

Farms Not Factories Responds to Gareth Davies MP

Gareth Davies is the Conservative MP for Grantham and Stamford

GD This is an important Bill and I am pleased that it will allow new land management schemes to be introduced in England, based on the principle of public money for public goods. This means that farmers and land managers who protect our environment, improve animal welfare and produce high quality food in a more sustainable way can be rewarded. The Bill will help farmers to stay competitive, with measures to increase productivity and to invest in new technology. I am pleased that transparency in the supply chain will also be improved to help food producers strengthen their position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

FNF I agree with all of the above. My concern is that unless our farmers are protected in law in the Agriculture Bill, from cheap imports from abroad, all the goods produced with the help of public money for public good, will be undermined.

GD 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 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.

FNF The UK citizen's demands to protect our standards in law in the Agri Bill, are not from ignorance but from a collective concern that global trade is the number 1 priority of the Prime Minister and his Ministers, not our farmers and our health. Our concerns are that the tariffs that Eustice has admitted he will put on substandard food imports, could slowly but surely be reduced.

GD I am assured that all food coming into this country will be required to meet existing import requirements.

FNF Why then is George Eustice saying that he will introduce tariffs of the food that is substandard when it comes into the UK?

GD I know that at the end of the transition period the Withdrawal Act will convert all EU standards into domestic law. This includes a ban on using artificial growth hormones in both domestic and imported products and nothing apart from potable water may be used to clean chicken carcasses. Any changes to these standards would have to come before parliament.

FNF Incorrect. Many MPs, Lords and [The Future British Standards Coalition](#) have pointed out 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.

GD You may have seen the excellent article from my colleague Anthony Browne MP who is Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Environment – he sets out why the Lords amendments were well intentioned but ill thought out and represents why the vast majority of Members voted the amendments down. You can read it [here](#).