



Department for International Trade

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9 July 2021

Dear Neil,

Thank you for your further letter of 15 June about the Trade and Agriculture Committee (TAC).

I note your concern about the publication of the Government response to the TAC's report. We are currently working across Whitehall to set a date for publication.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the Government remains fully committed to the high agri-food standards for which our country is rightly renowned. We will not pursue any trade deals that would undermine UK farmers unfairly or compromise those high standards.

Although I cannot yet comment on what will be in the Government's response to the TAC's report, I can say that the response, when it issues, will explicitly uphold and affirm the Government's commitment to maintaining and protecting the UK's high agri-food safety standards. It will not only repeat our pledge to ensure that all food imports comply with our high standards but will also set out once more our commitment to make sure that consumers are protected from unsafe food which does not meet those high standards. This commitment will rightly remain as one of the central planks of our trade policy.

We will also be setting out additional measures to help farmers, growers and food producers seize the opportunities new trade agreements will offer to access new markets and increase UK exports.

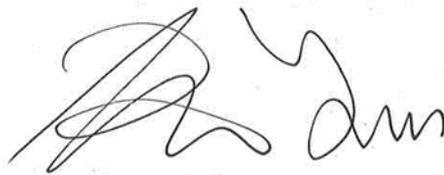
In your letter you reiterated the importance of having the new TAC being set up in sufficient time to properly scrutinise any FTA. On this point I would like to further offer you some reassurance. I expect to make an announcement on the membership for the new TAC in the coming weeks, following the conclusion of the expressions of interest process. I would also like to reassure you that the Commission will be established in sufficient time to scrutinise the planned FTA with Australia, to inform parliamentary scrutiny following agreement signature.

As you know the original TAC was a time limited body, set up with a specific remit to provide advice on an overall strategy for the UK's future trade policy. The new TAC, once constituted, will play a new role as an independent body helping to scrutinise new free trade agreements. It will be part of a suite of measures the government has put in place to scrutinise new trade agreements, during the negotiation process and after FTAs have been signed.

In pursuing trade negotiations we remain firmly committed to seeking balanced and comprehensive agreements that are fair, reciprocal and in the best interests of the UK economy and people. Our strategy will be guided and informed by the policy approach that will be set out in the Government's response to the TAC's report.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours: the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Chair of the International Trade Committee.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Truss', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade