



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Update for MPs

Latest news

- [New funding to support dairy farmers through coronavirus](#): A new fund will enable eligible dairy farmers in England to access up to £10,000 each to help them overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak
- [Fisheries Response Fund](#): English aquaculture businesses producing seafood for the food supply chain may now apply for grants up to a maximum of £10,000 per farm from the government's £10 million Fisheries Response Fund.
- [£14 million financial support for England's zoos unveiled](#): Support fund for licensed zoos and aquariums affected by coronavirus.

Recent progress

- **Vulnerable People:** As of 29 April, we are delivering approx. 62,000 food packages daily for shielded vulnerable people. The Government has put in place measures to ensure that people identified by the NHS as being extremely clinically vulnerable and who are without a support network of friends and family receive basic food and essential supplies. To date, nearly 1 million food parcels to those deemed to be clinically extremely vulnerable have been delivered.
- **Agricultural workers:** The Government has launched the '[Pick for Britain](#)' website in partnership with industry to bring together people who are looking for work on UK farms with recruiters who have roles to fill. We are encouraging industry to post job vacancies on this website.
- **Dairy:** This is a challenging time for the industry, between 5 and 10% of total milk production goes to the service trade and there is therefore a small proportion of milk production that currently has no home. The Government took early steps to support dairy farmers and the wider sector. These included designating employees in the food sector as key workers and temporarily relaxing the normal rules on drivers' hours, enabling the sector to keep supply chains running, including deliveries from farm gate to processors. In order to support affected farmers, we have temporarily eased some elements of competition law to make it easier for processors to come together to maximise production, processing and storage efficiency and ensure as much product as possible can be processed into high quality dairy products. Furthermore, a new fund will enable eligible dairy farmers in England to access up to £10,000 each to help them overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.
- **Fisheries:** A £10 million fund for England's fishing and aquaculture sectors was announced on 17 April. This includes £9 million of grants to eligible fishing and aquaculture businesses, to help them cover fixed costs such as such as insurance and equipment hire. A further £1 million has been made available for projects which will help seafood businesses to sell their products in their local communities and nationally. As of 5 May, the

MMO has written to all fishermen who are eligible for the Fisheries Response Fund, and almost 800 applications have been approved and a total of £ 3.6m has been paid.

- **Food supply:** The food industry has been working hard to keep food including fresh produce flowing into stores and people's houses. The Government has well-established ways of working with the food industry during disruption to supply situations. We have regular engagement with industry which is continuing to monitor the situation closely.
- **Garden centres:** We know that this time of year is crucial for the horticulture industry. Although many garden centres and nurseries have made the move to online sales and deliveries, that isn't possible for some. We are working with the sector to understand more about how they will be affected, and there is unprecedented support available for businesses to help them through this time.
- **Testing:** We have introduced a series of measures to support symptomatic workers and symptomatic members of their households to receive tests in a range of critical industries including the food and drink, waste, water and veterinary medicines sectors. Testing is now open to all employees in these critical industries and to members of their households who are showing symptoms. Testing has since been expanded to now include all symptomatic workers who are unable to work from home and symptomatic members of their household who are self-isolating.
- **Waste:** Defra has published additional guidance to support local authorities in preparing to reopen Household Waste Recycling Centres. We have worked with the waste industry to develop an online platform (Waste Support) to facilitate the sharing of resources between local authorities and commercial operators which was launched by the Chartered Institute for Waste Management (CIWM) on 16 April. In addition, the Environment Agency is taking a proportionate approach to regulation and has published a number of COVID-19 Regulatory Position Statements to address specific concerns around compliance with permit conditions, for instance on exceeding waste storage limits at permitted sites. The EA has also flagged that it will consider flexibility on permit charge payments.
- **Zoos:** Support is available for zoos to cope with the impacts of coronavirus, including business rates relief and the business interruption loan scheme. The Zoo support fund has been established to help those that need additional support to enable them to continue to care for their animals on top of the schemes that are already available.

*For further information, please contact Defra Parliamentary SpAd, Emma Pryor:
emma.pryor@defra.gov.uk*