

Jane Hunt MP



House of Commons

12 June 2020

Dear local resident,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about food standards and future trade deals.

I appreciate your concerns and you may be interested to read the following extract from a joint letter I have recently received from the Secretary of State for International Trade and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about this:

“This UK Government will not compromise on our standards. Our manifesto is clear that in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. We remain firmly committed to upholding our high environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards outside the EU and the *EU Withdrawal Act* will transfer all existing EU food safety provisions, including existing import requirements, onto the UK statute book.

These import standards include a ban on using artificial growth hormones in domestic and imported products and set out that no products, other than potable water, are approved to decontaminate poultry carcasses. Any changes to existing food safety legislation would require new legislation to be brought before this Parliament.

The UK’s food standards, for both domestic production and imports, are overseen by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. These are independent agencies and provide advice to the UK and Scottish governments. They will continue to do so in order to ensure that all food imports comply with the UK’s high safety standards. Decisions on these standards are a matter for the UK and will be made separately from any trade agreement.”

I note that some local residents are supporting the National Farmers’ Union’s (NFU’s) calls for a Trade, Food and Farming Standards Commission and I did raise this with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in a telephone call yesterday. I have also written to him and I will be sure to send those who have contacted me a copy of his response.

With regards to New Clauses One and Two of the *Agriculture Bill*, the UK currently operates trade on the grounds of adherence to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements only and so does not require countries we trade with to follow UK domestic regulation on how food is produced, including in preferential trade agreements like the CETA.

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There is no existing trade agreement anywhere in the world which includes a requirement for partner countries to produce to another country's domestic regulations and standards. Therefore, insisting on UK domestic regulations being applied to the production of food, and not just on the SPS standards of what we allow to be imported, would create an unprecedented barrier to trade. It would also damage developing nations where access to UK markets is key to lifting millions out of extreme poverty. It is for these reasons, coupled with the Government's commitment to not compromising standards, that I could not support these amendments.

I hope that this information provides clarity. Please do let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane".

Jane Hunt MP