

Ulster Farmers' Union – Written evidence (NIP0006)

1. What is the worst-case scenario here for the Northern Ireland agrifood sector, and what is the best case?

Worst case- decreased competitiveness and restricted access to existing EU/ROI/UK markets.

Best case - opposite of above

- a. Which issues are you most worried about?

Market divergence and lower import standards in GB/increased costs and bureaucracy/restricted market access

2. How is COVID-19 affecting the agrifood sector's preparation for the Protocol?

Greatly reduced capacity to get involved/engage/prepare.

3. What challenges do you anticipate for Northern Ireland agrifood products going into Great Britain?

Depends on standards divergence and access by external imports into GB. Definitions important of 'unfettered access'/'qualifying status'/origin labelling requirements.

- a. Are you reassured by the Government's commitment to legislate guaranteeing unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the wider UK internal market?

Partly but other issues as above. Also can't legislate for markets/consumer reaction.

- b. What do you hope to see from the Common Frameworks in the relevant areas?

Little if any divergence between GB and NI standards and tariffs.

4. What do you expect the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) formalities to be for goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland after the transition period, and how different is this from the current arrangements?

Tighter checks on consumer food products and resultant increased administrative costs/delays.

- a. How will these arrangements affect the agrifood sectors, and how can their impact be lessened?

Bigger impact on other parts of food supply chain than primary production. GB retention of existing/equivalent standards would negate need for checks.

5. What processes do you expect to see put in place for customs (including tariffs), VAT and excise, and product-related regulatory controls, for agrifood goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, and how would these affect you and your members?

Bigger impact on other parts of food supply chain than primary production and depends on GB tariff divergence and definition of 'substantially at risk products'

6. How can the UK-EU future relationship reduce the possible negative impacts of the Protocol on the agrifood sector?

No divergence of standards/tariffs.

7. How can the Government better engage with and provide support to your members and the Northern Ireland agrifood sector?

Meaningful engagement hasn't really started yet but needs to happen quickly with NI businesses. We have however found the industry stakeholder discussions which have recently commenced with the NI Secretary of State and the NI Office to be very useful.

8. What are the most pressing actions needed from the Joint Committee and its supporting bodies?

Proper engagement with the stakeholders involved and an understanding of their needs/issues.

- a. What would be your key message to participants in those bodies?

As above

9. Do you expect the Protocol arrangements to be ready for 1 January 2020?

We understand it can still be done but need to see progress starting urgently.

10. Will the Protocol solve the issues it is intended to?

UK only one party in negotiations and depends on EU response. UK position on tariffs and standards also critical.