

Core production standards for agri-food imports



OUR ASK

Begin a formal process of developing and establishing core production standards that apply to agri-food imports, and a restatement of government commitments to retain full sovereignty over our food and farming standards in future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.

Why it's needed

British farmers and growers are proud to produce food to some of the highest environmental and animal welfare standards in the world – standards we know the British people value and trust.

No one wants to see high welfare and sustainably produced home-grown food undermined by trade deals that fail to meet our own legal requirements on animal welfare and environmental protection. In 2020, more than a million people signed an NFU petition calling for the government to implement safeguards against this very real risk.

Major UK retailers¹, the first Trade and Agriculture Commission, and numerous Parliamentary inquiries have all supported calls to develop a set of core standards that the government would then uphold in any future trade deals.

These standards should contain strong and specific wording that commits all parties to promote cooperation on welfare standards internationally.

Establishing core standards would ensure imports do not undermine the domestic standards that we are rightly proud of. It would also show leadership on the global stage by raising the bar for food, environment, and animal welfare standards for producers around the world.

As an independent trading nation, the UK government has control of the food safety laws it demands of its domestic producers and trading partners. The UK must retain the right to regulate over food safety matters and must not cede this responsibility as part of an FTA or as a consequence of its implementation.

As the UK market is opened to additional sources of food, it is imperative that our Office of Food Safety (SPS) Assurance has sufficient resource to monitor the safety and standard of imported food and that a robust import regime is in place to ensure the food we consume continues to meet UK standards.



1. Call for core environmental standards for food trade | WWF.



What it would deliver

By establishing a set of core standards, setting out the most important animal welfare and environmental protections that UK food producers observe, the UK would ensure that the food we eat, whether produced here or abroad, meets the high expectations of British consumers.

Meeting these core production standards must be a key requirement for trade

liberalisation of imports in the agri-food industry to ensure our farmers and growers are competing on a level playing field.

We have a prime opportunity to take the lead in international forums in making the case for a better global food production regime.

Rather than being driven purely by price, to the detriment of animal welfare or environmental

outcomes, the next government can ensure that the UK harnesses its economic leverage to drive up these standards around the world.

If other countries want to trade with us, then they should raise their standards to meet ours.

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