



Department for International Trade

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Our ref: MCB2021/03229

By email: jonathan.woods@parliament.uk

14 June 2021

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 24 May to the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, on behalf of your constituent, regarding a prospective UK-Australia FTA and its possible impact on UK agriculture. The Secretary of State asked me to respond.

The Government wants to secure an ambitious free trade deal with Australia that benefits businesses, producers and consumers across the UK. A trade agreement with Australia could increase UK exports to Australia by up to £900m and would reinforce our relationship with one of our closest international partners.

We have made it clear that in negotiations we aim to secure broad liberalisation of tariffs on a mutually beneficial basis, taking into account UK product sensitivities, in particular for UK agriculture. Any deal we sign with Australia will include protections for the agriculture industry and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards. Tariffs for sensitive goods can be staged over time, with safeguards built in.

A UK-Australia trade deal can open up new opportunities for British farming. British beef and lamb are amongst the best in the world, and global demand for beef and lamb is soaring. A deal with Australia is a gateway to joining CPTPP, a high-standards free trade agreement of 11 Pacific nations, which will mean lower tariffs for British exports to those markets.

The UK's reputation for high-quality products drives demand for UK goods and success in the global marketplace depends on us continuing to maintain this reputation. We are proud of our standards and have no intention of undercutting our own reputation for quality by lowering our food and animal welfare standards in pursuit of a trade deal. Australia has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

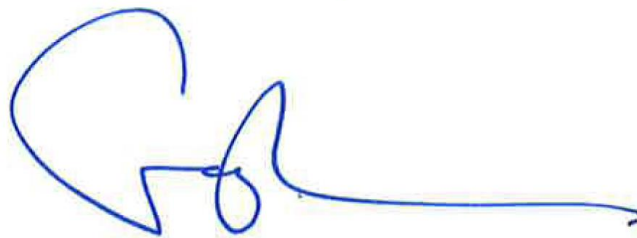
We are committed to upholding the UK's high environmental standards and supporting global decarbonisation. We are clear that more trade will not come at the expense of the environment. Nothing in the deal will stop us taking the domestic action necessary to deliver our commitment to net zero by 2050.

We keep farmers and senior figures from across industry, including the NFU, closely involved throughout all trade negotiations as part of our Trade Advisory Group (TAG). This allows us to better understand their views and the impact of each deal on the industry, and can help the industry to capture the full benefits of trade.

Any agreement with Australia would also be scrutinised by the Trade and Agriculture Commission.

Thank you once again for your letter, and I hope this response is of reassurance to your constituent.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Hands', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy
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