

House of Commons Public Bill Committee: Trade Bill 2019-21



June 2020: Written evidence submitted by the **British Poultry Council**

BACKGROUND

1. The British Poultry Council is the voice of the British poultry meat sector and the trade association for producers of poultry meat from chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese. Nearly a billion birds are reared for food every year, providing half the meat that the country eats. The UK consumes 20 million birds every week.
2. The British poultry meat industry is not part of the Common Agricultural Policy and yet contributes £5.5bn GVA (Gross Value Added) to the UK economy and over £1.2 billion in tax contribution to the Exchequer
3. UK is the fourth-largest producer of poultry meat in the EU. Britons prefer chicken breast meat to dark cuts like wings, legs and thighs. The sustainability of the British poultry meat production is incredibly dependent upon finding a market for 75% of the bird that is left over after removing the breasts. Currently three quarters of Britain's dark meat exports and breast meat imports are with the EU. Absence of markets for these products, pushes more cost into UK-consumed breast meat.
4. The UK is 65% self-sufficient in poultry meat. We import £2 billion worth of poultry meat each year, and export poultry meat worth £340 million; three-quarters of which is with EU Member States. Exports of breeding stock around the world are worth an additional £140 million.

BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER OUTSIDE THE EU

5. With the UK beginning a new chapter outside the European Union, it is more important than ever for the Government to recognise the needs of the British poultry industry, in order for the sector to continue feeding the nation their favourite meat.
6. Brexit must be used as an opportunity to re-focus our attention on British food values, to state boldly that prioritising high standard, affordable and sustainable British produce, for all, is at the top of our agenda. We want the Government to adopt policies that allow us to drive productivity, create good jobs and strengthen our food security in a thriving, independent UK post-Brexit.

EU FTA THAT DOES NOT COMPROMISE COMPETITIVENESS

7. We are calling on the Government to dedicate support towards maintaining existing markets and opening new third-country markets for the trade of poultry meat and breeding stock. This would boost the economy and our competitiveness at home and abroad.

8. Maintaining high British standards and continuing a healthy trading relationship with the EU is vital to UK food security. Government must not negotiate trade agreements that compromise Britain's competitiveness and risk the nation's access to a secure supply of safe, nutritious, and affordable British food.

STANDARDS MUST NOT BE REDUCED IN TRADE DEALS

9. The UK has spent a long time establishing and implementing standards that provide our citizens with safe, wholesome, and nutritious food, and that are applied to both home-grown and imported produce.
10. British food is produced to some of the highest standards in the world. The underpinning legislation on areas such as animal welfare and environmental protection is one of the most stringent in the world. It is vital that we do not lower our food standards in pursuit of new trade deals.
11. Pricing consumers out of purchasing food produced to our high standards compromises consumer food values and amplifies societal inequalities by creating a two-tier food system, in which only the affluent can afford to eat British food grown to British standards. This is unacceptable.
12. The Government has repeatedly stated the UK will not compromise on our high standards of animal welfare, food production and environmental protection in trade negotiations, and we are asking them to live up to that commitment.
13. If we lose control of the food that enters our markets, we risk diluting our own standards and compromise our future trading relationship with the EU and place barriers between us and our biggest and closest trading partner.

BRITISH PRODUCERS MUST NOT BE PENALISED

14. British farmers have worked incredibly hard to build a food system that enhances British food values and ensures high standards of production from farm to fork. As a nation we demand safe, wholesome, and nutritious food; world-class animal welfare; production that respects the environment; food that is affordable and available; and a sustainable and secure supply chain.
15. To allow products, produced to lower standards, even with tariffs attached, will penalise British producers who have worked hard to achieve these standards.
16. Maintaining high British standards and continuing a healthy trading relationship with the EU is vital to UK food security and ensuring nation's access to affordable British food.

For more information about how the British poultry meat industry is campaigning to put #FoodOnEveryTable, please follow @BritishPoultry.

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