

Defra won't rethink hedgecutting ban

By Philip Case

Farm minister George Eustice has ruled out any changes to the August hedgecutting ban at least before the UK leaves the EU in March 2019.

HEDGE CUTTING BAN DATES

The hedgecutting ban runs from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive) in the UK.

The change in cutting dates from 2015 was introduced under new EU regulations requiring the protection of birds during both the breeding and rearing season.

The six-month closed period that places a ban on cutting and trimming hedges and trees is a cross-compliance requirement under GAEC 7a: Boundaries and GAEC 7c: Trees.

Tom Pursglove, Conservative MP for Corby and East Northamptonshire, wrote to Mr Eustice in December on behalf of his constituent and hedgecutting contractor Bob Rutt, urging Defra to review the ban.

In response, Mr Eustice acknowledges *Farmers Weekly's* petition submitted to Defra last year – but says the ban must remain in place.

The petition, which gathered almost 2,000 signatures and was backed by the NFU, CLA, the Tenant Farmers' Association and the National Association of Agricultural Contractors, urged Defra to repeal the August ban.

The extended ban is deeply unpopular with farm contractors as it forces them to sit out a month when they would traditionally follow the combines around and trim hedges.

But conservationists, including the RSPB, say the August ban must remain as some "red-listed" (endangered) bird species, including the yellowhammer, are still nesting "well into August".

The ban on August hedgecutting has hit contractors hard



THE CONTRACTOR

Eustice response

In his response to Mr Pursglove, Mr Eustice writes: "I am aware there is a strong body of opinion in the farming community on this issue, however, we do not generally respond



STUART AGNEW MEP
Member of the
EFDD Group
in the European
Parliament



March 2018
Com-AGRI update from Stuart Agnew MEP

This is an introductory announcement of a regular monthly advertisement that I intend to place in the *Farmers Weekly*. I have been an MEP with the EFDD Group since 2009 and have been a member of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee since then. I also regularly attend the Animal Welfare Sub-Group, where I ensure that the industry's voice is heard amongst the great majority on that Group who are focused solely on animal rights.

I am a Norfolk farmer and have been employed in agriculture since 1971. The business comprises the production of free range eggs, lamb, cereals and sugar beet.

Each advertisement will conclude with an update on attacks on South African farming families. These are frequent but are not currently chosen as a worthwhile topic in human rights debates in the European Parliament. I aim to change that.



Part of the Europe of Freedom and
Direct Democracy Group
www.efddgroup.eu
www.stuartagnewmep.co.uk



YOUR LIVE NATIONAL GRASSLAND EVENT

GROW IT MOW IT CLAMP IT



BATH & WEST
GRASSLAND UK

10 MAY 2018

BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND, SOMERSET

www.bathandwest.com



Oliver Seeds

LIVE MUCK, CLAMP & WORKING GRASS DEMOS
- STATIC TRADE STANDS -
- SEMINARS -