



Department for International Trade

Compassion in World Farming
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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13 January 2021

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your open letter of 10th December to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade, regarding food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection standards in relation to free trade agreements. We are responding as the Ministers responsible for Trade Policy and Animal Welfare

On the issue of food safety and standards, please be assured that maintaining safety and public confidence in the food we eat is of the highest priority. When it comes to products imported to the UK, quality, safety and performance will continue to be paramount. Our current high standards, including import requirements, will continue to apply now that the transition period has ended.

As you mention, the Government made a very clear manifesto commitment that it will not compromise on the UK's high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards and we remain firmly committed to upholding these values. Parliament has already legislated, in the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018, to preserve existing EU environment, animal welfare, animal and plant health and food safety rules in the UK in the form of retained law at the end of the transition period. This provides a firm basis for maintaining the same high levels and full scope of protection for both domestic and imported products. Any changes to existing food safety legislation would require new legislation to be brought before this Parliament.

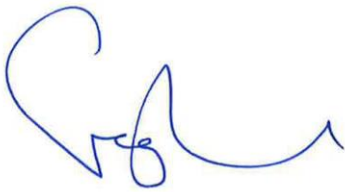
As regards food imports and the competition they create for our farmers, it is important to keep in mind that trade and trade agreements provide opportunities for British businesses, create more and better-quality jobs, encourage investment and will help the UK to emerge from coronavirus. The free trade agreements being negotiated will deliver significant opportunities across the economy and all UK regions, from agriculture to professional services. We will always ensure that UK FTAs are fair and reciprocal, and that any 'opening up' secures opportunities for UK farmers and ensures that animal welfare, food production and environmental standards are not undermined. British farmers will not face unbalanced competition. Furthermore, the Secretary of State has now placed the Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC) on a statutory footing, which will allow Parliamentarians access to

independent and expert advice when reviewing the impact of certain free trade agreements. It will improve the scrutiny of FTAs, giving farmers a stronger voice in UK trade policy.

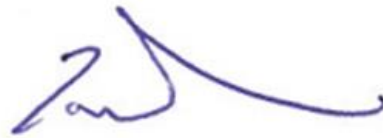
Finally, the UK Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any future trade deals live up to the values of farmers and consumers across the UK. The UK should be proud of our world-leading food, health and animal welfare standards and we will not allow those standards to be compromised in the pursuit of new trade deals. On the contrary, we are determined to use the opportunities provided through future free trade agreements and wider international engagement to promote high food safety and animal welfare standards among our international trading partners and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to write and we hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G Hands', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'D Goldsmith', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park
Minister of State for Environment