



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture

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APPG Inquiry - Farming Innovations to Deliver Net Zero

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture has launched an inquiry, including a three-month call for written evidence closing on 14 December 2022, into the technologies, innovations and practices which can help British agriculture deliver on the UK's net zero commitments.

The starting point for the inquiry is that climate change should be tackled by encouraging new green technologies and scientific innovations, rather than measures which might harm economic growth and living standards.

Plans in other countries, such as the imposition of emissions reductions targets in the Netherlands and Ireland, suggest that agriculture is often seen as a soft target for climate action. Indeed, Defra chief scientist Professor Gideon Henderson referred to ruminant livestock as the 'low hanging fruit' for short-term GHG reductions when he spoke to the All-Party Group in January this year.

His comments came just a few weeks before the European Commission announced the [approval](#) of the feed additive Bovaer which has been shown to consistently reduce methane emissions by 30% in dairy cattle and by up to 90% in beef cattle. Other innovations, such as more digestible grass and forage crop varieties, and uptake of better livestock genetics, can support further reductions.

In the House of Commons in July, the All-Party Group's chair Julian Sturdy MP asked the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, President of the COP 26 climate change conference, if he agreed that "net zero should be achieved through rolling-out low carbon technology and scientific solutions, such as the Gene Editing Bill, rather than measures that dampen economic growth and depress living standards?"

Alok Sharma replied that this was "absolutely right. Green technologies and innovations are what is going to help us achieve the net zero target." He agreed that gene editing, which allows for more food to be produced from crops and animals using fewer resources, was a good example of this.

Commenting on the exchange, Julian Sturdy said:

"It is encouraging that Ministers appear to support action on climate change which looks to science and innovation rather than arbitrary targets, bans or restrictions on economic activity. Our aim through this inquiry is to strengthen the evidence base for this pro-innovation approach."

"We are confident this call will highlight many exciting examples of how advances in areas such as plant and animal breeding, precision agriculture, data science, indoor farming and other sectors can help reduce GHG emissions from agriculture."

“We are therefore inviting individuals and organisations, over the next three months closing on 14 December 2022, to submit written evidence on the range of farming technologies, innovations and practices which can help farmers reduce their climate footprint. The resulting information will be used to produce a report highlighting the potential for science and innovation in agriculture to help the UK deliver on its net zero commitments.”

“This report will in turn be presented to Ministers to help inform policy on climate action,” said Mr Sturdy.

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Notes

Written submissions to the inquiry, which should be as concise as possible (not more than 3000 words), should be sent by email to inquiry@appg-agscience.org.uk and should include a name and point of contact. The closing date for submissions is 14 December 2022.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture exists to promote debate among politicians and other stakeholders on the value and role of scientific innovation in UK agriculture. The Group works to ensure that the Government’s support for agri-science is maintained and strengthened, that the regulatory environment is evidence-based and enabling, and that the contribution of modern agriculture to our society, economy and environment is valued and understood as widely as possible.

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