

Dear Dr Fox

As MEPs representing some of the UK's agricultural regions and/or a members of the European parliament's agriculture committee we have a keen interest in the framework within which farmers will produce and export after we leave the EU in less than a year's time.

At present, agricultural produce and food exported outside the EU is covered by agreements between the EU and a series of third countries. Please could you let us know what progress has been made to ensure that the farmers we represent will still be able to use the same framework during the transition period? Specifically, which countries have agreed to continue to recognise UK exports as being of EU origin during the transition period for the purposes of their existing agreements with the EU? If there is no such guarantee can you advise us about what framework you will put in place in the next eleven months to replace these trade agreements? As a keen proponent of Global Britain this is exactly the sort of trade you are seeking to expand so it would obviously be disastrous if those who are already exporting were to lose market share during the transition period.

As well as being the focus of the fiercest competition, food products are also subject to stringent sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards. Can you please let us know about progress to ensure that importers in third countries will continued to recognise UK products as meeting EU standards during the transition period? For example, can organic producers be confident that the US will extend the US-EU Organic Equivalency [regulation](#) to them during the transition period? Clearly, without guarantees that equivalent standards will be recognised the farmers we represent may face immediate problems with exporting their produce beyond the EU.

Finally, we would be interested to hear what progress you have made in seeking replacements for the systems of protection offered by the EU schemes for products of designated origin and protected geographical indicators. The high quality and price premium of West Country Cheddar cheese, Gloucestershire cider, Yorkshire forced rhubarb, and Cornish pasties are protected by these schemes. We understand that there are a few rare examples of similar protections under the WTO, so are you working there to establish such protections? We would suggest that without them our farmers of such specialist produce would face a rush of lower-quality competitors that would threaten their market position. In addition, the European Council has explicitly stated its goal to maintain the recognition of EU GIs in the UK post-Brexit. Can you confirm that the UK government will agree to this objective and seek a similar continued protection of UK GIs on the EU market?

It has become clear that negotiating our trade framework after Brexit will be a complex and time-consuming matter. As political representatives of farmers and food exporters we are deeply concerned that the underestimation of the difficulty of this process should not impact negatively on them and hence on British trade.

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