

Trade and Agriculture Commission membership announced

Retailers, farming unions, consumer, hospitality and environmental bodies from across the UK have been named as members of the Government's new Trade and Agriculture Commission.

It will be chaired by food safety expert Tim Smith, a former Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency and Tesco Group Technical Director.

The English, Scottish and Welsh branches of the National Farmers Union (NFU) are all represented, as are the Ulster Farmers Union and the Farmers' Union of Wales. Other members include the British Retail Consortium, UK Hospitality, and the Food and Drink Federation.

It will report directly to International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, advising on:

- Trade policies the Government should adopt to secure opportunities for UK farmers, while ensuring the sector remains competitive and that animal welfare and environmental standards in food production are not undermined.
- Advancing and protecting British consumer interests and those of developing countries.
- How the UK engages the WTO to build a coalition that helps advance higher animal welfare standards across the world.
- Developing trade policy that identifies and opens up new export opportunities for the UK agricultural industry – in particular for SMEs – and that benefits the UK economy as a whole.

The scope of the Commission was agreed after close consultation between farming unions, the Department for International Trade and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It will be set up for six months and submit an advisory report at the end of its work which will be presented to Parliament by the Department for International Trade.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

My officials and I are working round the clock to ensure that any trade deal we strike brings the very best opportunities to the UK's farming community.

We recognise the importance of engaging with the agriculture industry and seeking expert advice, which is why we have set up the Commission.

We are putting British farming first and giving our producers the best opportunity to export their world class food abroad and grow their businesses. Our high food and animal welfare standards won't

be compromised.

George Eustice, Environment Secretary said:

We have been consistently clear that we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards in all of our trade negotiations.

The Agriculture and Trade Commission will ensure that the UK's agricultural industry, our support for farmers and our commitment to high welfare standards are maintained. This Government will work hard to ensure any future trade deals are in their best interests and will prioritise both food production and our world-leading environmental targets.

The agriculture and food industries are our largest manufacturing sectors employing more than 4 million people and contributing £120 billion to our economy. The new Commission will play a crucial part advising on how trade policy can create further growth and stimulate this critical pillar of our economy.

Chair of the Agriculture and Trade Commission, Tim Smith, said;

The trade decisions the Government is making now will shape the future not just of British food and farming, but the whole country, so it is important that the voices of industry and the British public are heard.

This Commission will bring a clear-eyed perspective on what is fair and works for consumers, farmers, food producers and animals. I am delighted to chair it, and look forward to independently advising the Government on how trade policy can both protect and advance the interests of British farming and the UK as a whole.

President of the NFU, Minette Batters, said;

Today's announcement (regarding the Trade and Agriculture Commission) is a hugely important development in ensuring UK farming's high standards of animal welfare and environmental protection are not undermined in future trade deals. It addresses a crucial element of a much broader challenge in ensuring the UK's trade policy delivers a prosperous and sustainable future for UK agriculture. This means securing trade deals that work for UK farmers and consumers, as well as our farmed animals and our environment, and we will continue to work with Parliamentarians so that they have proper oversight of our trade policy.

All of this will be underpinned by the important work of the Trade and Agriculture Commission in the months ahead, and the NFU stands ready to contribute its technical expertise so that the Commission can do this job as quickly and robustly as possible. The role of the independent Chair will be critical, and we look forward to working with him in the weeks ahead to ensure the Commission meets the expectations and ambitions of all the consumers, campaigners and farmers who have demonstrated over recent months how important this issue is.

Kate Nicholls, CEO of UK Hospitality, said;

Tourism is our third largest export earner and eating out is a vital component of that, so it is critical that needs and concerns of the hospitality supply chain are reflected in the trade deals being negotiated. That is why I am so pleased to be involved in the new Trade and Agriculture Commission.

Our dynamic hospitality sector is rightly regarded as one of the best in the world, in part due to the fantastic quality of our food. Ensuring access to high quality food at a reasonable price will be key to keeping this up and ensuring hospitality can play a central role in the economic recovery.

Andrew McCornick President of NFU Scotland said:

As the UK sets its own trade policy this is a moment in time that will shape Scottish farming for generations to come. The Commission has the potential to set a roadmap for UK trade policy that will allow farming to grow and thrive across the UK by opening up new markets but also ensure that our production standards are front and centre of all new trade deals. For NFUS ensuring that production standards are taken into account in trade is absolutely critical.

John Davies, President of NFU Cymru, said:

We have consistently argued for the establishment of a trade and agriculture commission at what is a crucial time for British agriculture and as such we fully welcome today's announcement by Secretary of State Truss. We are determined to play a full role within the commission in order to ensure UK farming's high standards of animal welfare and environmental protection are not undermined in future trade deals.

Ivor Ferguson, President of the Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU):

The Government's recent announcement of the establishment of this Commission recognises the importance of addressing the challenges of protecting our world leading environmental, animal welfare and food production standards. The UFU now have direct involvement in this Commission to ensure that the dedication of Northern Ireland's farmers, who take pride in upholding the UK's high-production standards and producing quality food for the nation, is not undermined in future trade deals.

Chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-fed beef are illegal in the UK. Any changes would need to be approved by Parliament. This Government will not compromise UK:

- High environmental protection
- Animal welfare
- Food safety standards

Members include:

- Ex-Tesco Tech Director/FSA – Tim Smith (Chair)
- NFU England – Nick von Westenholz
- NFU Scotland – Andrew McCornick
- NFU Cymru – John Davies
- Ulster Farmers Union – Victor Chestnutt
- The Farmers Union of Wales – Glyn Roberts
- Lamb Farmer – Rob Hodgkins
- Competere – Shanker Singham
- Former Chief Veterinary Officer – Nigel Gibbens
- British Retail Consortium – Andrew Opie
- Former Trade Minister – Lord Price
- Trade Out Of Poverty – Tom Pengelly
- Former Trade Minister and Agriculture Minister for New Zealand – Sir Lockwood Smith
- UKHospitality – Kate Nicholls
- Food and Drink Federation – Ian Wright CBE
- LEAF – Caroline Drummond