

C/O
Agriculture House
Stoneleigh Park
Stoneleigh
Kenilworth
CV8 2TZ

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Friday 24th January 2020

Dear Prime Minister

We are writing to you as a broad coalition of major farming, environment, animal welfare and public health organisations who share and support your government's stated commitment to ensuring the environmental, animal welfare and safety standards of UK food production are not undermined after we leave the EU and develop our own independent trade policy.

We are all agreed that Brexit provides an opportunity to foster a sustainable, carbon neutral model of farming in the UK building on our reputation for high quality, safe and affordable food. There may be differences of opinion as to the best way of achieving that outcome, but we are all agreed that without the right domestic policy, supported by a progressive and ambitious trade policy, none of us will realise this shared vision.

You have pledged "not to in any way prejudice or jeopardise our standards of animal welfare or food hygiene", and the Secretary of State for Defra recently promised to "defend our national interests and our values, including our high standards of animal welfare." Along with your party's manifesto commitment that, "in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards," we are increasingly reassured that you are as committed as us to making the UK a world leader in food, farming and environmental standards.

However, we also recognise that this is a complex issue that goes beyond just the negotiating position of the UK government in any potential trade deals, and that there will be intense pressure on British negotiators to make significant concessions on this issue. Furthermore, as an independent member of the WTO the UK will also need to consider how it manages its trading relationships outside the terms of bilateral trade deals. It is vital that we have more than just verbal assurances to ensure our standards are properly safeguarded. In light of this, we urge you to take some specific actions we believe will enable you to ensure that the UK government can achieve its commitment to safeguard the standards of UK production, now and in the future:

- The government should enshrine its manifesto commitment in law. The Agriculture Bill provides a good opportunity to do so for some key standards. We would be pleased to work with the government to draft legislative provisions that meet the government's commitment to safeguard standards while allowing sufficient flexibility to conduct meaningful trade negotiations.

- Formal processes are vital to allow government and stakeholders to engage openly on this issue. As Secretary of State for Defra, Michael Gove committed to establishing a trade and standards commission. A body such as this could undertake such a role, bringing together a wide variety of stakeholders to engage on the UK's trade policy and how it affects our standards.
- Finally, we believe that Brexit provides a vital opportunity for the UK to lead the way in devising a global trading system fit for the 21st Century. While the liberalisation of global trade in recent decades has been successful in growing economies, providing jobs and lowering prices for consumers, it has failed to deal with the negative impacts of such growth – most evident today in the challenges of climate change, loss of biodiversity and concerns over the welfare of the farm animals we rear. Brexit means the UK can show leadership in pioneering a new type of global trading system; one that moves away from the narrow and dated focus on ever cheaper goods, regardless of how they are produced, to one that rises to the challenges of climate change and promotes more sustainable models of production and consumption across the world. In the year that the UK hosts the COP26 climate change summit, we are ready to work with you in pushing forward this agenda with energy and vision.

With the enactment of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill and our formal departure from the EU just days away, we believe these measures must be pursued as a priority. We believe that with the right policy framework and the establishment of a clear understanding of our shared vision for the future, Brexit can be a catalyst for UK farming not just to be the envy of the world, but to provide gold-standard model for high standard, high quality, sustainable food production. We would welcome the chance for a delegation of the signatories to this letter to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can work in partnership to achieve this vision.

Yours sincerely,

Minette Batters – President, National Farmers Union

Beccy Speight, Chief Executive, RSPB

Katie White – Executive Director of Advocacy and Campaigns, WWF-UK

Hilary McGrady – Director General, National Trust

Patience Thody – Acting Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts

Chris Sherwood – Chief Executive, RSPCA

John Davies – President, NFU Cymru

Ivor Ferguson – President, Ulster Farmers Union

Andrew McCornick – President, NFU Scotland

Shirley Cramer CBE – Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health

Dr Darren Moorcroft – Chief Executive, The Woodland Trust

John Sauven – Executive Director, Greenpeace UK

Kath Dalmeny – Chief Executive, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

Shaun Spiers – Executive Director, Green Alliance

Mark Bridgeman – President, CLA

George Dunn, Chief Executive, Tenant Farmers Association

Helen Browning – Chief Executive, Soil Association

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive, LEAF

Patrick Holden – Chief Executive, Sustainable Food Trust

Crispin Truman – Chief Executive, CPRE: The countryside charity

David Goodwin – Chairman, NFYFC AGRI

Richard Griffiths – Chief Executive, British Poultry Council
David Johnstone – Chairman, Scottish Land & Estates
Andrew Laughton – Chairman, National Beef Association
Richard Lister – Chair, National Pig Association
Phil Stocker – Chief Executive, National Sheep Association
Mark Williams – Chief Executive, British Egg Industry Council
Jyoti Fernandes MBE – Chief Executive, Landworkers Alliance
Richard Benwell – Chief Executive, Wildlife and Countryside Link
Roger Kerr, Chief Executive, Organic Farmers and Growers
Michael Krause – Acting Chief Executive, Plantlife
James Thornton – Chief Executive Officer, ClientEarth
Steve Andrews – Chief Executive, Earthwatch Europe
Will Travers OBE – Executive President, Born Free Foundation
Paula Sparks – Chairperson, UK Centre for Animal Law (A-Law)
Dr Mark Avery – Co-Founder, Wild Justice
Christopher Price – Chief Executive, Rare Breeds Survival Trust
Prof. Alastair Driver – Director, Rewilding Britain
Chris Fegan – Director, Catholic Concern for Animals
Georgina Groves – Executive Director, Wild Welfare
Caroline Yates – Chief Executive, Mayhew
Bob Elliott – Director, OneKind
Matt Shardlow – Chief Executive, Buglife
Stephen Sibbald – UK Country Director, World Animal Protection
Andy Knott – Chief Executive, League Against Cruel Sports
Andy Atkins – Chief Executive, A Rocha UK
Caroline Ruane – Chief Executive, Naturewatch Foundation
Dr Nick Palmer – Head of Compassion UK, Compassion in World Farming
Julie Williams – Chief Executive, Butterfly Conservation
Fiona Matthews – Chair, The Mammal Society
Jill Nelson – Chief Executive, People’s Trust for Endangered Species
Dominic Dyer – Chief Executive, Badger Trust
Brian Da Cal – Director, Four Paws UK
Lucy MacLennan – Chief Executive, Organic Research Centre
Dr Keith Tyrell – Director, Pesticides Action Network
Dan Crossley – Executive Director, the Food Ethics Council
Simon Billing – Executive Director, Eating Better
Prof. Tim Lang – Founder Food Research Collaboration, City, University of London
Colin Tudge – Director, The Real Farming Trust
John Turner – Coordinator, Farm Transition Pathways
James Morford – Chairman, Family Farmers Association
Miles King – Director, People Need Nature
Jan Creamer – President, Animal Defenders International