



Department
for Environment,
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Baroness Hayman of Ullock
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Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
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28 May 2026

Dear Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael,

I am writing to update you on further steps the Government is taking to support business preparedness ahead of the forthcoming UK–EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement, building on my letter to you in March.

As previously set out, the agreement under negotiation is intended to reduce friction in agrifood trade with the European Union, while maintaining the UK's high standards in animal health, plant health and food safety. The agreement will also facilitate the smooth flow of agrifood goods, including plants, from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, protecting the UK's internal market. We remain focused on ensuring that businesses can benefit from the agreement as soon as it takes effect, with a working assumption of a mid-2027 start date.

I recognise that businesses need clarity, time and support to prepare, particularly given the operational and regulatory changes that may be required under the agreement. While negotiations are ongoing and final arrangements are not yet settled, we have heard from businesses that we should provide further practical information where possible, to maintain momentum and support early readiness.

To that end, we are publishing further business-facing guidance on GOV.UK to help agrifood sectors prepare for the changes ahead. This guidance is action focused and sector-specific, setting out steps businesses can take now - such as reviewing supply chains, preparing systems and records, and signing up for updates - while being clear about where detail is not yet confirmed and when further information will follow.

Some of the detail is still subject to negotiations. Depending on the final negotiated outcome, businesses may need to consider changes in areas including production and processing requirements, certification, labelling, IT systems, and wider compliance activity. We know that some businesses will need longer to adjust to the new arrangements and we will work with those businesses to make sure there is a smooth transition. We will provide more information once negotiations conclude.

I am conscious that some stakeholders may express concern about the level of certainty that can be provided while negotiations continue. Our approach is to be transparent about what is known, what is not yet agreed, and when further clarity is expected to support preparedness. Providing further information at this stage is intended as a proportionate interim step to provide reassurance and direction, responding to stakeholder demand for early information. The guidance reflects engagement with a wide range of sectors across the agrifood system, including producers, processors, hauliers, port operators and professional service providers.

We will continue to build on this following the outcome of negotiations and as implementation planning develops, ensuring that businesses and stakeholders have the clarity they need at the right time.

I appreciate the Committee's continued interest in this work and its role in scrutinising how changes of this scale are communicated and delivered. I will ensure you are kept informed as further milestones are reached.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, reading 'S. Hayman' in a cursive style.

BARONESS HAYMAN OF ULLOCK
MINISTER FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND BIOSECURITY