

Dear [MP in your area]

As the Agriculture Bill moves through stages in parliament I write to urge you to uphold Conservative election manifesto promises not to 'compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards'. Surely the Bill should specify in law that we **only allow the importation of agricultural goods if the standards meet UK specifications for animal welfare, environmental protection, food safety, hygiene and traceability.**

Most people are aware of the importance of food self-sufficiency in the UK, a concern particularly highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis not least because living on an island makes our global food supply chain extremely vulnerable; while more local production for local consumption offers far more resilience. If UK food self-sufficiency has declined to 53%, why is the Conservative government signing free trade treaties that will increase imports and the lead to deregulation of food?

The only reason most imports are cheaper is because public health, soil fertility and animal welfare have been undermined in the country of origin. For example, chicken and pork from the US is cheap because of low wages and poor standards at work and ineffective or non-existent animal welfare laws that allow ever more concentration and close confinement of livestock that results in them getting three times as many antibiotics to keep pigs alive. The beta-agonist Ractomomine, used in the US but banned in 160 countries, speeds up the growth of pigs by 18% but causes pigs to collapse and become "downers," that is, animals too sick or injured to walk, and then often dragged to their death in the slaughterhouse. These cheaper products will undercut our farmers who produce to higher standards.

A UN report published 6 July 'Preventing the Next Pandemic' emphasised the necessity and importance of agro-ecological practices to curb zoonotic diseases - ***'The primary risks for future spill-over of zoonotic diseases are deforestation of the tropical environment and large-scale industrial farming of animals, specifically pigs and chickens at high density'***. I would like to know what commitment you will make to ensure food standards demanded of our farmers are kept high and that we have the freedom to improve our standards without corporations using the Investor-State Dispute Mechanism (ISDM) to win damages against the government for trying to protect our farmers?

In the House of Lords, Lord Dundee made some excellent suggestions for amendments to the Agriculture Bill, notably, **To encourage the rearing of livestock outdoors. To encourage the purchase of domestically produced animal feed**, in order to reduce carbon emissions from imported animal feed, and **To encourage a connection between afforestation and agroforestry.**

We urge you to support these amendments along with those that will allow our farmers to compete on a level playing field.

Signed
[Signature]