

In response to my letter below, Luke Hall, Conservative MP for Thornbury and Yate, explained to me why he voted against important Agriculture Bill amendments to protect British Farmers from substandard imports. If you received a similar stock response from your local conservative MP, feel free to use this as a resource that comes from [this Landworkers Alliance report](#) and [Greenpeace](#), to form your reply.

LH *"Let me assure you, I fully agree with you that British consumers want high welfare produce and if our trading partners want to break into the UK market, they should expect to meet those standards. The manifesto I stood on at last year's General Election was clear that in all trade negotiations, our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards will not be compromised. The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any deals live up to the values of our farmers and consumers. I am pleased that all food coming into this country will be required to meet existing import requirements. I know that the EU Withdrawal Act will transfer all existing EU food safety provisions, including existing import requirements, onto the UK statute book."*

In response to this argument that the EU withdrawal will transfer all existing food safety provisions:

TW *"In fact, [The Future British Standards Coalition](#) panel noted with concern that layers of accountability had been removed in the transposition of EU law and that standards had been inserted into secondary legislation, which can be changed without adequate scrutiny or being put to a vote. The government's environment minister in the Lords, Lord Gardiner of Kimble, recently conceded that changes to food standards would be done through a process known as a negative resolution – which means that they would become law automatically without a vote in parliament. Secondary legislation (also known as a statutory instrument, or 'SI') is rarely subject to what could be considered proper or meaningful scrutiny or debate. What's more, in some areas, it appears that it will now be possible to make changes to food standards through purely administrative rather than legislative routes. While there is a role for bodies such as the UK's Food Standards Agency to play, the processes for making changes to food standards are far from transparent and ministers can overrule its recommendations."*

LH *"With regards to the Lord's amendments to the Agriculture Bill on trade, I personally believe these risk adverse effects. The amendment requiring imports of food and agricultural goods to meet domestic standards, for example, would make it very difficult to secure any new trade deals"*

In response to the Conservative party line that legislation which protects food standards could affect trade deals...

TW *"Does this not mean that you must remain flexible so as to be able to sacrifice our high food standards if a trade deal required us to do so. Otherwise, why not put it in law in the Agriculture Bill?"*

LH *"I know that such conditions are not in place for imports under agreements negotiated during our membership of the EU. Furthermore, the amendment changing the role and*

structure of the Trade and Agriculture Commission is unnecessary given the strength of membership, its broad representation and extensive remit.”

In our opinion the Trade and Agriculture Bill commission is concerningly focused on industry and retail and there is not a broad representation. This is my response:

TW *"The representation is NOT broad and this has been repeatedly cause for concern. No representation for British Vets, no animal welfare charities or NGO voices such as the RSPCA. Small scale local farmers and their marketing networks have no-one to represent them. Of the 16-member board, nine are representatives from the food industry and retail. This is not broad, it reflects the real priorities of this neo-liberal, free trade government. Shanker Singham, on the board, is an ex listed 'expert' of USA's leading climate denial group - Heartland institute. Singham arranged for members of a US think tank in favour of reducing regulations around chlorinated chicken to meet UK politicians, according to an investigation by Greenpeace's investigative unit [Unearthed](#)."*

From: HALL, Luke

Sent: 12 October 2020

Dear Tracy,

Thank you for your email about maintaining British food production standards ahead of any future trade deals.

Let me assure you, I fully agree with you that British consumers want high welfare produce and if our trading partners want to break into the UK market, they should expect to meet those standards. The manifesto I stood on at last year's General Election was clear that in all trade negotiations, our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards will not be compromised.

The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any deals live up to the values of our farmers and consumers.

I am pleased that all food coming into this country will be required to meet existing import requirements. I know that the EU Withdrawal Act will transfer all existing EU food safety provisions, including existing import requirements, onto the UK statute book.

I would also like to assure you that in March, the Department for International Trade published the UK's approach to trade negotiations with the US. If you would like to read this in full, it can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869592/UK_US_FTA_negotiations.pdf

The document states; "Any agreement will ensure high standards and protections for consumers and workers, and will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards."

This assurance is repeated explicitly on 13 separate occasions throughout the negotiation ambitions, and I can assure you that this position will not change.

I have also included a joint-letter which was sent to MPs, from both Trade Secretary Liz Truss and the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary George Eustice. They share my determination to ensure that future trade agreements will deliver benefits for our brilliant farmers and food producers, and I am pleased that they have reiterated their stance that food standards will not be compromised.

With regards to the Lord's amendments to the Agriculture Bill on trade, I personally believe these risk adverse effects. The amendment requiring imports of food and agricultural goods to meet domestic standards, for example, would make it very difficult to secure any new trade deals and I know that such conditions are not in place for imports under agreements negotiated during our membership of the EU. Furthermore, the amendment changing the role and structure of the Trade and Agriculture Commission is unnecessary given the strength of membership, its broad representation and extensive remit. I am content that the UK will maintain a strong institutional framework for upholding the quality and safety of the food we import and consume through a range of Government departments, agencies and bodies such as the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and the Health and Safety Executive.

I hope that this response has offered some reassurance regarding this situation, and as always, if there is ever anything I can do to help as your local MP, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Luke Hall MP

From: Tracy Worcester

Sent: 08 October 2020

Dear Luke Hall

As my MP I'm asking you to help save our standards and protect child health in any future trade deals.

The trade deals we're now negotiating could drive the biggest change in what British people eat for decades.

We welcome trade. But the wrong kind of trade deals could mean British farmers and food producers have to compete with products that would be illegal to produce here in the UK. They could also damage child health, as shown by past trade agreements between Canada and Mexico and the USA where obesity rates increased dramatically.

That's why, when the Agriculture and Trade Bills return to parliament, I am asking you to make the case that we save our world-leading British standards and protect child health in every trade deal. To do this we need to:

- *Legislate to ensure our environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards are upheld in all UK produced and imported products*
- *Strengthen the Government's new Agriculture and Trade Commission by:*
 - *Extending its duration to five years.*
 - *Including recognised public health, child obesity, animal welfare and environmental experts in its membership.*
 - *Ensuring it produces a report on every trade deal which should be debated and voted on in parliament*
- *.Quickly implement plans to reduce child obesity, including improvements to our food labels and restrictions on junk food advertising.*

Let's have a race to the top, not a race to the bottom.

Please don't let us down.

Tracy Worcester