# Letters to the Editor

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## Impact on African farmers ignored

portant factors well beyond the farmers.

of subsidies. These subsidies are not as high as those paid to farmpayer but for the producers of : water use on farms. food outside the UK and Europe : RICHARD PERKINS who are competing to put food SENIOR AGRICULTURAL POLICY on the UK table.

For 20 years, food (and wine) GODALMING, SURREY producers in Australia and New Zealand have done without any Turkey resists US their produce, but they still manage to sell to UK markets less ex-

ciation could analyse the carbon i government. footprint of farm subsidies to the sults in their ethical equation.

cess to the organic market that : for a wider Kurdistan. grounds of "ethics".

Air freight is a small but undeniable factor in the equation of global warming. I suggest other Briefly... factors may have more importance when attempting to be- Asparagus tip have ethically.

### **COLIN KENDALL**

ISLEWORTH, HOUNSLOW

out air freight in a sensitive way HARRIET CONNIDES by finding alternative markets LONDON N2 that are as good for the grower: and better for the planet.

In the interim, we believe it poverty.

the discussion to the important : ate impact in the EU. That is : vide an additional £350,000 in : political factors, but there is : LONDON SW14

## Hypocrisy of threatening Iran in the face of a nuclear-armed Israel in badger debate

in outer London, I am sometimes : argues that "to go to war to uphold the amazed at the incredibly narrow : Nuclear Proliferation Treaty would be a view of the wider world often is sick joke, when the world's leaders are all taken here by so-called "author- | blatantly burning it themselves". Sicker ities". The Soil Association's view by far is the Western world's hypocrisy about air miles ("African pro- in threatening Iran, having for nearly half duce to lose organic labelling", i a century either ignored or encouraged reprt, 25 October) ignores im-! Israel's development of nuclear weapons.

In 1969, when it became apparent that impact their definitions of "or- : the Israelis had obtained a nuclear capaganic" may have on poor African : bility and had no intention of signing the NPT, President Richard Nixon's Defence The British farmer is one of Secretary, Melvin Laird, warned that the major recipients of welfare : such "developments were not in the US in the UK, delivered in the form interests and should, if at all possible, be

had an ideal lever to use against Israel, a forthcoming sale of F-4 Phantom jets. A memorandum for Nixon made clear: "The issue is whether we are prepared to imply - and to carry out if necessary - the threat not to deliver the Phantoms if Israel does not comply with our request."

Yet during the summer of 1969, Nixon and Henry Kissinger, then his national security adviser, decided not to use this leverage, and their administration's only feeble protest was to refuse an Israeli request to deliver the jets a month early.

What could explain the contrast between this supine policy and today's bel-

Sir: As an expatriate Kiwi living Sir: Johann Hari (Opinion, 22 October) stopped". As it happened, the Americans licose rhetoric. The historian of Israel's Sir: What a load of hypocrites nuclear programme, Avner Cohen, writ- ! ("Activists voice dismay at plan ing last year in the Bulletin of Atomic Sci- ! to cull badgers", report, 23 Ocentists, suggests that Golda Meir, then ! tober). These are the very peothe Israeli Prime Minister, "may have as- ! ple who sabotaged the Indepensured Nixon that Israel thought of nu- ! dent Scientific Group's trial by clear weapons as a last-resort option, a : wrecking traps and releasing way to provide her Holocaust-haunted and relocating badgers. nation with a psychological sense of existential deterrence".

Should a self-interested version of 1940s ! long a period, the £34m trial was history be allowed to dictate the nuclear : seriously flawed and the conclupower politics of the 21st century, with is sions wrong. But the trial, for all potentially disastrous consequences? PETER RUSHTON

STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE

ers across the EU, but they still issue of the environmental im- ways anticipated by the Amer- disingenuous. What she fails to has been turned down: six tered every month, but thoutranslates as a lower standard! helped the Soil Association to! fluenced by the US. of living for not only the UK tax- : set standards for responsible :

ADVISER, WWF-UK,

## carve-up of Iraq

parliament to authorise troops : up Iraq, combined with a resur- : that the system is too fast to be : Cullingworth (18 October) seems : BROADWAS ON TEME, WORCESTER If those highly efficient grow- to cross into Iraq cannot be sep- gence of Kurdish nationalism fair because it does not allow peo- to think that there's something ers and processors are to be de- arated from the passing of the buoyed by a genuine possibility ple time to disclose traumatic unthinkable about preventing Sir: There is an urgent need for nied access to the UK's premi- i resolution by the US Senate to i of nationhood. um organic market because of a : support the division of Iraq along : STEFAN SIMANOWITZ narrow and dubious set of ethnic lines into three separate BRIGHTON "ethics", perhaps the Soil Asso-! regions under a limited central!

UK farmer and include the re- passed on 26 September and of asylum appeals supported by the Iraqi President, It is fashionable for UK politi-! Jalal Talabani, would effective-! cians and pop stars to vigorous-! ly create an oil-rich autonomous! tober) claiming that "asylum! cases were heard at the Yarl's! it was either that or starve, we! tery why possible immunisation ly shake the begging bowl for ! Kurdish state on Turkey's bor-! claims are considered by trained! Wood Asylum and Immigration! mainly ate it. I'm now 50, 5'10"! of cattle or badgers has not been Africa, but vitally important ac- der, strengthening the campaign caseworkers, and claimants Tribunal, the court linked to the and weigh 10st 9lb. I wonder what championed instead.

represent a huge collective pay- pacts of growing the products, cans and was even set out in revealisthat legal support is sub- women former detainees inter- and sof badgers are also sufferment that must come from the such as water use. In this con- Iraq's interim constitution, ject to a strict merits test - the viewed by BID for the second ing TB; they die within months UK taxpayer, which, of course, ! text, we are delighted to have! whose drafting was heavily in-! lawyer must be satisfied that the ! phase of our research had spent! from starvation. This level of

> conducted 24 cross-border op- : asylum claims are refused. erations against the PKK in Iraq: Our research into the governand the killing of Turkish sol- ment's "Fast Track" system of CELIA CLARKE diers is nothing new. Indeed, in processing asylum claims (claims DIRECTOR, BAIL FOR IMMIGRATION the first six months of this year: deemed to be "straightforward"; DETAINEES, LONDON E1 alone, 111 members of the Turk- i are given an initial decision with-

## The non-binding resolution! The stark reality

allows African food producers : Despite the assurances Pres- : ing initial consideration and : per cent of women did not have : to the chip shop instead. to lift their returns beyond sub- ident George Bush made to i while appealing to the independ- any legal representation. sistence level will be denied them ! Turkey before the 2003 invasion, ! ent judicial authorities if they! And people can spend long pe- CHELTENHAM, by the Soil Association on the ! this separation of Iraq was al- ! are unsuccessful" is somewhat ! riods in detention once their case ! GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ish security forces were killed. in three days during which peo-What is new is the Turkish de- ple can be detained while their Lockdown at termination to prevent the US asylum claims are being decid- lunchtimes from pushing through with the ! ed) shows that just 1 per cent of asylum-seekers (from a third to ! mitted to leave at all. two-thirds in our sample) are unrepresented at appeal.

claim has at least a 50 per cent i on average more than five i suffering is condoned by the Over the years, Turkey has i chance of success-and that most is months in detention, with one i RSPCA when they claim that diswoman deprived of her liberty : ease in wildlife is all part of evofor 11 months.

pensively than their UK farm- | Sir: The decision of the Turkish | latest stage of their plan to carve | claimants are granted asylum, | Sir: Your correspondent Tony | D J B DENNY MRCVS

not allowed to leave school at entifically based debate, but there Between May 2005 and the be- ! lunchtime. We weren't forced to ! are significant flaws in any pro-Sir: Lin Homer's letter (23 Oc- ginning of September 2006, 345 eat the food provided, but since culling argument. It is also a myshave access to legal support dur- i detention centre. At appeal, 26 i I'd weigh if I'd been allowed to go i

**EDWARD COLLIER** 

welcomes the nuanced position : said the item had been packed : able to reap the rewards. taken by the Soil Association on in Kent. Peering more closely, Sukanya natarajan air freight of organic produce. I spotted a tiny label that read, RESEARCH OFFICER, INTELLECTUAL We congratulate the Soil As-: "Product of Peru". I replaced: PROPERTY AND COMPETITION, sociation on the decision to phase: the pack with a regretful sigh. LONDON N18

## **Patently obvious**

WWF-UK is very pleased that bicort (Astrazeneca's asthma ingits benefits to the public. mind. Nobel committees are an unreserved apology. the Soil Association is widening i drug) will not have an immedi- We have, in fact, agreed to pro- influenced by all kinds of socio- RODNEY BURBECK

Sir: In my local shop, I was sur- i ity because Symbicort's origi- ways to work better within wrongly denied the prize more cobacterium bovis bacterium. prised to see a sign stating, i nalexpiry for patent in Europe i their budgets. "British Asparagus". I thought was 2015. Companies' incen- MICHAEL WILLS MP the season was long over, so I ! tive to invest in new drugs will! MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF Sir: The World Wildlife Fund UK: had a closer look. The first label: decrease as they become un-: JUSTICE, LONDON SW1

### Watchdog bites back

### Rules of Nobel

incorrect. Astrazeneca will lose ! funding this year. But all areas ! no evidence to suggest that fe-! gesting and inhaling droplets five years of market exclusiv- of public service need to find imale scientists have been containing the causative Myoften than have male scientists. The overuse of antibiotics affect-

> DR MILTON WAINWRIGHT UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

### Unfair to simians

Sir: I write on behalf of India's imoval of territory-holding dom-Sir: It is fashionable for femi- is simian population to protest is inant boar badgers will make way nists to claim that Rosalind : at your damaging headline "In-: for weaker males that would oth-Franklin was denied a Nobel : vasion of the killer monkeys" : erwise have needed to compete Prize because of sexist bias (report, 24 October). Just one for that territory by fighting. Ter-(Letters, 25 October). The re- : unfortunate man has died, by : ritorial extension will then occur Sir: You suggest in your arti- : ality is far more straightfor- : accident, falling off his balcony : as a depleted population fills any cle "Under-resourced watch- ward: she was not even consid- while shaking a stick at visit- gaps, therefore increasing the is a sensible approach for the Sir: David Prosser's report dog swamped by complaints" ered for the prize simply bed ing monkeys. Otherwise, you potential range of TB by infect-Soil Association to require that : "Astrazeneca loses patent on : (19 October) that there is a de- : cause she was dead. Nobels are : accuse monkeys of biting (so : ed badgers. Without interferany greenhouse gas emissions i asthma drug" and Jeremy i liberate strategy to starve the i awarded only to the living. But i do dogs, rabbits and horses i ence, badgers would automatifrom air-freighting organic food : Warner's article "Generics : ICO of funding and cause delay : male scientists have been when provoked), pinching (so : cally self-limit their populations are fair or ethical trade. This is raise pressure on Big Pharmar in complaint processing. The robbed of Nobels while still do Italian men) and trashing according to available territory likely to improve the contribu- : (19 October) claim that the Eu- : Government remains commit- : alive, and Albert Schatz (med- : papers in a government office : and food supply. tion of this trade to reducing : ropean patent office's decision : ted to Freedom of Information, : icine) and Sir Fred Hoyle : (who hasn't wished to do the : to revoke the patent for Sym- : to making it work and promot- : (physics) immediately come to : same?). India's simians are due : killing badgers in areas unaffect-

Consequently, since too few badgers were culled over far too its limitations, proved that badgers do transmit TB to cattle.

Not only are thousands of healthy cattle that fail their TB test being compulsorily slaughlution, and no action should be taken. Surely, it is a policy abhorrent to all who are genuinely concerned for the wellbeing of wildlife?

It is critical that there is a cull of infected badgers, not only for the benefit of cattle but the badger population too.

experiences, or to prepare prop- pupils from leaving school prem- the Independent Scientific Group erly for their appeals by gather- ises during lunchtime, to prevent to reach an evidence-based poling expert reports or medical in- ! them filling up with junk food. I! icy decision on badger-culling, formation, and that many can't imagine why they are per-which may avoid a wholesale : slaughter. Sentimentality should In my day (the 1970s), we were : not be allowed to cloud lucid, sci-

> Other potential disease vectors need to be examined. Cattle may be housed at high densities, so the likelihood of aerosol contamination between coughing cows must be greater than any risk of badger-to-cow transmission. Cud-chewing spreads saliva and increases the possibility of other nearby animals ining physiology and natural immunity must also be taken into account when examining epidemiology in cattle.

If culling is allowed, the re-

There is no justification for ed by bovine TB.

DAVID ELEMENT : LONDON SW19