

11<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Agriculture Bill.

Food and farming is a bedrock of our economy and environment, generating £112 billion a year and helping shape some of our finest habitats and landscapes. I am pleased that the Government will continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of this Parliament in 2022. Once we have the freedom to move away from the Common Agricultural Policy, the proposal is for an 'agricultural transition' period in England, allowing farmers to prepare for a new system.

Leaving the EU creates a once in a generation opportunity to design a domestic agricultural policy that will stand the test of time. Starting from first principles we can bring in innovative new ideas to support investment in healthy, sustainable British food production and do much better for farming, the environment and animal welfare. The Government proposes to move to a system of paying farmers public money for public goods: principally environmental enhancement.

Ministers have consulted widely with farmers and others, and have published the Agriculture Bill alongside their response; it focuses mostly on England because they recognise that devolution provides each administration with the powers to decide its own priorities. They are keenly aware of the importance of seasonal labour, so will work with the industry to ensure it has the right people with the right skills.

We must take this opportunity to use public money to reward environmentally-responsible land use, as well as maintaining and enhancing high standards of animal welfare. I am convinced that we will harness this opportunity and ensure that our best days as a food and farming nation lie ahead of us.

Unfortunately, due to exiting Ministerial duties, I was unable to attend the second reading of the Agriculture Bill on 10 October.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**