



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

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Dear Prime Minister

The result of the EU Referendum presents particular challenges as well as opportunities for the UK food chain. After 40 years, our farm businesses and food companies have learned to influence, adapt to and work with policy set in Brussels. The Government's intention to trigger Article 50 in March 2017 presages a period of intense negotiation over what will replace current policy and legislation. We are clear that the outcome of this negotiation will have far reaching effects for our sector. But we are equally clear that a settlement that recognises the critical role of the UK food chain will demonstrate how Brexit can be beneficial not just for our sector but also the wider economy too.

Those signing this letter represent the four UK Farming Unions and 71 leading food businesses with a collective turnover of over £92bn and employing over 925,000 people across the UK. We have a bold and ambitious vision for our industry; one where competitive, profitable and progressive farming and food businesses deliver an increasing proportion of the nation's needs for high quality, safe, affordable food to British people, as well as expanding into new export markets. We know that we have the strong support of consumers who value the British provenance as well as the daily care we take to manage the environment and safeguard the integrity of our crops, animals and production processes.

Uniquely, while being the UK's largest manufacturing sector, bigger than the automotive and aerospace sectors combined, our economic reach spreads to every parliamentary constituency. As such a positive outcome from the Brexit negotiation should benefit every corner of the UK.

For our sector maintaining tariff-free access to the EU single market is a vital priority. It is where 75% of our food exports go, so all our farming and food businesses wish to achieve this outcome. The sector needs access to EU and non-EU seasonal and permanent labour, alongside assurances that EU workers already working permanently in the UK are allowed to remain. This access to labour is essential as it underpins the UK food chain's timely delivery of high quality affordable food to consumers. We would urge that the UK Government seeks both these goals as the whole of society and the economy will benefit.

We recognise that the negotiations will be protracted and detailed – rightly so, the best outcome must be sought – however we would welcome an early opportunity to brief you before the discussions commence and stand ready to provide input as required.

Yours sincerely

Meurig Raymond *W. Allan Bowie*

MEURIG RAYMOND
President
NFU



ALLAN BOWIE
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NFU Scotland



Barclay Bell

BARCLAY BELL
President
Ulster Farmers Union



Stephen James

STEPHEN JAMES
President
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This letter has also been sent to:

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon David Davis MP, Secretary of State for Exiting the EU
Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP, Secretary of State for International Trade
Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Secretary of State, Defra