

ELIZABETH TRUSS MP

Constituency Office:
The Limes
32 Bridge Street
Thetford
Norfolk IP24 3AG
Tel: 01842 757 345



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Westminster Office:
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7151

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POST ROOM

Rt Hon. Owen Paterson MP
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,
Nobel House,
17 Smith Square,
London,
SW1P 3JR

Friday, 01 February 2013

Dear Owen,

I recently held a forum for farmers in my constituency to discuss how policy is affecting them. I wanted to write to you to raise the concerns that they presented to me. I would be grateful if you could consider these issues so that I can provide my constituents with a full response.

The most pressing issue is that the European Commission has announced that the reformed CAP scheme will probably not be implemented before 2015. However, there is uncertainty about whether the RDP will be able to begin in 2014, or whether that will also be delayed. Also with regard to HLS schemes, there was strong encouragement for historical features to be included.

The question of why abstraction licences are limited to five months, rather than being based on river flow to vital irrigation water to be taken when it is available was also raised.

Although many farmers were appreciative that the number of farm inspections has reduced, there was a view that veterinary inspections, especially for cattle, have increased.

Concerns were raised about the closing of the SAWS scheme after December 2013, and the possible shortage of agricultural workers that will result.

The question of what contingency for continuing the agricultural subsidy regime is going to be made if there is a referendum and we come out of Europe was also raised.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Truss MP