

Report: Brussels Trip

Dates: 06/08/2023 / 07/08/2023

Purpose: This trip aimed to advocate for increased support for young farmers in the UK and discuss agricultural policy in the context of Brexit.

Meetings:

Breakfast Meeting with SAGE: A breakfast meeting was held with representatives of SAGE (Supporting Agriculture & Growth in the Economy) to discuss the possibility of increasing the young farmers' payment from 2% to 3% of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funding. This increase is crucial for supporting young people entering the agricultural sector in the UK. We will present findings from this meeting to the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) to strengthen our case.

Individual Meeting with MEP Isabel Carvalhais: A one-on-one meeting was held with Ms. Isabel Carvalhais, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the S&D Group. The meeting likely focused on the issue of young farmers' payments and its importance to Wales and the UK's agricultural future.

Roundtable Lunch with EPP MEPs and Industry Sector: A roundtable lunch discussion was held with MEPs from the European People's Party (EPP) alongside representatives from the agricultural industry sector. Key topics of discussion likely included the challenges faced by young people in rural communities, mental health in the agricultural sector, and the potential impact of Brexit on these issues.

NFU Meeting: I had a specific meeting with NFU representatives in Brussels to discuss ongoing developments in European agricultural policy and their potential implications for the UK farming sector post-Brexit.

Visit to the Flemish Parliament: The final day included a visit to the Flemish Parliament. Observing a session provided firsthand experience of the legislative process and democratic structures in Flanders. This visit offered valuable insights that can inform discussions on governance and agricultural policy back in the UK.

Conclusion:

This trip to Brussels proved highly successful in raising awareness of the critical issues facing young farmers and rural communities in the UK. Engaging with policymakers and industry leaders provided a platform to advocate for change and secure valuable information to be shared with the Senedd. The knowledge and connections gained will serve to inform future efforts in supporting a thriving rural sector in the UK.