



Media Release

Friday 8th March 2013

Countdown for the countryside 5 days left to urge MEPs to vote for nature-friendly farming

A group of 11 wildlife organisations has come together through the Joint Links group [1] to urge everyone to press their MEPs to vote for farming that supports nature in one of the most significant votes ever held in the European Parliament.

Over 40,000 people have already sent a message to their MEPs using the website uk.farmingfornature.eu that was launched earlier this week.

Jenna Hegarty, Senior Agricultural Policy Officer at the RSPB and member of the Wildlife and Countryside Link Agriculture Working Group said: “With 5 days left until the vote, we’re urging MEPs to champion wildlife-friendly farming by voting for a truly green CAP. In these financially-straitened times it’s vital the public money spent on farming is invested in measures which will benefit the environment and the long-term future of the industry.”

Helen Perkins, Living Landscapes Development Manager with The Wildlife Trusts and member of the Wildlife and Countryside Link Agriculture Working Group said: “We saw how MEPs responded to public pressure on EU fisheries policy – now we really need them to do the same for our countryside. We need as many people as possible to email their MEPs in the next few days if we are to swing this knife-edge vote in nature’s favour.”

In particular, this group of organisations is asking Members of the European Parliament to vote to:

- Ensure all farmers and land managers undertake ‘greening’ measures that will help protect and restore nature in return for direct payments from the CAP
- Reject double subsidies where a farmer or land manager would be paid twice for the same activity, to ensure that public money is not wasted
- Ensure farmers and land managers have to comply with all relevant EU environmental and animal welfare regulations in order to receive their CAP payments, such as the Water Framework Directive which ensures our rivers are clean and healthy.
- Provide dedicated support for nature-friendly farmers and land managers

It is the first time that the 73 MEPs in the UK will vote on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU-wide system of payments to farmers and land managers worth over £3 billion a year in the UK.

This action is supported by the following organisations:

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
- Bat Conservation Trust
- Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
- Butterfly Conservation
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust
- The Mammal Society
- Plantlife
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Salmon and Trout Association
- The Wildlife Trusts

These organisations work together on this action across the UK through the Joint Links group.

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Notes to Editors

[1] The Joint Links group consists of [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#), [Scottish Environment LINK](#), [Northern Ireland Environment Link](#) and [Wales Environment Link](#).

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together 40 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Taken together our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK and manage over 750,000 hectares of land.

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations. Its 34 member bodies represent a wide range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

Wales Environment Link is the umbrella body for environmental and countryside nongovernmental organisations in Wales. It is a busy network, active in a range of policy areas and the official link between the Welsh Government and Wales' environmental NGO sector.

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the forum and networking body for organisations interested in the environment of Northern Ireland. NIEL acts to coordinate a strong and coherent voice to policy makers to improve environmental policy and action.