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**Emperors' new clothes** Artist Léo Caillard has dressed classical statues at King's College London in modern clothes for The Classical Now show, which opens on Friday

## Farming chief attacks menus peddling myth of local food

**Jerome Starkey**  
Countryside Correspondent

Pubs, hotels and restaurants are hoodwinking diners about where their food comes from, according to the head of the National Farmers Union.

In her maiden speech Minette Batters, the NFU's new president, said that "safe and traceable food is a public right" and that menu writers often peddled myths about local provenance and artisanal producers to make the food sound more attractive, and the public swallowed it too easily.

"The whole food service [sector] is just a black abyss," Ms Batters, 50, said. "If you go into quite a few hotels, quite a lot of bars, you see Wiltshire beef or Wiltshire pies. How honest is it? No one is checking."

She had seen diners served New Forest berries which could not have possibly come from the New Forest. She had asked a waitress in a pub where the pork came from and was told that it was local, because it came from the local

branch of a national wholesale chain. The wholesaler, Ms Batters discovered, bought all its pork in Denmark.

"We think it must be honest because they have said it on the blackboard. We should question more," she said.

The first female president in the NFU's 110-year history said that the supply chain for large companies such as McDonald's was more transparent than for smaller producers. "How do we know that artisanal production is what it says it is? We need to have evidence-based food labels," Ms Batters said.

Better data use across the farming and food sector will enable customers to track their food from farm to fork at the click of a button, she predicted.

She said that British farmers were well placed to be global leaders in traceability because they had a good story to tell of high standards and quality. "We need evidence demonstrating traceability, standards and safety to be available at the click of a button," she said. "That will become as important for shoppers in the UK as it is for those in

China. It's also paramount to building the power base behind brand Britain."

Last year the Soil Association, which certifies organic farms, launched a scheme that lets shoppers scan codes on packets of bacon to find out where the pigs were reared, when they were slaughtered, and when it arrived at the shop. In future Ms Batters said that such schemes would be standard across the NFU's range of products certified with the Red Tractor mark. "We should know the grower of our food," she said.

She said it was vital that farmers had "zero-tariff, frictionless trade with the EU marketplace" but that she planned to work with the government to boost exports. "More cereals to North African markets such as Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, more premium dairy products to the USA and Canada and more pork, lamb and beef to China and other Far East markets," she added.

Trading Standards and the British Hospitality Association declined to comment.

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## Subsidies for landowners to be cut

**Ben Webster** Environment Editor

Farm subsidies could be capped at £100,000 a year for the largest landowners from 2021 to release £150 million for environmental projects and other "public goods", under reforms proposed today by Michael Gove.

The cap would affect about 2,100 landowners including some billionaires, with several losing more than £1 million a year. Farms owned by Sir James Dyson, the inventor who backed Brexit and is thought to be worth £7 billion, received £1.6 million in 2016 under the EU's common agricultural policy, according to analysis by Greenpeace.

The environment secretary will today publish a consultation document on post-Brexit farming policy that will commit to a new system of paying farmers "public money for public goods".

About two thirds of the £3 billion paid annually to British farmers under the EU system is paid per acre in "basic payments", meaning that the more land farmers own, the more subsidy they get.

Mr Gove has pledged to maintain basic payments for most farmers during an "agricultural transition" but will today propose to limit the highest payments in the first year of that transition, expected to start in 2021.

He will consult on several options for caps, including a limit per landowner of £100,000 a year and "progressive reductions" affecting 19,000 farmers receiving more than £25,000 a year. Under the latter, 22 per cent of farmers would lose some subsidy but for most of those it would be less than £5,000.

Mr Gove has said that farmers could be paid to encourage animal welfare standards, wildlife protection and investment in technology and skills.

## Final curtain for wild circus animals

**Ben Webster**

Travelling circuses will be banned from using wild animals in England by January 2020, the government has pledged.

There are only two circuses with wild animal licences. Circus Mondao and Peter Jolly's Circus have 19 animals between them: six reindeer, four zebra, three camels, three raccoons, a fox, a macaw and a zebu.

Ministers have been promising to im-

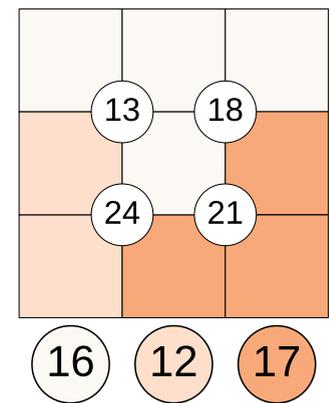
pose a ban for more than five years but yesterday was the first time the government committed to a deadline.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published the timescale in a review of the existing licensing scheme for wild animals in circuses which was introduced in 2013. The review concluded that the scheme was effective and "ensured that animal welfare needs have been met without imposing excessive costs". Thomas

Chipperfield, who hopes to apply for a licence to tour this summer with two lions and a tiger, said the ban was not justified because Defra's review had concluded that the licensing scheme was working well.

David Bowles, of the RSPCA, said the deadline for the ban was "very welcome and comes as a huge relief". Scotland has already banned wild animals in circuses and Wales has said it is "exploring opportunities" to impose a ban.

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### 'Paedophile' suicide

A man committed suicide after a paedophile-hunter group confronted him in a sting operation and posted his address online, an inquest was told. David Baker, 43, was arrested in October 2017 after he was accused of arranging to meet a 14-year-old child in a car park in Southampton. He was found dead three days later at his home in Wickham, Hampshire, having taken an overdose of medication. A verdict of suicide was recorded at Winchester coroner's court.

### Diabetes rate doubles

The number of people with diabetes has doubled in the past 20 years, according to Diabetes UK which says that 3.7 million people have the condition. Bradford has the UK's highest prevalence of diabetes, with one in ten people. In Richmond, west London, about one in 30 people has a diagnosis. The charity called diabetes the "fastest growing health crisis of our time".

### Blacked-up float cleared

Four men who blacked up to look like a Jamaican bobsleigh team for a carnival will face no action after a police investigation. The men, with dreadlock wigs and rasta hats, waved Jamaican flags in the parade last August at Aberaeron, west Wales. Their float was based on the 1993 film *Cool Runnings*. Police took statements after a complaint of racism.

### Grenfell council pledge

The London council responsible for Grenfell Tower has pledged to spend £220 million building and repairing social and affordable housing. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said it would find the money through borrowing over five years. Kim Taylor-Smith, deputy leader, said visits to social housing had persuaded him that "huge investment" was needed.

### Meat is a dieter's friend

Scientists claim to have proved that a vegetarian diet is no better for us than a Mediterranean regime that includes some meat and fish. Doctors in Italy put 118 people, mostly women around the age of 50, on two diets, each lasting three months. One included milk and eggs but no meat and the other included meat, fish and vegetables. After six months they had lost 2kg.