



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 5 March to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents, about hedgerow protections. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

We share your constituents' view that hedgerows are a vital resource for our environment and wildlife, and this is why last year we consulted on how they should be protected in England. Almost 9,000 people responded to our consultation, and this response to the consultation demonstrates that hedgerows are widely valued, including by farmers.

I am pleased to let you know that the Government has now published the response to last year's consultation on protecting hedgerows, and this can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The responses to the consultation overwhelmingly supported regulation to protect hedgerows and this is what the Government will now do as soon as parliamentary time allows. The regulations will require a two-metre buffer strip measured from the centre of the hedge, where no cultivation or application of pesticides or fertilisers must take place. This will prevent harm to the structure and health of the hedge. The regulations will also ban the cutting of hedges between 1 March and 31 August, protecting nesting birds.

We trust farmers to look after our hedgerows and these regulations will make sure all are following the same hedgerow management practices. While these rules themselves will be familiar to farmers, as they were required by cross-compliance, the approach to enforcement of the proposed new regulation will be different with a focus on being fair and proportionate.

We are now working hard to put these important protections into law and will be working with farmers to make sure they are aware of the proposed rules. In addition, we will be engaging with stakeholders on the enforcement approach for the new regulations and we will welcome further views.

I hope this letter helps to address your constituents' concerns and shows that the Government is committed to protecting our hedgerows. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP

