

Green MEP attacks minister for disinformation about farming exports



30 July 2019

In response to comments made by NFU boss Minette Batters about threats to sheep farmers from a No Deal Brexit (1), Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns suggested they should switch from their dominant European markets and seek customers in Japan instead (2).

Molly Scott Cato, who represents many sheep farmers in her constituency of South West England, said:

“The minister is either misrepresenting or misunderstanding the situation and thereby risking the livelihoods of sheep farmers in Wales and the South West.

“He admits that the 40% tariffs that will follow a No Deal exit from the EU will decimate lamb exports to the EU but suggests that a new market has just opened up in Japan.

“This market is only tariff-free because of an EU trade deal between the EU and Japan (JEFTA), a deal that we will no longer be part of outside the EU.

“This indication of a fundamental failure to understand the trade situation facing our farmers – or a deliberate attempt to mislead – indicates the contempt for our farming industry shown by this government.”

Dr Scott Cato, who is a member of the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee, added:

“The idea of global Britain is a threat to our climate. Local supply chains are less energy-intensive and attempting to encourage people in the Far East to consume more meat when the climate emergency requires us all to move towards the sort of plant-based diets they currently enjoy is irresponsible.”

Notes

(1)

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/how-no-deal-brexit-will-devastate-farming-in-uk-nfu-president-minette-batters-1-9869309>

(2)

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jul/30/stop-playing-russian-roulette-sheep-industry-johnson-told>

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