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



From the Minister

**PERSONAL**

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
No 10 Downing Street  
Whitehall  
London SW1A

21 November 1985

*Dear Prime Minister*

On return from my visit to China and my subsequent attendance at the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Brussels, I have seen the correspondence which Sir Derek Barber has had with your Office, which was copied to mine, about your 'conservation' lunch on 25 November. (I had not previously heard about this lunch.)

*at own  
of PAP.*

The issue to which Derek Barber refers - the probability of land being removed from food production and the question of its alternative use - is an active one. Derek Barber has been giving a lot of thought to it, and although by no means all his suggestions are sensible, some of his points are valid. You may recall that I sent you, under cover of your minute of 30 September, a paper very much addressed to this issue. Because of its political sensitivity, which both you and I recognise and to which Willie Whitelaw referred, I have given that paper no wider circulation, and do not propose to do so until you decide that you wish it to be considered further. Ministers from the Department of the Environment therefore have not seen it. Still less have outsiders - though you will find that the factual forecasts in it are now the subject of general discussion. You may care to refresh your mind on the contents of my paper before your lunch.

You will, I know, appreciate that those invited to your lunch - all articulate, some of them very responsible - will be speaking from one particular perspective. If you wished, I could recommend to you participants in a similar lunch, which could give you another, complementary, perspective. I genuinely believe that these days we can - as a matter of both principle and fact - speak about 'complementary' rather than 'conflicting' interests in most environmental matters.

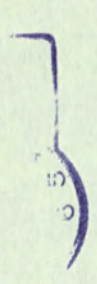
In due course I would be glad to hear - as far as my responsibilities are concerned - how your lunch goes.

*Yours truly  
Michael*

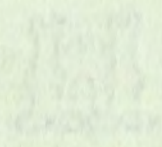
MICHAEL JOPLING

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