

Agroecology (Food Security) Bill

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Requires the Secretary of State to prepare and implement a strategy to promote the application of the principles and practices of agroecology in farming and food production and the management of natural resources to ensure the security of food supplies; and for connected purposes.

1 Principal purpose

- (1) The principal purpose of this Act is to promote the application of agroecological principles and practices to farming and food production and the management of natural resources to ensure future food security.
- (2) In this Act “agroecology” means the application of ecological science to the design and management of sustainable agroecosystems in order to strengthen food sovereignty and includes, but is not limited to:-
 - a) the fostering of the healthy functioning of ecosystems and beneficial ecological services such as carbon sequestration and crop pollination and attain high levels of efficiency in the use of land, water and energy;
 - b) improved security of food supplies through localised food systems;
 - c) the development of improvements in agricultural biodiversity at ecosystem, farm, seed, livestock breeds, soil, to ensure that threatened species/varieties can recover and thriving population sustained;
 - d) the encouragement of natural processes of nutrient recycling;
 - e) improving soil fertility and quality by methods based on natural processes such as the use of rotations, legumes, green manure and integrated crop-livestock systems;
 - f) avoiding pollution of surface water, groundwater and marine ecosystems;
 - g) controlling insects, pathogens and weeds, through using improved cultural practices, increasing agricultural biodiversity, integrated pest management, and related approaches;
 - h) the attainment of high standards of animal welfare by adopting husbandry systems that enable animals to express both their innate behaviours and other species-specific behaviours shown by scientific research to be essential for their physical, psychological and mental well-being
 - i) the attainment of high health status for animals through good hygiene, husbandry and housing without recourse to regular prophylactic use of anti-microbials;
 - j) viable rural livelihoods and farming communities;
 - k) the minimisation of wastage of food and feed along the chain and;

- l) ensuring an active role for citizens and farmers through greater democracy in decision-making processes and opportunities for participation in food systems.

2 Implementation

- (1) The Secretary of State must within two years prepare a strategy to promote the application of agroecological principles and practices in farming and food production and the management of natural resources covering a wide range of approaches including organic techniques, agroforestry and permaculture.
- (2) The strategy must set out proposals designed to increase the application of agroecological principles and practices in farming and food production. It must also promote the efficient management of natural resources and to maximise the proportion of food production that is derived from agroecological farming and food production, including:
 - a) the setting up of advisory services for farmers and managers of natural resources;
 - b) ensuring the availability of relevant training courses;
 - c) the use of public information campaigns to increase understanding of the benefits of agroecology developed in the framework of food sovereignty;
 - d) the promotion of research designed to advance knowledge regarding agroecological principles and practices;
 - e) the role of public procurement in supporting the principal aim set out in subsection (1) of section 1;
 - f) the use of subsidies and grants to encourage the use of agroecological practices;
 - g) the use of taxes and levies to encourage or discourage the use of certain practices;
 - h) the setting of appropriate targets for making progress towards meeting the principal aim set out in subsection (1) of section 1;
 - i) any other policy the Secretary of State believes will assist in meeting the principal aim set out in subsection (1) of section 1.
- (3) When preparing the strategy the Secretary of State must consult such persons appearing to him to represent any interests concerned as he considers appropriate and must consider any representations made by them.
- (4) The Secretary of State must lay a draft of the strategy before both Houses of Parliament.
- (5) The strategy must not be published until the draft has been approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament; and if it is so approved the Secretary of State must publish the strategy in the form of the draft.

3 International aid and assistance

The Secretary of State must, when providing advice, aid, research services, technological or other assistance to third countries, promote the benefits of encouraging and supporting the application of agroecological principles and practices in farming and food production and the management of natural resources.

Government should promote this policy when attending meetings at the European Union, in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other international policy fora where policy on farming, food production, the management of natural resources and agricultural biodiversity is discussed and adopted.

4 Annual progress report

Following publication of the strategy under section 2, the Secretary of State must lay before each House of Parliament each year a report setting out-

- a) the progress that has been made towards implementing the strategy including the meeting of any targets set in the strategy; and
- b) the further progress that is needed to implement the strategy including any targets set in the strategy.

After two years the effectiveness of the implementation should be reviewed.

5 Short title, commencement and extent

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Agroecology (Food Security) Act 2014.
- (2) This Act shall come into force at the end of a period of three months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.
- (3) This Act extends to England.