



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

17th June 2020

New Comment,

RE: AGRICULTURE BILL

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the *Agriculture Bill*; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

This Bill will allow ambitious new land management schemes to be introduced in England, based on the principle of public money for public goods. This means that farmers and land managers who protect our environment, improve animal welfare and produce high quality food in a more sustainable way, can be rewarded. The Bill will help farmers to stay competitive, with measures to increase productivity and to invest in new technology. I am pleased that transparency in the supply chain will also be improved to help food producers strengthen their position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

British consumers want high welfare produce, and if our trading partners want to break into the UK market, they should expect to meet those standards. The manifesto I stood on was clear that in all trade negotiations, our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards will not be compromised. The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any deals live up to the values of our farmers and consumers.

I am also pleased that all food coming into this country will be required to meet existing import requirements. I know that at the end of the transition period, the *EU Withdrawal Act* will convert all EU standards into domestic law. This includes a ban on using artificial growth hormones in both domestic and imported products and nothing apart from potable water may be used to clean chicken carcasses. Any changes to these standards would have to come before Parliament.

Finally, the Government has committed to a serious and rapid examination of what could be done through labelling in the UK market to promote high standards and high welfare goods. Any scheme could not be devised until we have completed the transition period and would need to recognise World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations.

It is for these reasons that I did not support various amendments tabled by backbench MPs during the passage of the Bill in the House of Commons, and that you advocate for in your correspondence. Simply put, I could not be clearer in my view that the amendments you refer to are unnecessary, because I trust my ministerial colleagues to deliver on the promises we made at the General Election. Essentially, I welcome the Government's very clear commitment that we will uphold the UK's high levels of food safety and welfare standards and that they will not be watered down in pursuit of any trade deal now that the UK has left the EU.



With that in mind, I have attached a 'Dear Colleague' letter I have received jointly from the Secretary of State for International Trade, the Rt. Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, the Rt. Hon George Eustice MP, which I hope further clarifies the Government's position on these matters and directly addresses your concerns.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**