



Department for  
International Trade

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Minette Batters  
President  
NFU

By email: [nfulondon@nfu.org.uk](mailto:nfulondon@nfu.org.uk)

29 June 2020

Dear Minette,

Thank you for your letter, and for the productive phone calls with you and your colleagues last week.

I wholeheartedly agree that any trade deal the UK strikes must be fair and reciprocal to our farmers, and must not compromise on our high standards of food safety and animal welfare. I have been very clear on both these points and will continue to fight for the interests of our farming industry in any and all trade agreements we negotiate.

As you know, this is the first time in over 40 years that the UK has pursued its own independent trade policy, and I do recognise the importance of close engagement with the industry and a clear 'roadmap', as you put it, to help inform agricultural trade policy and apply appropriate safeguards in UK free trade deals.

I am pleased therefore, on behalf of the Government, to agree in principle to the establishment of a Trade and Agriculture Commission under Department for International Trade auspices, subject to agreement on terms of reference

I support your recommendation that the Commission is not another quango or regulator, and that it is strictly time-limited. I propose that once the Commission has finished its work, it produces a report in line with its terms of reference that will be presented to Parliament by my department. Its recommendations should be advisory only.

The report, and the work of the Commission, should focus on four areas:

1. Considering the policies that the Government should adopt in free trade agreements to ensure UK farmers do not face unfair competition and that their high animal welfare and production standards are not undermined.
2. Reflecting consumer interests and those of developing countries.
3. Considering how the UK engages the WTO to build a coalition that helps advance higher animal welfare standards across the world.
4. Developing trade policy that identifies and opens up new export opportunities for the UK agricultural industry – in particular for small and medium sized businesses – and that benefits the UK economy as a whole.

I am encouraged that the NFU supports the UK's broad objectives in promoting free trade and shares our belief that free trade deals can open up significant new exporting opportunities for the UK farming industry.

I look forward to continuing to work constructively with the NFU in this area and to agreeing the terms of reference for the new Commission as soon as practicably possible.

Best wishes,

**THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP**  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
& President of the Board of Trade