# Labour's halt on sustainable farming incentive sparks outrage among farmers



Labour's decision to halt new applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) has ignited significant backlash from the agricultural community, particularly among farmers and rural advocates. The announcement took effect immediately, and it follows the government's commitment to outline a new farming scheme later this year after the forthcoming spending review.

The SFI programme, which was launched post-Brexit, aimed to incentivise farmers to adopt environmentally sustainable practices on their land. Its abrupt cessation has been met with dismay, as critics assert that it undermines efforts to promote responsible farming. Victoria Vyvyan, president of the Country Land and Business Association, described the SFI as "the most ambitious, forward thinking and environmentally friendly agricultural policy seen anywhere in the world." She noted that the policy held the promise of a fairer future for farmers and a greener future for the planet, lamenting, "Labour promised to support it, but at the first available opportunity they have instead scrapped it."

Vyvyan further expressed concern over the repercussions of the government's actions, stating, "Of all the betrayals so far, this is the most cruel. It actively harms nature. It actively harms the environment." She emphasised the gravity of the situation, particularly in light of ongoing conflicts in Europe, arguing that compromising food production is "reckless beyond belief."

Adding to the criticism, James Wright, a farmer and policy director at the Conservative Rural Forum, condemned Labour’s withdrawal of the programme, which he described as a balanced approach supporting food production, environmental concerns, and farm incomes. He expressed discontent with the government's abrupt cancellation, asserting that it displays "complete contempt" for farmers and rural areas.

Farming YouTuber Olly Harrison, known for his active protests against the recently controversial inheritance tax changes, also voiced his frustration. In a video shared on X, he questioned, "What is going on? We're getting attacked from every single angle, it's just absolutely bonkers." He called into question the understanding of agricultural issues among those in power, suggesting that they ought to engage more directly with farming practices to appreciate the complexities involved.

The response from within the farming community underscores a growing concern regarding agricultural policies and their impact on both the environment and the livelihoods of those in the sector. As the government prepares to introduce a new scheme in the coming months, stakeholders in agriculture are awaiting further details on its content and implications.

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

## References

* <https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/farm-policy/cruellest-betrayal-as-defra-halts-new-sfi-applications> - This article supports the claim that Labour's decision to halt new applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) has been met with significant backlash from the agricultural community. It also highlights Victoria Vyvyan's criticism of the decision as a betrayal of sustainable farming efforts.
* <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/business-management/agricultural-transition/farmers-frustrated-by-slow-rollout-of-2024-sfi-scheme> - This article corroborates the frustration among farmers due to delays in the rollout of the 2024 SFI scheme, which further exacerbates the current situation with the halt of new applications.
* <https://www.farmersguide.co.uk/business/politics/govt-accused-of-cutting-off-funding-for-farmers/> - This article supports the claim that the government has faced criticism for pausing capital grants related to the SFI, which is part of a broader pattern of funding issues affecting farmers.
* <https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/farm-policy/cruellest-betrayal-as-defra-halts-new-sfi-applications> - This article explains the background of the SFI scheme as a post-Brexit initiative to promote sustainable farming practices, which aligns with the article's description of the SFI's environmental goals.
* <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/business-management/agricultural-transition/farmers-frustrated-by-slow-rollout-of-2024-sfi-scheme> - This article highlights the operational and financial challenges faced by farmers due to delays and uncertainties surrounding the SFI scheme, which is exacerbated by the halt of new applications.