# Chancellor’s new inheritance tax sparks crisis fears among UK farmers



Farmers across the UK are sounding the alarm over detrimental changes to inheritance tax legislation, which are set to send shockwaves through the agricultural community. Chancellor Rachel Reeves has announced the introduction of a 20% tax charge on inherited agricultural assets valued over £1 million, effective from April next year. This move has ignited fears of dire consequences for farmers struggling to keep their family legacies alive.

Victoria Atkins, the Shadow Environment Secretary, has shed light on the emotional toll these tax changes could inflict on farmers. Sharing a particularly harrowing encounter with a distressed farmer, she recounted, “If there was a rope in the corner of this room I would use it.” Such despair highlights the betrayal felt across the countryside, as elderly farmers grapple with whether their families can sustain them beyond the tax's enactment date.

In reaction to the widespread outrage, an initiative has been launched to “Save Britain’s Family Farms.” The anger among farmers, as articulated by Atkins, reflects a growing sense of abandonment amid relentless financial pressures from a government that seems disconnected from rural realities.

Gareth Wyn Jones, a farmer from North Wales, whose family has been in agriculture for over 300 years, described the current industry climate as “devastating.” He articulated the frustration with soaring regulatory burdens and financial woes, lamenting, “We’re on our knees.” The proposed tax could lead to increased prices, squeezing lower-income consumers who rely on affordable and nutritious food.

Ben Aveling, another farmer from Northamptonshire, pointed out the series of attacks on the farming sector, including the abrupt discontinuation of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), which had provided essential support for environmental initiatives. He emphasized how the erratic policies of the current government exacerbate stress for farmers, resulting in a mental health crisis that has been largely ignored.

Mo Metcalf-Fisher from the Countryside Alliance underscored the mental health challenges faced in rural areas, particularly among farmers. He noted a disturbing combination of limited mental health services, isolation, and the relentless demands of agricultural work. With recent tax announcements, he cautioned that anxieties among farmers will only deepen, calling for genuine dialogue between policymakers and rural communities to develop supportive measures rather than punitive policies.

The resounding protests and sentiments from farmers indicate a brewing crisis within the agricultural sector, fueled by the backward-looking policies and lack of support from the new government. As the agricultural community faces unprecedented challenges, the need for a robust and committed opposition voice has never been clearer, advocating fiercely for the rights and mental well-being of the people who feed our nation.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/key-measures-uk-labour-partys-first-budget-nearly-15-years-2024-10-30/> - This source outlines the key measures in the UK Labour Party's first budget in nearly 15 years, including the introduction of new fiscal rules and tax changes affecting businesses and the wealthy.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rachel-reeves-victoria-atkins-labour-budget-chancellor-b2642052.html> - This article features Victoria Atkins' criticism of the government's decision to remove some inheritance tax relief for farms, describing it as a 'crass decision' that betrays the government's lack of understanding of the countryside.
4. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4374598/autumn-budget-chancellor-rachel-reeves-confirms-agricultural-property-relief-apply-gbp> - This source confirms that Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced changes to agricultural property relief, applying a 20% inheritance tax on agricultural assets above £1 million from April 2026.
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6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/government-environment-secretary-victoria-atkins-farmers-budget-b1194048.html> - This source reports on the National Farmers’ Union disputing the government's claims about the number of farms that will be impacted by the proposed inheritance tax changes, warning that more agricultural businesses could be exposed to the tax.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2050310/farmers-pushed-brink-suicide-rachel> - Please view link - unable to able to access data