways of improving the operation of the 1981 Act. I am also, as I indicated in my earlier letter, looking at the possibility of including in the EC's agricultural structures directives a provision to safeguard areas of

/environmental ....

Environmental Affairs P.2 ACIDRAIN

environmental importance. I do however hope you will agree that our consideration of these issues should be based on what is currently happening, rather than on what has happened in the past, and on what is likely to represent the most effective means of encouraging farmers to pursue desirable conservation objectives.

I shall be writing round separately on Nicholas Ridley's suggestion of an initiative in Europe to take land out of farming.

I am copying this letter as before, to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*James Ewart*  
*Michael*

MICHAEL JOPLING



cc DP

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

n bpm  
2mb  
25/6

My ref:

Your ref:

22 June 1984

Dear Michael,

Many thanks for your letter of 14 June about our booklet UK Environmental Achievements.

I note your view, shared by others, that we did not in this booklet make enough of our achievements in protecting wildlife and the countryside, and indeed I am happy to look for future opportunities, as you suggest, for getting our story across. I sympathise with your views on the unbalanced nature of some of the criticisms of our policies, and I agree entirely on the credit due for the efforts being made to reduce the excesses of CAP.

But we must also not be complacent. Of course it would be absurd for conservation reasons to try to stifle general progress and development in agriculture. As you say, the landscape which so many are keen to conserve today is itself the product of past changes in practice. But there are none the less grounds for concern. A lot of the change now taking place has a pace and scale not experienced in the past. Much of the charm of British landscape lies in its variety. This applies both to richer lowland country with hedge and copse and to wider areas of heath and moor in the uplands. It is this variety which is often at risk with current changes. Further, there can be no doubt that since the war there has been extensive destruction of wildlife habitats in this country with resulting loss of fauna and flora. We cannot afford to discover five years on that the Wildlife and Countryside Act has not curbed this destructive trend.

For all these reasons we need to take an early relook at the Act and the way it is working. Hence the importance of the discussion we are shortly to have with the Prime Minister on the basis of a paper which our officials are currently working up. Hence also the value of following up Nicholas Ridley's helpful suggestion of an initiative in Europe to take land out of intensive farming and thus serve the two objectives of reducing agricultural surplusses and conserving countryside.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Your ever  
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN

Environmental Affairs Pt 2

Acid Rain

25 JUN 1984



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

18 June 1984

*nbpm  
DMS  
19/6*

*Dear Nick,*

*with BB*

Thank you for your letter of 6 June about the booklet on Environmental Achievements. This has now been published, and so there is no possibility of adding to it. You do however raise the interesting question whether we should undertake in the EC an initiative to take large areas of farmland out of intensive agricultural use and conserve them as "natural" countryside.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act does of course provide in this country a framework for action by the Nature Conservancy Council and local authorities to conserve particular areas of countryside and in pursuance of a remit from the Prime Minister I shall be consulting colleagues shortly on possible ways of strengthening the Act and modifying the related compensation arrangements. Officials are currently engaged in preparatory work. I think however that in this exercise we shall be primarily considering measures which are within our national discretion.

As you imply, a successful initiative to reduce agricultural surpluses by taking land out of intensive agricultural use would depend upon the cooperation of other EC countries. I have no doubt that would be hard to obtain, and would in any event take a long time to negotiate, but it seems worth considering. I suggest therefore, subject to Michael Jopling's views, that officials examine this possibility and report on it as a further stage to the work currently in train on measures to strengthen the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

I am copying this letter to Michael Jopling and to the other recipients of your letter (other members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong).

*Yours ever  
Patrick*

PATRICK JENKIN

ENV AFFAIRS: Acid Rain  
Pt 2



From the Minister

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

pa 2mb  
18/6  
a DP

Prime Minister<sup>(4)</sup>

To be aware. As you know, not  
all colleagues share MAFF's  
enthusiasm for the Wildlife and  
Countryside Act June 1984

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 3EB

DWB  
14/6

UK ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS

See P41

I have been interested to read the booklet on environmental achievements, circulated with your Private Secretary's letter of 29 May, and the subsequent correspondence. Although now it is too late to do anything about it, I share the view that the booklet could have made more of what we have done to protect wildlife and the countryside. It is a great pity that we as Ministers give the impression that we are apologetic or defensive about the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This plays straight into the hands of our political opponents. Instead we should be much more positive about it - the Act was, after all, a considerable step forward, and we should say so.

If there are specific weaknesses in the Act that need to and can be put right, consistently with the Act's principles and in a way that is self-contained and does not reopen all the issues again, let us have a look at what can be done. This does not necessarily mean legislation - I have an idea that it might be possible to deal by administrative action with the main problems that the so-called "3 months loophole" might be causing. I note that your department is working on this. Should we not ask our respective officials to get together on it?

I see that Nicholas Ridley, in his letter to you on the subject, describes Kenneth Carlisle's CPC booklet as "excellent". I am afraid that I cannot agree with him. It strikes me that it unfortunately shows some of the same weaknesses as the attacks on our policy by our opponents. Those attacks usually consist of generalisations which are not factually based, or are based on partial or distorted "facts", or on events that occurred many years ago. They give no recognition to the changes we have made over the

last 2 or 3 years in our policies and practices relating to agriculture and conservation, the effects of which are still working through. They give no recognition to the fact that we, often in a minority of one, have been striving to reduce the excesses of the CAP - which in the public eye so often underlie the sharpest conflicts between agriculture and conservation - and that we at last are having some real success.

Nor is there any recognition that agriculture represents the principal land use over four-fifths of surface of England and Wales, and that it is the farming industry which has created the countryside as we know it today. The official conservation bodies themselves recognise that an efficient and prosperous agriculture is essential in order to achieve effective conservation. There is therefore the need to strike the right balance between the needs of agriculture and the interests of conservation, and it is important that both our agricultural and conservation policies reflect this.

I accept that we cannot stand still. As you know, in Brussels John MacGregor and I, and my officials, have been pressing that the EC's agricultural structures directives, which are now being reviewed, should pay more regard to environmental considerations. We have already made some proposals to that end. I am wondering whether we can go further. I have asked my officials to look into the possibility of including in the directives a provision for schemes to safeguard areas of environmental importance. I accept that any such initiative will have to be contained within the overall finances available for the directive, and not lead to increased expenditure. If my officials can come up with feasible proposals, I shall put them to my colleagues.

The agricultural community - and we in our policies - now recognise the importance of reconciling the needs of agriculture and of conservation. I wish I could say the same for all the conservationist lobby. Lord Melchett's recent presidential address to the Ramblers Association is a notorious example of the way some of the more extreme conservationists are not prepared to give us credit for anything we do.

All in all therefore I believe we have a reasonably good story to tell on agriculture and conservation, and that the position is steadily being improved. I do not think we need to be apologetic about it. I invite my colleagues to join Ministers in my department in stressing our positive achievements. I shall happily provide notes for those who wish to do so.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*James Funnell*  
*M. Jopling*

MICHAEL JOPLING







DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

pa  
Dus  
7/6

CE/D  
Prime Minister<sup>2</sup>

Mr Ridley suggests an initiative in the Community to take land out of agriculture. Await colleagues?  
6 June 1984

Dus  
6/6

ms

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
Room N16/05  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

Dear Patrick

UK ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS

PA 315.84

I agree with Arthur Cockfield's comments on the booklet on Environmental achievements, and share his concern about the public perception of our farming policy. The protection of the countryside and of wildlife is rightly of great and growing public concern, and we ought to have a better tale to tell.

I have just read Kenneth Carlisle's excellent CPC booklet "Conserving the Countryside", which makes alarming reading. It confirms, to my mind, the need for us to give a stronger lead.

My view is that the issue of protecting the natural countryside and wildlife habitats is inextricably bound up with farming policy, and that is bound up with the Common Agricultural Policy. To make progress I believe we ought to plan an initiative within Europe, expressed in terms of a deliberate policy of taking land out of intensive agricultural production across the Community in order to preserve and extend natural countryside areas. The Americans have succeeded in setting aside something like 50 million acres. I see no reason why the EEC Member States cannot agree to a set aside policy too. This would make a sizeable contribution to reducing surpluses.

I think this issue is of great political importance and I therefore suggest it would be a good idea to establish a working party to formulate a policy designed to reverse the process of despoilation of the countryside. If we can persuade Europe to adopt such a policy we would achieve two of our objectives - ~~protecting~~ important sites and reducing European farm production.

I am copying this letter to recipients of your Private Secretary's letter.

Nicholas Ridley

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

Env Affairs. Acid Rain Pt 2

JN 1984

11 12 11  
0 2  
9 73  
8 4  
7 6 5