

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of food sourced by (a) her Department and (b) public bodies for which she is responsible was procured from UK food producers in the latest period for which figures are available. [83723]

Mr Paice: EU treaty principles of non-discrimination and the free movement of goods and services between member states prevent public bodies from discriminating in favour of domestic food suppliers. This is reflected in UK and EU procurement legislation.

In June 2011 the Government introduced Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services which specify that food procured should be produced to UK or equivalent standards, except where that would incur an increase in overall cost. We want to drive up standards and encourage people to buy food with the highest production and animal welfare standards.

Officials are taking action to encourage these standards to be adopted as a minimum across the public sector and this will include all agencies and arms length bodies with which DEFRA is engaged. DEFRA's current catering

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contract covers the whole of DEFRA's estate including Fera, the Rural Payments Agency, Natural England, AHVLA and DECC and we are working with the caterer to ensure that Government Buying Standards are met in full.

The percentage of food under the contract between May and September 2011 that was sourced specifically from the UK was:

Meat: 43.5%

Poultry: 67.1%

Fruit and Veg: 23.3% of total, 38.5% of indigenous.