

FARMING INDUSTRY JOINT STATEMENT

August 2017

Exiting the European Union and the Common Agricultural Policy has sweeping implications for UK farming. UK farming is a vital part of the national economy, contributing in excess of £24 billion of revenues and around £8.5 billion of Gross Value Added to the UK economy in 2015. It also accounts for over 500,000 jobs (source NFU, Development Economics, February 2017). It is also responsible for the management of our farmed countryside which makes up around 70% of the total UK land mass.

Looking to the future, **there are many opportunities** to increase markets for our products, to drive innovation and new investment into our industry, to increase our productive efficiency, to upskill our workforce and to establish new, simpler and more effective means of supporting farmers and land managers to deliver a range of benefits to society.

The process of exiting the EU brings risks and uncertainties that have to be managed. That is why we are calling on the UK Government to seek to secure an agreement on an **initial transition period** through which the UK retains unfettered access to European markets, remaining within the Customs Union. Such arrangements must be in place for the full duration of negotiations and implementation of a Free Trade Agreement between the UK and the EU that could extend beyond the end of Article 50 process.

We are committed to working with the UK Government to maintain the **high standards of quality, welfare and provenance** that sets out UK food in domestic and international markets. This includes supporting the UK's world leading assurance schemes like Red Tractor, that are critical to the UK brand. As well as maintaining a commitment to maintain and champion UK standards in trade policy with the EU and the rest of the world.

We believe that a **fairer, more transparent and accountable UK supply chain** is vital to the future of a sustainable domestic food market that works in the best interest of consumers and producers. We call on Government, to ensure that UK law, including the role and remit of the Grocery Code Adjudicator, is fit for purpose ready for life outside of the European Union.

The UK Government must put in place a **fully functioning immigration system**, before the end of freedom of movement that ensures farmers have access to the workers that are vital to supporting our industry.

We are committed to working with the UK, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish Governments to establish a **new and better agriculture and land use policy** once the UK leaves the Common Agricultural Policy. In turn, we call on our Governments to work together with us to establish a **collaborative policy framework and budget**.

We welcome Ministers commitment to the **continuity of support based upon existing schemes and budgets**. This should allow necessary time to address market failures in supply chains and provide a vital window for the development, implementation and testing of a new policy framework that ensures sustainable growth of a competitive and valuable farming sector.

This **certainty in the short term** provides the necessary time for farmers to prepare for a new long-standing free trade agreement that retains and grows the opportunities for competitive, profitable and progressive farm businesses with the European Union and the rest of the World.

			
British Poultry Council	Country Land and Business Association	Country Land and Business Association (Wales)	National Beef Association
			
National Farmers Union	National Farmers Union of Wales	National Farmers Union of Scotland	National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs
			
National Pig Association	National Sheep Association	Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers	Scottish Land and Estates
			
The Soil Association	Tenant Farmers Association	Tenant Farmers Association (Wales)	Ulster Farmers Union