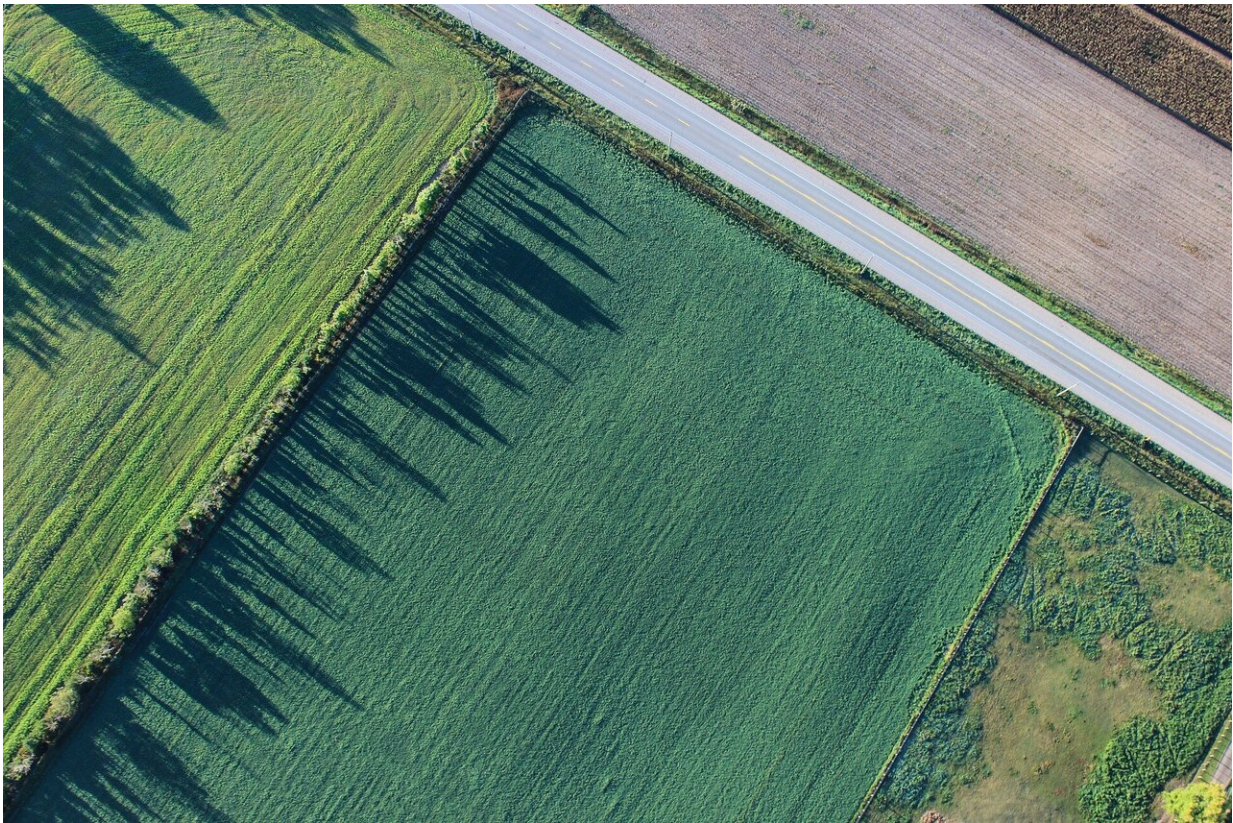


British farmers 'to be paid to help restore natural habitats'

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Farmers are to be paid to help restore natural habitats and rewild Britain in government plans aimed at filling the gap left by EU subsidies, according to reports.

A full announcement on two new schemes is set to be made at the Oxford Farming Conference on Thursday by Environment Secretary George Eustice.

The Sunday Telegraph says that the plans include a Local Nature Recovery scheme, where funding will be provided to build new habitats, [plant trees](#), and restore peat and wetland areas.

There is also a Landscape Recovery scheme, which is aimed at helping return the British countryside to the wild.

It is expected to be open to landowners and farmers or groups in charge of managing schemes that cover 500-5,000 hectares. It is believed the scheme will begin with funding for 15 projects.

The newspaper reports Eustice said: "Successful and profitable agricultural production is crucial to our food security.

"We are facing challenges on issues like [biodiversity loss](#) and [climate change](#), so we must use our freedom from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy to establish a new system of rewards and incentives in agriculture."

The government wants to stop the decline in British species by 2030 and restore up to 300,000 hectares of habitat by the 2040s.

Opponents in the [farming industry](#) have criticized the move amid fears that it focuses on giving up land for rewilding rather than looking towards backing domestic food production and self-sufficiency.

Fears have also been raised that the changes will help wealthy landowners and not the hundreds of tenants who make up half of the nation's farming.

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