



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG  
01-233 3000

13 July 1984

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP  
Minister for Agriculture

*Wagner  
Dubs  
17/7*

*Dear Minister,*

**EC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES PROPOSALS AND CONSERVATION**

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of today to Geoffrey Howe.

I am afraid that I do in fact see difficulties in your proposal to make a major policy initiative on conservation in the context of the EC agricultural structures regulations. I am sure that there must first be collective discussion between us or at least our officials on the form which such measures might take and of their potential cost before any such initiative could be launched.

I have no objection to your continuing to press for some reference in the draft regulation to the need for agricultural investment to take account of conservation interests. Nor do I oppose your suggestion that the high level group of officials which is working on the structures package should be asked to consider whether the present draft strikes the correct balance between agricultural and the environment. But, as I said when the original negotiating brief was cleared with ODE in March, I cannot agree to any substantive proposal which would make it more difficult to obtain our agreed overall objective of holding down the cost of the structures package. This would be an unacceptable hostage to fortune as far as UK public expenditure is concerned.

I understand your desire to be seen to be making a positive response to the recent House of Lords report, given the considerable public interest in the question of consultation. The initiative you are proposing does not seem to me, however, to be consistent with either our general economic policy or the need to restrain public expenditure. The best way of dealing with these conflicting demands would be, I feel, for the United Kingdom to propose that member States could (or indeed should) cease to reduce the payment of investment assistance to agriculture in environmentally sensitive areas.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe and the other recipients of yours.

*Yours sincerely,  
Nigel Lawson*

NIGEL LAWSON

*approved by the Chancellor & signed  
on his behalf.*



Euro Pol = CAP Pt 12

18 JUL 1984  
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From the Minister

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

*Pa. Dub  
20/7*

*CC NO*

*Prime Minister (2)*

*To note. The Chancellor objected to  
Mr Topping's proposals, and they  
will now be discussed in OD(E).*

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
Parliament Street  
London SW1P 3AG

18 July 1984

*Dub  
18/7*

*Nigel Lawson*

*ms*

**EC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES PROPOSALS AND CONSERVATION**

Thank you for your letter of 13 July which, as I told you when I telephoned from Brussels yesterday, came as a great disappointment. I was even more disappointed that, in the course of our conversation, I was unable to persuade you to take a more sympathetic view of the initiative that Patrick Jenkin and I think is urgently needed if the Government is to assert a credible and positive approach towards conservation.

In view of what you said, I simply took the line at the Council of Ministers yesterday that the High Level Group of officials should be asked as a matter of urgency to examine the present structures regulations to see if it strikes the right balance between agricultural production and conservation. This at least serves the purpose of keeping the matter in play for the time being. In making my request, I did of course acknowledge that conservation could be supported under the investment aids provisions of the present structures proposals and also in less favoured areas. But I think we must press the High Level Group to look at the problem more broadly and consider whether, in the regulation as a whole, the conservation interest is adequately protected and, more positively, suitably encouraged.

More immediately, we have to decide what the Government spokesman should say when the House of Lords, on Monday, debates the Report on Agriculture, and the Environment. In view of the criticisms which have been made of the Government's position I am convinced that we need to seize the initiative on Monday and announce the course of action I set out in my original letter of 13 July.

Since we have not been able to agree, I have asked for an urgent meeting of OD(E). I am therefore copying this letter to the Prime Minister and Geoffrey Howe, and to other members of OD(E), as well as to Patrick Jenkin and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Michael Jopling*

MICHAEL JOPLING



Euro Pol. CAP Pt12

18 JUL 1984

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SE NO

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



From the Minister

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign  
and Commonwealth Affairs  
Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AL

Prime Minister (2)  
Mr Topling seeks amendments to  
the Structures Directive to take  
greater account of conservation  
interests.

13 July 1984  
Content, subject to colleagues?

Yes  
dms  
13/7

EC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES PROPOSALS AND CONSERVATION

At next week's Council of Agriculture Ministers, starting on Monday, the Presidency will be seeking the Council's guidance on a number of issues arising from the agricultural structures proposals. I shall have no difficulty in following the line already agreed with OD(E) colleagues - with one exception, and that concerns conservation.

I believe that we now have to take a major conservation initiative, which would allow the Government to achieve a greater integration of farming and conservation under the agricultural structures measures. The House of Lords Report on Agriculture and the Environment published earlier this week is strongly critical of our policies on this point and I have no doubt that there will be widespread support for their views when the Report is debated on 23rd July. The Government would earn considerable credit in responding to the Report if we were able to announce the initiative that I have in mind.

We are already doing a great deal to aid conservation under our farm capital grants schemes. Additionally there is some limited scope under Article 3(5) of the Less Favoured Areas Directive for us to designate land of high conservation value and assist certain types of grazing livestock. But Article 3(5) is not in my view a suitable vehicle for areas which are not naturally disadvantaged. (The Halvergate Marshes with their highly productive cereal-growing potential are a good case in point). What is clearly needed is a more general provision in the structures regulation which would enable Member States if they so wished, to define (and provide assistance to) areas of special conservation value where the continuation of certain types of farming was necessary to protect the conservation interest.

Next week's Council meeting will be the last before the summer break and if we are to make reasonable progress with an initiative along these lines, it is essential that I launch it then. We must not lose this opportunity, and for the purposes of this forthcoming Council I intend to make a general statement:

/(i) drawing attention to...

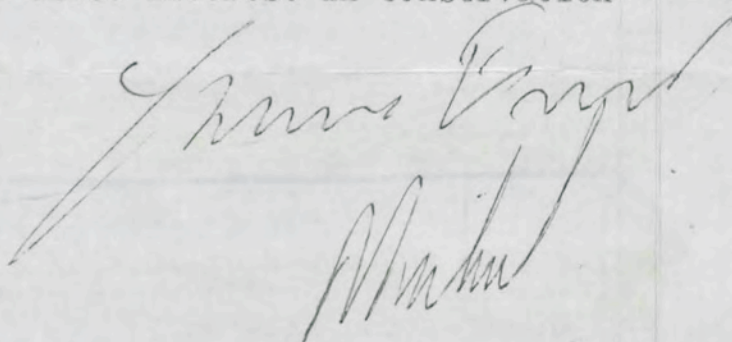


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- (i) drawing attention to the deficiencies and limitations of the Commission's current proposals as they concern conservation; and
  - (ii) signifying my intention to table amendments which would enable Member States to define areas of special conservation value and adopt in them the measures currently available only to land designated under Article 3(5) of the LFA Directive.

The vital point is that, as a Government, we are professing great concern for conserving the environment and if this is to be taken seriously it is essential to ensure conservation provisions in the new structures measures which will provide a framework within which we can develop policies appropriate to UK conditions. The way in which we might use such enabling powers would of course be a matter for subsequent discussion with colleagues. Obviously too, the terms of any textual amendments to the regulation, and the cost implications, would need to be looked at by our respective officials. Subject to that understanding I do not expect that my immediate intentions will cause difficulties for colleagues.

I am convinced that we must grasp this opportunity to show our commitment to conservation and set an imaginative lead for our Community partners. I know that this would be widely welcomed by responsible conservation bodies and also by the farming industry.

I am copying this letter to other members of OD(E) and to Jim Prior, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Patrick Jenkin and Sir Robert Armstrong. I am also sending a copy to the Prime Minister in view of her close interest in conservation policies.



A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James Younger', is written over the bottom right portion of the page. Below it, there is a smaller, less legible handwritten mark.

MICHAEL JOPLING



cc 10  
PK



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)  
01-233 (Llinell Union)  
6106  
Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

WELSH OFFICE  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)  
01-233 (Direct Line)  
6106  
From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

nbpm  
DWB  
19/7

19 July 1984

Dear Minister

EC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES PROPOSALS AND CONSERVATION

I have seen your letter of 13 July addressed to Geoffrey Howe about the initiative you proposed to take in the Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels this week. I have also seen the comments of Nigel Lawson and Patrick Jenkin.

Whilst I can understand the misgivings the Chancellor has about possible conflicts with our general economic policy and the risks of increased public expenditure I strongly share your view and that of Patrick Jenkin that a major initiative at this time to achieve greater integration of farming and conservation is necessary.

As a territorial Minister with responsibilities on both sides I am continually reminded of the need for the parties to be encouraged to work together in harmony rather than for disharmony to develop. What you are now proposing will help to achieve this goal. If we do not make such efforts now the pressures will increase substantially and quickly. I would much prefer us to be making a positive proposal now than to try to ride out the storm and have to yield in the end to pressure, which I feel sure we should have to do.

/ I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe and other members of OD(E), colleagues in Scotland and Northern Ireland and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,  
C. H. Jones

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP  
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

(Approved by the  
Secretary of State and  
signed in his absence)



18 JUL 1984



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PT 12





SCOTTISH OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

cc/c  
NO

DB

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP  
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Whitehall Place  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HH

Wagon  
DUB  
25/7

19 July 1984

Dear Michael,

EC AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES PROPOSALS - CONSERVATION

With the changing of the time for OD(E) tomorrow I will not, unfortunately, be able to be present or to be represented and I am therefore writing to indicate my position.

I am very conscious of current conservation pressures and can therefore understand your wish to be seen to take an initiative, particularly one relevant to those areas in England which are not LFAs and which have been giving rise to special problems. I therefore support you in your proposal to announce in Monday's Debate in the Lords an initiative on the lines of that set out in your letter of 13 July.

Should agreement be reached tomorrow then I suggest we will need to watch carefully what develops in Brussels. There my prime concern is that we should safeguard HLCAs, currently under attack from the French with support from other Member States. I would not want there to be any risk of our diverting negotiating capital which we need for that task to the conservation issue. We will also need to watch the financial implications overall. The UK cannot be seen arguing for an overall increase in resources devoted to structures; nor can we readily contemplate diversion of resources which should be devoted to genuine agricultural projects. Nevertheless I agree with you it would be a valuable advance if we were able to write into the structure proposals something which would give Member States room for sensible manoeuvre in dealing with conservation aspects of agricultural proposals.

There will clearly need to be detailed inter-Departmental consideration of the implications of any proposal you make and I will leave any further comment to that stage. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and Geoffrey Howe, to members of OD(E) and to Patrick Jenkin and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,  
George





20 250

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

no pwr  
2nd  
17/7

16 July 1984

Dear Chancellor

AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES DIRECTIVE

CVAR  
File with  
DB

I understand that you had reservations about Michael Jopling's proposal to take an initiative at tomorrow's Council of Ministers to import a new title into the Regulations under the Structures Directive to permit the making of agricultural grants to assist farming activities which would conserve landscape and wildlife.

I am writing to say that I strongly support Michael's ideas here. They are very much in line with some of the positive ideas which came out of the Lords' Select Committee, and which we have been considering within DOE. I see major political advantages in being able to make grants to encourage positive conservation measures, rather than as it appears at the moment making grants under management agreements purely to secure negative actions on the part of farmers. Indeed, in the paper I am having prepared for the Prime Minister, I intend to argue for just this sort of scheme. It would enable the Government to re-establish our position, at a time when we face a degree of criticism, and help us to take a positive stance.

As to any resource effects, I understand that the details of any scheme are still to be worked up in full consultation with Treasury, and that we would have freedom within UK legislation to decide how any scheme would work.

I very much hope that you will be willing to agree that Michael should take this initiative at Tuesday's Council.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe and other members of OD(E), the territorial Secretaries of State and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,  
Armstrong

for PATRICK JENKIN

(checked by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)



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18 JUL 1984