Written Question

Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to support the sale and production of local food.

James Paice (Minister of State (Agriculture and Food), Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

To meet the growing demand for more food with a local and regional provenance, our food and drink producers' access to market must be improved. We are providing funding under the Rural Development Programme for England for a range of measures aimed at supporting the availability of local food, including assistance to individual food producers and retail outlets, food hubs and farmers' markets.

I welcome the fact that retailers have put in place policies aimed at increasing the availability of regional and local food on their shelves. This provides opportunities for UK farmers to capture a greater market share by becoming more competitive.

Research shows consumers are increasingly concerned about the origins of their food, and the Government are committed to clearer origin labelling to provide consumers with the information they need to make informed choices about the food they buy.

We are also committed to ensuring that food procured by Government Departments, and eventually the whole public sector, meets British or equivalent standards of production wherever this can be achieved without increasing overall costs.

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