



**Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs
Committee**

Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Department for Business and Trade
London
By email

9 May 2024

Dear Greg,

UK trade policy: food and agriculture

Thank you for taking the time to appear before the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on 23 April for the final session of the Committee's inquiry into UK trade policy: food and agriculture. The Committee is grateful for the combined input of Defra and DBT given the cross-cutting nature of our inquiry.

I am writing to request additional information on some matters discussed during the session; I would be grateful to receive your response by 24 May. I have written separately to Sir Mark Spencer on points of relevance to Defra.

Trade and Agriculture Commission

During the evidence session, you offered to write to the Committee regarding the Trade and Agriculture Commission's funding.

In 2022, as part of an inquiry into the UK-Australia free trade agreement, we took evidence from the Trade and Agriculture Commission's Chair, Professor Lorand Bartels. We were concerned by the funding challenges Professor Bartels reported and recommended in our report that the Commission be granted sufficient independent

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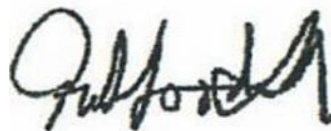
resources by the Government to carry out its important work. The Committee would appreciate an update on the Commission's funding levels and your assessment of the adequacy of its resources.

Trade with the EU

The European Union remains the UK's most significant trading partner for agri-food products. During this inquiry and our work on veterinary workforce shortages, witnesses have raised the importance of securing veterinary and sanitary and phytosanitary agreements with the EU. We have also heard evidence that the lack of electronic certification and a reliance on paper-based systems is significantly limiting the ability of agri-food businesses to trade efficiently with the EU and other international partners.

The Committee would like to know what steps you are taking to achieve such deals, and to introduce more efficient certification methods for businesses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee