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DEFRA REVEALS UK'S RESPONSE TO EU CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONSULTATION

Defra has published the UK Government's response to the EU's public circular economy consultation, including calls for more cross-sector collaboration and voluntary - rather than prescriptive - measures. The response also called for "consistent application of standard" and a "clear direction of travel" in order to build investor confidence.



The response, published this week, was submitted to the EU in October. Responses to the EU's consultation will form the basis of the European Commission's long-awaited Circular Economy package, due to be officially published on 2 December 2015.

From the outset, the Government called for a Member States to be given some autonomy in the implementation of the package, saying: "We endorse the use of voluntary measures, which have been successful in the UK, and oppose prescriptive approaches that do not allow Member States scope to take account of their national circumstances."

For the full article please click: <http://www.edie.net/news/5/Defra-reveals-UK-response-to-circular-economy-consultation/>



UK PIG FARMERS LOSING OUT AS EU 'FAILS TO ENFORCE' WELFARE RULES



This is not old news and sadly an ongoing problem for the UK's pig farmers, and not forgetting the pigs kept and reared abroad under much lower welfare standards!

Highlighting the fact that we as a country take animal welfare seriously and abide by the rules set .

European pig farmers getting unfair advantage over the UK by failing to comply with higher welfare standards, MPs say

Struggling UK pig farmers are losing out to cheap imports of pork from countries where the EU is failing to enforce animal welfare rules, MPs have warned.

Neil Parish, chairman of the Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee, accused the European Commission of "prevaricating" and giving European farmers an "unfair advantage" by allowing them to flout an EU ban on 'sow stalls'

"Europe has taken far too long to get this sorted." Neil Parish MP



The stalls, which keep sows caged so they cannot move during their pregnancy, can cut farmers' costs but were banned for cruelty reasons in the UK in **1999** and in the rest of the EU from the start of 2013.

But more than two years on, **six EU countries** are still officially **non-compliant** while it is "questionable" whether others that claim to comply are actually doing so, Lizzie Wilson, of the National Pig Association, told the committee.

Ms Wilson said: "We are now at six countries that are non-compliant. Pig producers have been at a competitive disadvantage since 1999 and continue to be, unfortunately.

NOTE: Bacon and other products from EU farmers that fail to comply with welfare rules is being sold in the UK.

Please click here for further reading and privy to the countries involved:

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/agriculture/farming/11961682/UK-pig-farmers-losing-out-as-EU-fails-to-enforce-welfare-rules.html

Compassion in world farming link: www.ciwf.org.uk



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REVEALS JAMES BOND-ESQUE FLOOD-TACKLING GADGETRY

The Environment Agency has unveiled an armoury of high-tech equipment it will use to fight the spectre of potential flooding this winter, including lasers, solar-powered cameras and a remote-controlled robot called Mr Nosey.

This is a new robot known as Mr Nosey, which is being used to investigate causes of flooding that people can't reach, such as blocked tunnels and underground culverts. Weighing 30kg to prevent it from being swept away in fast-flowing water, Mr Nosey beams real-time images to the surface so that Environment Agency staff can assess the damage or blockages below.

John Curtin, the Environment Agency's executive director of flood risk management, said: "Almost five million people in England live in areas at risk of flooding and innovations ranging from little gadgets like Mr Nosey to our new state of the art incident vehicles are hugely important.



"They are the little brothers to our larger scale flood defences, such as the iconic Thames Barrier, but all of them help us to reduce that risk. As winter approaches, we also encourage people to prepare for potential flooding by checking the flood risk in their area and signing up to free flood warnings."

To register Please click here:

<https://fwd.environment-agency.gov.uk/app/olr/register>

For further reading please click: <http://www.edie.net/news/4/Environment-Agency-reveals-James-Bond-style-UK-floods-gadgets/>



MICROCHIPPING OF DOGS REGULATIONS

It will be compulsory for all dogs over the age of eight weeks in England, Scotland and Wales to be fitted with microchips from Spring 2016. In England the date is 6th April but dates for Wales and Scotland are tbc.





The only exemption is where a vet certifies in writing that a dog is unfit to be microchipped. Many vets offer free microchipping as do other welfare organisations. Owners of dogs without microchips face being served with a notice to comply, and may face criminal prosecution and a £500 fine if they do not comply with the law. Dog breeders will be responsible for microchipping puppies before they are sold. Breeders will also be required to register their own details and these will be recorded against the microchip for the lifespan of the dog. All imported dogs will need to have a microchip.

For more information please click here: <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/microchipping/microchipping-changes-in-the-law>



GOVERNMENT URGED TO HONOUR RURAL FAIRER FUNDING PROMISE

MPs and rural local authorities have called on the Government to honour a commitment to ensure rural communities receive fairer funding for public services.

The call is being made by the Rural Services Network and the Rural Fair Share Campaign, a cross-party group of MPs and other parliamentarians. Together, the two bodies are calling for £130m promised by the Government to be allocated to individual rural local authorities and fire and rescue services.

The £130m is the amount unpaid from an initial £255m promised in 2012 as being due to authorities in partial acknowledgement of the extra cost of providing services in rural areas.

- Network calculations show that urban areas in 2015/16 still receive some 45% (£130.99) per head in Settlement Funding Assessment grant more than their rural counterparts.
- Rural residents pay, on average, £81 per head more in Council Tax than their urban counterparts due to receiving less government grant, said Mr Biggs.

This means rural residents pay more, receive fewer services and, on average, earn less than those in urban areas – a position the network says is unfair.

The focus going forward will be on the way that local government funding will be provided in the future to ensure there is equality between urban and rural funding

Mr Biggs said: "A further period of gross unfairness will be completely unacceptable."

Please click here for the full article: <http://www.rsonline.org.uk/politics/government-urged-to-honour-rural-fairer-funding-promise>



HOLIDAYING BY THE SEA! BEACH HUT PLANS FOR CLACTON & HOLLAND-on-SEA



Tendring District Council are investing thousands of pounds on new beach huts and hopes to make a long-term profit by leasing them out. The build consists of 12 huts at Clacton and Holland-on-Sea in Essex at a cost of £100,000. Although the rents have not been fixed, the council leases its existing 50 huts for up to £828 a year.



Nick Turner, council cabinet member, said the move was about

"maximising the huge investment we have made in these beaches".

The hut-building programme is part of a plan to regenerate the seafront following the completion of £36m of coastal protection work along the Clacton and Holland sea front. Six huts would be built on the promenade and six on the beach itself.



The council said existing rents range from £480 a year in Dovercourt to £828 for the most recently built huts in Clacton. The Clacton huts can also be rented for a weekly fee of £100. The council said there was a waiting list for people wanting to rent beach huts, so it was unlikely they would be sold, but that could be a future option. The rest of the 3,000 huts on the Tendring coast, which also includes Walton-on-the-Naze and Frinton-on-Sea, are privately owned.

Source BBC Website



ENGLAND ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING TEAM SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN WEEK

STARTED 30th NOVEMBER 2015



The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) campaign promoting the Stop Loan Sharks message launched on 30th November 2015. The IMLT will lead the campaign with support from partner organisations.

- Around 310,000 people use a loan shark each year.
- A loan shark is someone who lends money without the correct permission from the Financial Conduct Authority.
- Loan sharks may initially appear friendly but they will often use violence and intimidation to ensure they get their money, causing borrowers endless misery.

The IMLT want to ensure that everyone knows what a loan shark is and more importantly how to report one. By working with other organisations, IMLT can get the message out to those borrowing from loan sharks, especially in the run up to Christmas: There is help available.

To report a loan shark call

0300 555 2222

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk





WOODLAND TRUST FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY WOODS



Hundreds of thousands of British lives were lost in the costly and devastating conflict between 1914-1918. One hundred years later, the Woodland Trust is creating four brand new woods, one in each nation of the UK to honour their sacrifices. These woods will become meaningful and lasting memorials that will live on for hundreds of years.



By 2018, millions of trees will have been planted in each country in the UK, and almost 1,000 acres of native broadleaf woodland will have been created as part of the Woodland Trust's Centenary Woods project.

Each of the Centenary Wood sites was chosen because of its potential to benefit wildlife, with native broadleaf trees and carpets of wildflowers creating corridors including the common or corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*). Lowland grassland is an incredibly wildlife-rich habitat, with up to 40 species of flowering plants growing in just one square metre.

These new woods will be wonderful to explore.

To test your planting knowledge and for further information about this scheme please click the following link: <http://www.centenarywoods.org.uk/planting#block-takethecentenarywoodsquizandwin>

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales (No. 294344) and in Scotland (No. SC038885).



FUTURE MEETING DATES FOR THE DIARY

Steering Group	Monday 25 th January 2016	Venue & time TBC
Full Essex Rural Partnership	Monday 15 th February 2016	Venue & time TBC
Full Essex Rural Partnership	Monday 4 th April 2016	Venue & time TBC
Steering Group	Thursday 2 nd June 2016	Venue & time TBC



We would like to wish all our members a

Warm and Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Source: westmorningnews.co.uk

Cornish woman knits tank tops for her chilly chickens.

A woman from Cornwall has developed a new way to keep battery chickens warm this winter by knitting them woolly jumpers. Animal lovers Nicola Congdon, 25, and her mother Ann, 58, have been rehoming the birds for some years but found they got cold when they lived outdoors.

"We are doing it for ex-battery hens for when they come out of their poor conditions for them to put on in the cold weather"

The word has spread regarding this innovative idea and now Nicola knits to order, there is no charge just a donation for an aids orphanage in South Africa, where the money goes straight to the orphans.



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