# Protest at NFU conference calls for shift to plant-based farming



During the National Farmers' Union (NFU) conference held at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in Westminster on a tense day in central London, PETA activists made a bold statement advocating for plant-based farming. The protest occurred while NFU president Tom Bradshaw was addressing the audience. Two eco-activists donned carrot masks and ascended the stage, unfurling a banner that read "Root for the planet! Go vegan." One of the activists passionately declared, “Root for the planet. Farming animals is unsustainable, we must switch to plant-based.” This interruption was met with groans from the audience before a member of the crowd was cheered as he jumped on stage and forcibly removed the banner from their hands.

The protest coincided with growing frustration among farmers regarding recent changes to inheritance tax policies that many believe will jeopardise longstanding family-run farms. The NFU has warned that these adjustments could compel farmers to liquidate businesses that have been passed down through generations. Specifically, farmers have expressed concern over the introduction of a 20 per cent inheritance tax, which reverses a previous exemption that helped preserve agricultural enterprises within families.

Outside the conference venue, numerous tractors were parked as farmers demonstrated their dissatisfaction with Chancellor Rachel Reeves’ Budget. The protest included toy tractors as a visual representation of their plight. PETA seized the opportunity to share their perspective on social media, stating, "Animal agriculture gobbles up resources, pollutes the planet, and kills over 1 BILLION animals in the UK every year. Yet the government continues to prop up this cruel, destructive system instead of investing in sustainable, life-giving plant farming."

Within the conference, Environment Secretary Steve Reed faced heckling as he unveiled new strategies aimed at improving the farming sector's resilience. Despite the tension, he noted the importance of holding discussions on difficult topics, pledging to engage with farmers' concerns. He acknowledged the widespread sentiment against the inheritance tax changes, asserting, "I'm sorry it's a decision that we've had to take."

Reed’s proposed 25-year farming roadmap aims to bolster food production and help businesses withstand adversities such as severe weather and animal disease. He highlighted the significance of balancing nature restoration with sustainable food production, emphasising that both are essential to farming's future.

In his speech, he announced various support measures, such as extending the seasonal worker visa scheme for five years and promoting high welfare products sourced from British producers in government catering contracts. Reed also discussed the progress of environmental management schemes that engage around 50,000 farm businesses.

However, the question-and-answer session following his address became contentious as farmers raised concerns regarding the inheritance tax adjustments and how they planned to navigate financial pressures in the face of such changes. Reed outlined the government's difficult financial position and justified the need for policies aimed at stabilising the economy.

Amidst these discussions, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) prepared to reinforce the importance of the farming sector in the broader economic landscape. CBI chief executive Rain Newton-Smith is expected to emphasise that “you can't grow without food,” urging the government to recognise and support foundational industries like farming amidst its growth strategies targeted at sectors such as clean energy and advanced manufacturing. Newton-Smith's comments highlight the need for confidence in the farming industry, especially given the challenges posed by recent Budget changes that could adversely affect 75 per cent of farms.

As the NFU conference unfolds amidst these significant dialogues on agricultural policy and economic strategies, it underscores the broader tensions around food production, environmental sustainability, and the livelihoods of farmers in the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/march-farming-rally/> - This URL supports the information about farmers' protests and concerns, such as the upcoming rally related to farming issues, which aligns with the broader context of farmer dissatisfaction mentioned in the article.
2. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4409967/nfu-conference-2025-government-reset-relationship-farming> - This URL corroborates the NFU's efforts to address government policies affecting farming, including the need for a reset in the relationship between the government and farming families, which is relevant to the tensions discussed during the NFU conference.
3. <https://www.peta.org.uk/blog/update-dutch-government-announces-plan-phase-animal-safety-testing-2025/> - Although not directly related to the NFU conference, this URL highlights PETA's broader advocacy for animal welfare and sustainable practices, which aligns with their stance on plant-based farming mentioned in the article.
4. <https://www.peta.org/media/news-releases/video-peta-supporters-call-out-cruel-animal-tests-at-national-farming-conference/> - This URL supports PETA's activism in agricultural settings, similar to their actions during the NFU conference, where they advocated for plant-based farming.
5. <https://www.cbi.org.uk/news-and-insights/news/2023/02/cbi-responds-to-budget-2023/> - This URL would typically provide insights into the CBI's stance on economic policies affecting industries like farming, although it does not directly address the specific NFU conference or PETA protest.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-secretary-sets-out-25-year-plan-for-farming> - This URL would typically provide information on government strategies for the farming sector, such as the 25-year plan mentioned in the article, although it may not directly address the specific events or protests described.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14433875/PETA-protesters-storm-National-Farmers-Union-conference-demand-end-non-vegan-government-subsidies-farmers-reeling-inheritance-tax-raid.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data