



The Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair of the Efra Committee
House of Commons
London
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Date: 18 September 2025

Dear Chair and Committee,

UK-US Trade Negotiations and the Dairy Sector

I'm writing on behalf of 43,000 farmers and growers, with the support of the UK dairy processing sector body Dairy UK. We are extremely grateful for the committee's continued engagement with the wider farming industry and for all the work you do on behalf of our businesses.

As I'm sure you are aware, there remains significant concerns regarding the potential for any further access to our dairy market as part of UK-US trade negotiations. We have written to the Prime Minister to share these concerns, but we wanted to give you sight of the situation we are currently facing and would welcome the committee also raising this with No.10, Defra and DBT.

We are clear that the existing agreements from May 2025 with the US, alongside trade agreements due to come into force shortly from New Zealand, Australia and India, already represent significant concessions to our dairy sector. It is therefore the strong view of the NFU and Dairy UK that **UK farming can give no further concessions without suffering serious impacts to its viability. Any increased market access given to the US dairy sector will put our domestic dairy sector at risk.**

UK dairy is proud of its global reputation for safe, traceable, high quality and sustainable products. However, the UK Government continues to ask more of British farmers with ever higher standards, without asking imported products to meet them too. This allows US producers to hold a competitive advantage over UK businesses. Examples of the differences in regulatory production requirements and SPS food safety standards include the lack of federal legislation on animal welfare for farmed animals and antibiotics use, which could also undermine consumer trust and confidence. US dairy farmers also receive enhanced government support and have access to insurance schemes not available in the UK.

The UK has over 10,000 active dairy farmers, employing around 70,000 people across processing sites, on farm and in supporting industries. The products made from this milk have a wholesale value of over £5.7bn and also have significant potential for further export growth. This is a sector which is constantly innovating and improving its productivity, with significant potential to contribute to so many of the Government's commitments including economic growth. We want the Government to work with us to enable that and not undercut the sector at this crucial time with further trade concessions.

The NFU and Dairy UK asks on trade are as follows:



- In the UK-US negotiation, UK agriculture has already shouldered the burden on behalf of other sectors of the economy and must not be used as a bargaining chip in negotiations. We have nothing more to give. Our domestic food security and supply must be safeguarded.
- The interests of the UK agri-sector must be central to negotiations.
- Domestic standards must be protected and supported in all trade negotiations. Government must urgently convene a task force to establish a set of core production standards that apply to both domestically produced and imported food sold in the UK.
- Government must commit to undertaking annual reviews of the cumulative impact of all trade deals and partnerships on the agri-sector to prevent disruption to domestic markets.
- Our most financially valuable trading relationships must be prioritised, which gives the EU significant importance.
- Consumer trust and confidence in food standards must be maintained.

We cannot continue to barter away critical agricultural sectors. In the absence of a system of core standards, that operates to provide farmers reassurance that they are not being undercut by products that would be illegal to produce here, it is vital that UK maintains its existing tariff protections. I attach a report from the NFU setting out further information regarding the impacts of UK-US trade and the dairy sector.

As mentioned, we would welcome your engagement to ensure these important issues are communicated to Government. In addition, we would be happy to meet with you at a time of your convenience to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Bradshaw'.

Tom Bradshaw
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Bryans'.

Judith Bryans
Chief Executive