

Headlines

Defra intends to review agricultural tenancy legislation

Defra is going to ask Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG) to see if the 2006 legislative changes are having the desired effect and will make fiscal and legislative changes if they are not.

Queen's Speech 2009-10

The Government has proposed 15 new bills in the next session of Parliament. Although it has been criticised as unlikely to be able to pass the bills before the general election, it is worth noting that John Major's Government managed to pass nine in a similar period. Three bills particularly affect property:

- Floods and Water Bill, which will hopefully join up flooding and land and environmental management
- Financial Services and Business Bill
- Energy Bill, which should encourage environmentally-friendly energy generation

Conservative agricultural policy

Reversing the decline in domestic food production would be the first task of a Conservative government. They want to create a productive countryside by creating opportunities for farmers rather than legislation.

Marine and Coastal Access Bill receives Royal Assent

Natural England will shortly be launching a 12 week consultation on the "scheme" for implementing the access provisions. Once approved, initial work will focus on creating access in Weymouth (in preparation for the Olympics), Kent, Somerset, Norfolk, Cumbria and East Riding of Yorkshire.

South Downs National Park created

Hillary Benn has signed the order to create the 632 square mile National Park. The South Downs National Park Authority will be established in April 2010 and be operational a year later.

Scottish Land Use Summit

Rural land generates £17bn for the Scottish economy and is responsible for one in every six jobs according to reports launched at the recent Scottish Land Use Summit.

Agriculture

Economics professors want European policy to focus on public goods

22 leading economists have said that the CAP is not the right framework to increase agricultural efficiency, promote food security or encourage Rural Development. They suggest abolishing direct payments and instead funding research and environmental and social policy - at national and regional levels as well as European. It has not been widely supported by politicians around Europe so far!

World Food Summit, Rome, 16-18 November

The number of people who go hungry is expected to top 1bn as it has grown 100m in 2009. The UN has warned that there could be another global food crisis and price instability in 2010 if the issue is not tackled. A declaration was signed at the summit which commits to substantially increase support to the hungry.

Milk processing near London

Arla is planning to build the world's largest milk processing plant on the outskirts of London. It will open in 2012 and process 1bn litres a year, around a third of the liquid milk market.

Environment & Sustainability

Biomass power will more than double wood imports

The UK will import 50m tonnes of timber by 2015, up from 20m tonnes today, to fuel the biomass-fired plants which are being built, according to the Forestry Commission. This has raised concerns about the emissions from shipping and also treatment by baking that the wood needs before it is imported.

Green concrete

Geo-Green Crete is made using waste, aluminium, silicon and oxygen, rather than being Portland-based like traditional concrete, and is also produced using an environmentally friendly process.

UK's contribution to climate change is increasing

A report by the Stockholm Environment Institute for WRAP looks at the global impacts of everything the UK has consumed in the past 20 years. The key conclusions are fascinating:

- Service sectors are substantial procurers of manufactured goods and so are significant contributors to UK emissions
- UK is increasingly relying on carbon intensive manufacturing overseas to meet its consumption
- The UK's contribution to climate change is increasing – when the impact of imports is included
- At the moment, resource efficiency measures are not delivering the reductions required to reduce absolute emissions. Attention must be made to UK consumer patterns

Green Energy Bill receives Royal Assent

The Bill aims to facilitate the development of renewable energy by requiring the government to review its micro-generation strategy. Permitted development rights are to be amended to facilitate installation of micro-generation, and procedures amended so that any increase in a property's value due to energy efficient measures will not lead to higher council tax or rates bills.

General

Village green registration process to be reviewed

Defra is going to review the registration process based on evidence that affordable rural housing developments are being delayed and stopped by the process.

New CLA president

William Worsley has succeeded Henry Aubrey-Fletcher as President of the Country Land & Business Association.

Planning & Development

Heritage building protection confirmed in PPS15 redraft

PPS15 will be redrafted so it is clear that protection of heritage buildings will not be reduced.

Property Agency

Residential market update

- House prices continue to rise despite an increase in the number of new instructions (RICS UK housing market survey)
- Reducing stamp duty relief on house purchases back from £175,000 to £125,000 could hamper the recent recovery in prices in regions lagging behind the national average (RICS)
- The number of houses being built has climbed to a one-year high (National House Builders Council). This assessment is supported by an announcement from Barratt

- The Council of Mortgage Lenders has revised down its forecast of repossessions for 2009 from 65,000 to 48,000 (DCLG)

And finally...

Sustainable supermarkets

This is not very funny but might be worth thinking about on your next trip along the aisles...Consumer Focus rates the sustainability of the UK's supermarkets, based on climate change, waste, sustainable fish, sustainable farming. <http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/>

Grade	Supermarket
A	Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Waitrose
C	Co-op, Morrisons and Tesco
D	Aldi, Morrisons and Lidl

Fine for duck feeding

A woman has been fined £75 for "littering" as she was feeding ducks outside the designated area in Smethwick. Her 17 month old son was allowed to continue as he is too young to prosecute.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this briefing, its information may not be comprehensive and recipients should not act upon it without seeking full professional advice.

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