



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



The Rt Hon Simon Hart MP,
Secretary of State for Wales,
UK Government,
By Email

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20 May 2021
Re: Free-Trade Deal

Dear Secretary of State, Simon,

I hope that this letter finds you well. During the last Senedd, I was pleased to communicate with you on a number of matters impacting farmers in Wales, including The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021; the potential prohibition on short and long livestock and horse journeys when the external temperature is outside the range of 5-30oC; excluding sheep, dairy, and beef from the suggested species-specific headroom requirements; trade friction; and allocations for agricultural funding for 2021/22.

As I hope to have proven since I was appointed Shadow Minister for Environment, Energy, and Rural Affairs, I am determined to see policies delivered and decisions taken which strengthen farming in Wales. Indeed, that is one reason why I have been so determined in my opposition to the aforementioned NVZ Regulations; introduced the Welsh Wool Pledge; led on calls in the Senedd for an independent review of the Rural Development Plan; championed the importance of food production in Welsh Government post-Brexit policy; worked on the need to improve the shelf life of Welsh lamb; made clear the short term need to explore what more can be done to tackle TB in wildlife; and much more.

Given the work I have carried out to champion Wales' network of family farms, it should come as no surprise to you that I am concerned about the possible impact a zero-tariffs free-trade deal with Australia could have on Welsh farmers. Whilst I believe that there is scope to strengthen the export of Welsh meat globally, especially lamb if shelf life is improved, I agree with NFU Cymru that the UK Government must safeguard the interests of Welsh farmers in trade talks. Indeed, as I hope you will agree, Welsh farmers should not be undercut through unfair competition.

It was with much interest that I read the following comment by the Department for International Trade: "Any deal we sign with Australia will include protections for the agricultural industry and will not undercut UK farmers or compromise our high standards". I would be grateful if you could kindly liaise with UK Government colleagues so to clarify what protections are under consideration.

Please be assured that I, like FUW, believe wholeheartedly in seeking new trade opportunities for UK agriculture and other industries. However, every step possible should be taken to ensure that trade deals are to the benefit of Welsh farmers.

Kind regards,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS