



Department for
International Trade

Government response to the Trade and Agriculture Commission report

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Foreword

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP

Secretary of State for International Trade
President of the Board of Trade



In July 2020 the Trade and Agriculture Commission was established to advise the government on how best to secure opportunities for UK farmers and food producers through our future trade policy.

I am grateful to Tim Smith, Chair, and members of the Trade and Agriculture Commission for their ambitious and comprehensive report. They have made innovative and far-reaching proposals to ensure the sector remains competitive, and that the UK's high animal welfare and environmental standards are not undermined. I congratulate them on the breadth and depth of their work. I also commend them on the expertise they brought to it and their outreach across the industry and civil society throughout the UK.

The UK is embarking on a new journey as an independent trading nation. For the first time in nearly 50 years we have unprecedented opportunities to reach into new markets and to create further growth and jobs. We also have the opportunity to stimulate the agri-food industry – a critical pillar of our economy.

Promoting the interests of our farmers and food producers is a priority of our trade policy and our trade deals are delivering on this. Our negotiations will continue to support farmers. We will do this for every region of the UK. We will work to broaden access for Cornish dairy, as well as recognising iconic products like Melton Mowbray pies or cutting tariffs on Scotch Whisky. The UK-Japan agreement, for example, supports UK agri-food access into the Japanese market by lowering Japanese tariffs. It also further protects iconic UK brands through geographical indications. British business excels by having a global outlook and people across the UK's nations stand to benefit from these agreements.

As the Secretary of State for International Trade I am keen to realise the government's vision for free and fair trade. I believe a crucial part of implementing this is by ensuring that businesses, large and small, are at the heart of our trade policy. This includes farmers and growers from across the UK. We want to make sure that our vision for a values-led and value-generating trade policy meets the needs of farmers, consumers and businesses alike.

We are now embracing our freedom to trade with markets around the world. So far, we have agreed trade deals with 68 countries plus the EU. These countries accounted for £744bn of UK bilateral trade in 2020, securing jobs in every region and nation of the UK.

We are forging closer links with fast-growing and like-minded nations across the Americas and Pacific to help the best of British business export worldwide. I want British farmers and food producers to be able to seize these opportunities.

On 17 June 2021, the government published an Agreement in Principle for its trade deal with Australia, the first we have negotiated since leaving the EU. This Agreement in Principle is a significant achievement. It is the basis of a FTA which will deepen the links between two allies bound by common values. This includes a shared commitment to high standards in areas like food and animal welfare.

Negotiations on a trade deal with New Zealand are also well underway. Both of these agreements will help pave the way towards our eventual accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Our accession, which remains a priority for this year, will connect the UK to some of the world's most dynamic economies. It will also increase demand for the high quality, premium food and drink produce for which this country is renowned.

Looking ahead we want to unleash the potential of UK businesses through our ambitious trade programme. We also want to see our farmers leading the way in the world's most vibrant markets. Success for UK producers overseas means income for farmers across the UK to invest in their business for the future.

We will forge a bright future for our farmers. In doing so we will support jobs, improve productivity, provide lower prices and greater choice for consumers. We will cement our position as global players in the market.

In conclusion, the government fully intends the UK to pursue a bold, proactive approach internationally, in line with our aspirations for a Global Britain.

**The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
and President of the Board of Trade**

Executive Summary

The government welcomes the Trade and Agriculture Commission's report. It is based on the principles of liberalising trade and upholding the UK's high standards in food production, animal welfare and the environment. The Trade and Agriculture Commission's report complements our own trade ambitions in taking a strategic look at agri-food trade policy. We welcome its approach.

The government wholeheartedly shares the Trade and Agriculture Commission's optimism for the future of UK trade. This includes the new opportunities that a positive and ambitious agri-food trade policy will unlock.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission's recommendations focus on 5 priority areas for action by the government. These are:

- the development of an ambitious agri-food trade strategy
- a coherent plan for UK leadership on the international stage
- the negotiation of free trade agreements (FTAs)
- the promotion of UK exports and market access and
- the alignment of trade, aid and climate policies relating to agri-food

An ambitious agri-food trade strategy

The government has ambitious trade objectives with the aim of delivering economic growth to all nations and regions of the UK. Crucial to this are:

- securing world-class FTAs
- reducing market access barriers
- helping UK businesses export and
- championing the rules-based international trading system

The government is committed to a bold and ambitious approach to agricultural trade. We are focused on getting trade deals that protect and advance the interests of farmers, food producers and consumers. Environmental considerations and protecting animal welfare standards will continue to be at the heart of our strategy.

We will not pursue a strategy which undercuts the UK's reputation for quality. Nor will we lower our food and animal welfare standards in

pursuit of trade deals. The UK's reputation for high-quality products drives demand for UK goods across the globe. Success in the global marketplace depends on us maintaining an unwavering commitment to retaining the highest standards.

Our bold approach to agri-food trade will complement a broader UK food strategy. This will be set out in the forthcoming government Food Strategy White Paper to support the development of a sustainable, resilient and affordable food system.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission's report challenges the government to go further. Our response outlines new commitments in important policy areas. This includes working with trading partners on animal welfare and on tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

We will use our influence in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other multilateral bodies. In these, we will argue for better and fairer trading rules for producers and consumers worldwide.

UK leadership on the international stage

Since leaving the EU the government has been working to show that the UK will be an international force for trade liberalisation, committed to our core values.

The UK is in a strong position to lead international cooperation. We can achieve this by leveraging our high standards and values and encouraging global partners to match our ambition.

We will continue to promote our values globally, to build alliances with major partners and work with like-minded governments. In international fora like the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), we will address crucial challenges and make the case for better animal welfare standards.

The government will champion the tackling of climate change internationally through the WTO. We will also use the UK's COP26 and G7 presidencies to push for ambitious international action. Through forthcoming legislation, such as the Environment Bill, we will cement the UK as a positive force for sustainable trade.

The government will also use our FTAs to protect and build on the UK's high standards and those of our partners. We have already agreed with Australia that our trade deal will contain an explicit article on climate change. This is the first time that Australia has ever signed up to such an article. This affirms our commitment to tackle climate change, including under the Paris Agreement, and enhance cooperation on a range of issues supporting these objectives. The deal also includes non-regression provisions and a meaningful commitment to cooperate internationally on animal welfare.

The government will continue to build global coalitions to protect and advance the labour rights of workers in vital supply chains. We will also continue to play an active role in the International Labour Organization.

Negotiating FTAs

The government is determined that policy should not operate in a vacuum. Every organisation and stakeholder in the UK should feel that they are able to engage with trade policy. Significant consideration has gone into supporting this approach and to ensuring robust scrutiny and assessment practices are in place.

The government currently publishes scoping assessments in advance of FTA negotiations and releases full impact assessments on completion of FTAs. It reports on the extent to which agri-trade measures in new FTAs are consistent with maintaining existing levels of protection. It also gives Parliament meaningful and detailed access to talks at each stage of negotiations. Through this the government is putting transparency at the centre of our policy approach.

In November 2020 the government announced that the Trade and Agriculture Commission's role would evolve. It will become a new body with a new remit to scrutinise final trade deals. This will ensure that the interests of the UK agriculture sector are considered at every step of the FTA negotiations process. This starts with public consultations, dedicated Trade Advisory Groups during, and now independent scrutiny of the final deal through the new Trade and Agriculture Commission.

The consultation exercise undertaken prior to trade talks with Australia, New Zealand and the US was one of the largest ever by the UK government. Consultations will be a permanent feature of preparations for all trade talks in future.

Promoting UK exports and market access

The UK has become an independent trading nation for the first time in nearly 50 years. The Trade and Agriculture Commission recognised it as the right time for a step change in efforts to realise the agri-food sector's trading potential.

The opportunities for our high-quality products are worldwide but are particularly prominent in North America and the fast-growing middle class consumer markets of Asia. Here, demand is increasing for meat, dairy, fish and high-end manufactured goods, spirits and sparkling wine.

Over the last year the government has significantly increased our focus on ensuring that businesses remain resilient to the unpredictable times we find ourselves in. We are also working hard to ensure that businesses can also thrive in this new trading environment.

In 2020 we launched the Bounce Back package to help the industry recover from the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19), connect with buyers and develop expertise. This was followed by the Open Doors campaign, in February 2021, to help the industry seize new opportunities through new trade agreements in priority markets. So far businesses have engaged in expert master-classes and a new six-month agricultural export mentoring programme. This is all supported by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the National Farmers Union (NFU). In addition, the government announced in September 2021 an exports initiative for farmers and the food and drink industry. The initiative includes appointing more dedicated "agri-food attaches" to act as representatives on the ground to unlock key markets across the world. These new measures will build the capability of our excellent international teams. They will help our food and drink producers seize new opportunities in the biggest and fastest-growing markets in the world.

We are continually trying to reduce non-tariff barriers to open up more markets. Recent successes included removing seafood barriers to trading in Brazil and securing the ability for UK poultry exporters to trade in Japan. Our 'report a trade barrier' tool, which can be found at <https://www.great.gov.uk/report-trade-barrier/>, enables businesses to tell us about those barriers that matter most to them. The 'check for barriers' service on gov.uk also enables businesses to identify barriers and plan their trade on that basis.

All government support needs to recognise and respect the unique approaches to supporting exports that have evolved in the different parts of the UK. New trade and investment teams were recently established in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. They will help strengthen the working relationships with the devolved administrations to support businesses throughout the UK.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission identified ways in which we might escalate our strategy in the next few years. We will work in partnership with major business organisations to take that forward. We will enhance our technical and diplomatic efforts to accelerate new market access and overcome the restrictive barriers that prevent trade from starting. This will be particularly important for meat, poultry, fish and dairy products in priority markets. As barriers are resolved and new trade agreements unlock opportunities, we will consider how to progress a more ambitious, sophisticated approach to promoting the UK's offer overseas. It will rival our main competitors.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission rightly identified that this needs to be underpinned by sound evidence including a systematic mapping of opportunities and strengths. This would enable both government and business to best target their efforts.

Finally, we must ensure that this new approach is implemented UK wide, together with the devolved administrations and in partnership with business itself. A new UK wide Food and Drink Export Council will enable us to collectively harness our expertise and capability to achieve that.

Aligning trade, aid and climate policies relating to agri-food

The UK will use its influence in the WTO and other multilateral bodies to argue for better and fairer trading rules. Trade is a critical driver of economic growth. It can trigger positive changes and poverty reduction in the economies of developing countries, particularly when small businesses and producers are supported. This support ensures they have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from trade. Increased trade and investment with developing countries also creates opportunities for UK firms and consumers by lowering prices or opening fast-growing markets for UK exports.

We recognise the challenges faced by developing countries in the international trading system, particularly in the agriculture sector. We will continue to champion increased trading opportunities with them.

At the same time, the UK is exploring support for countries who struggle to meet standards and regulations to participate in trade.

The government will continue to support farmers and food producers across the UK to help their businesses grow at home and overseas. We will champion high standards worldwide and make sure that our great farming and food heritage becomes a beacon for Britain's future prosperity.



Candy
Beetroot
£ 3 20/kg
UK

White
M...
France

Golden
Turnip
£ 3 20/kg



Government
Response to the
Trade and Agriculture
Commission's
Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 1: Agri-food Trade Strategy

“The UK government should develop a bold, ambitious agri-food trade strategy. This would enable a coherent approach to the sector across the UK government and the devolved administrations and provide a framework of priorities for future trade negotiations. It should be based on a liberalising approach to trade policy, focused on bringing new opportunities for UK business, tempered with safeguarding of important standards. It should be framed well in the context of a broader UK food strategy.”

The government agrees with the Trade and Agriculture Commission that the UK’s approach to agri-food trade should be bold and ambitious. It should expand opportunities for UK businesses without compromising our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. This will continue to form the basis of the UK’s strategy and negotiating positions on agri-food trade that implements the government’s manifesto commitments. Our approach will continue to show leadership on climate, environment and animal welfare issues.

The government has an ambitious set of trade objectives to secure world-class FTAs, reduce market access barriers and support economic growth in all the nations and regions of the UK. The government will also support UK business to export and champion the rules-based international trading system. We want to build UK trade policy across the agri-food sector in a way that benefits consumers, farmers, producers and businesses across the entirety of the UK.

We will continue to protect the UK’s high standards and work with other global trading partners to advance shared interests, championing free and fair trade. We will work to ensure that the benefits of prosperity are shared through global growth.

This approach has been set out in the published objectives for trade negotiations with Australia, New Zealand and the USA and in publicly available strategic cases and scoping assessments.

It will also be reflected in the government’s forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper. The strategy will build on the independent review undertaken by Henry Dimbleby. It will also build on the work from the Agriculture Bill, the Environment Bill, the Fisheries Bill, the Industrial Strategy and the government’s latest obesity strategy¹. The Food Strategy White Paper will set out the government’s direction and ambitions to support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and affordable. It will also aim to help people live healthy lives, whilst also protecting animal health and welfare.

Close cooperation with a range of stakeholders and the devolved administrations is crucial to securing a bold and fair agri-food trade policy. The government will continue to engage with stakeholders as our approach to agri-food trade develops.

Consistent with the principles and recommendations in the Commission’s report, the government will ensure that our strategic approach to agri-food trade remains ambitious in its objectives and coherent in its approach.

¹ Tackling Obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives.



RECOMMENDATION 2: Agri-Food Trade Minister

“There should be a minister with specific responsibility to lead on agri-food trade, who would ensure policy coherence across UK government. The minister would lead in pushing for an elevation of global standards on environment, animal welfare and ethical trade in international forums.”

The government is committed to ensuring its agri-food trade policy is, and remains, coherent across departments. To support its delivery, well-established processes and clearly defined Ministerial portfolios are in place.

All Departments with an interest in agri-food trade policy work closely together on the formulation of mandates and on trade negotiations. They will draw on expertise across government and ensure alignment of agri-food trade policy with the UK’s domestic and international policy

objectives. Decisions are made by all interested Ministers in line with the normal processes of Cabinet government.

The government remains committed to upholding our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. We agree that the UK should lead the elevation of global standards in these areas. We will continue to do this, working with our trading partners and through multilateral fora, including at Ministerial level.





RECOMMENDATION 3: Climate and Environment in Trade Policy

“Climate change and other environmental pressures are of such paramount importance that the UK government must ensure that they are integral to its trade policy and negotiations. It should promote these issues in international forums, especially COP26. It should champion the creation of a global standards framework for the environment and clear metrics for measuring environmental sustainability, whilst establishing a corresponding set of rigorous national standards. WWF’s Codex Planetarius could be a model from which to build these ambitions.”

Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is the government’s number one international priority, and trade can be part of the solution.

This means advocating for a trading system which is free and fair to accelerate the global green transition. It is where certain goods and services are liberalised to support environmental objectives and where market failures and distortions are addressed to reduce environmentally harmful activities.

Asymmetrical environmental standards for sustainable agriculture undermine free and fair trade in agricultural products. Successful green trade in agriculture will depend on ambitious collective action to raise environmental standards worldwide, taking into account the environmental, social and economic impacts of trade.

Cooperative approaches which secure voluntary progress will be vital, as use of trade levers to force policy change can risk undermining the trading system and its benefits. The UK will use our participation at the new WTO forum – the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions – to engage meaningfully with

other WTO members and stakeholders. Through our FTAs the government will also look to support the UK’s strong environmental and climate commitments, while upholding and building on the UK’s strong standards of environmental protection.

The government is committed to upholding and advancing our high environmental standards. The landmark Environment Bill will set a new and ambitious domestic framework for environmental governance.

However, the government recognises that high UK standards alone are not enough. The UK will work to raise global ambition for sustainable agriculture by:

- Promoting UK values globally and seeking opportunities for more joined-up policy and aligned environmental standards
- Engaging with relevant stakeholders and organisations on ideas for overcoming the challenges in developing and agreeing international standards
- Working with producer countries to raise capacity and capability to meet international standards in the sustainable production of agricultural and forest

products. This will aim to prevent further harmful land-use change, reduce biodiversity loss and mitigate the environmental impact of land-use change that has already occurred on a large scale

- Supporting the development of international metrics for measuring environmental sustainability, including through fora such as the OECD
- Exploring options to advance sustainability standards in the production of internationally traded products, such as through the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue. And continuing to support assurance standards and private sector ambition on voluntary initiatives, such as eco-labelling schemes

- Improving land governance which, together with secure land tenure, underpins the responsible and sustainable use of land. The UK is working with other governments, the private sector, multilateral bodies, civil society and community tenure rights holders to take forward change.

The government will continue to explore options for supporting higher global ambitions on sustainable agriculture and the role of trade. It will also consider whether certain policy measures, such as a global standards framework, could help to meet the UK's goals.





RECOMMENDATION 4: Animal Welfare

“The UK should draw on its strengths in animal welfare to show world leadership in embedding it into trade policy. The UK government should play a leadership role in international forums, to raise worldwide standards of animal welfare. It should do this by setting a clear strategy, investing where necessary in expert facilities, building international relationships, working with relevant experts who can provide independent advice to government, and putting forward proposals that are carefully crafted, convincing and evidence based.”

The UK is widely recognised as having among the best animal welfare standards and practices in the world, underpinned by the support and commitment of the UK agri-food sector. The UK also has a strong and comprehensive legal framework. The government will develop an approach to international engagement on animal welfare which reflects the government’s commitments to those world leading standards and practices and to champion free and fair trade.

Raising animal welfare standards internationally may reduce the risk of our domestic standards being undercut by lower standard imports. The UK is already undertaking an ambitious approach to cooperation and collaboration in many of our new FTAs where we are seeking commitments to work with trading partners on animal welfare. This will form part of public negotiating objectives in future, where relevant. The government will develop an

approach to FTAs and wider trade policy that reflects the particular challenges faced by developing countries in meeting international agri-food standards. We are committed to supporting the integration of developing countries into the global economy.

The government will consider the full range of mechanisms available to us, including at international forums such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the WTO. The government proactively engages stakeholders through expert committees and other forums such as the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) and the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC).

In talks with Australia, we secured ground-breaking animal welfare commitments which explicitly recognised the importance of high animal welfare standards, non-regression and cooperation between Australia and the UK in international forums.



RECOMMENDATION 5: Antimicrobial Resistance

“It is important to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in compliance with the WHO Global Action Plan. The UK government should apply the approach taken in the EU-UK Cooperation Agreement, in all future trade negotiations. It should also adopt a strong stance on AMR in multilateral forums and at the UN Food Systems Summit later in 2021.”

The UK is determined to sustain our efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance. We will continue to take local, national and global ‘One-Health’ approaches across human, animal, the environment and food sectors. We will work in line with global ambitions and in collaboration with other nations, partners and the international community.

In the animal health sector, the UK reduced antibiotic use by 40% between 2013 and 2017 and it is expected to reduce further. However, due to an increase in meat production and meat consumption globally, it is predicted that antimicrobial use in animals worldwide will increase by 67% between 2010 and 2030. Trade policy can therefore play an important role.

The government is proud of the commitments on AMR secured with the EU in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. These represent some of the most ambitious trade agreement text on AMR in any trade deal globally.

The government recognises that not all countries share a likeminded approach to the inclusion of AMR obligations within FTAs.

We will seek to include commitments on tackling AMR in the published negotiating objectives of all of our future independent trade agreements. Such commitments may facilitate bilateral cooperation and gain traction on recognition of the issues. More importantly, we may seek to strengthen cooperation in supporting international agencies to promote change on a global level. Forums we will use will include the WHO, OIE, G7, G20 and the World Economic Forum.

The UK’s special envoy on AMR, Dame Sally Davies, is leading bilateral and multilateral engagement, including as a member of the United Nations Global Leaders’ Group on AMR. Dame Sally is co-leading the development of the Group’s action plan, including activities on economic cooperation.

The FCDO leads on coordinating HMG input and follow up to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), working closely with the global AMR diplomacy team and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD).



RECOMMENDATION 6: Ethical Trading

“The UK government should respond to the noticeable shift in public attitudes to ethical trading and set out its ambitions for the agri-food sector, to be an exemplar for other sectors. It should conduct an assessment of enforcement practices overseas, to give a regular scorecard performance on exporting countries. It should seek to include a labour chapter and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provisions in all FTAs. Finally, it should ensure that the UK is leading by example domestically. This will involve enhancing support for the UK Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. It also means calling on UK industry to ensure fair wages and conditions are being provided for seasonal workers.”

As set out in our publicly available strategic approach documents on gov.uk, we are seeking to include labour provisions in all FTAs. Corporate Social Responsibility provisions will be considered as part of that. Here are links to the [Australia](#), [US](#) and [New Zealand](#) strategic approach documents.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), of which the UK is a member, already examines the application of international labour standards in member states and identifies areas where they could be better applied. International labour standards are backed by a supervisory system that helps to ensure that countries implement the conventions they ratify. If there are any problems in the application of standards, the ILO will assist countries through direct communication or providing technical assistance.

The government also strongly supports the ILO taking action to promote compliance with the eight fundamental Conventions, whether through the ILO’s technical assistance, or through UK funded programmes. The government understands the intention behind the recommendation

for the UK to assess enforcement practices overseas to provide a regular scorecard performance on exporting countries. However, we believe that the ILO is best placed to conduct labour standards assessments with the UK’s full support.

The UK leads by example domestically and has a strong track record on enforcement of employment standards. Alongside the ability for workers to seek redress through a system of free conciliation and independent employment tribunals, state bodies provide targeted enforcement, particularly for the most vulnerable workers. The government spends £35 million per year on state enforcement and has also agreed to establish a new single enforcement body for employment rights. This will ensure that we are better placed to protect vulnerable workers and create a level playing field for the majority of employers complying with the law. We are developing more detailed plans for this body in partnership with the existing enforcement bodies.

The UK National Minimum Wage provides clarity for employers who operate across the UK. This reduces the burden on business and the scope for non-compliance. However, where there is non-compliance, the minimum wage is enforced through a robust state inspection and penalty regime. The government is committed to do more by extending state enforcement to cover holiday pay for vulnerable workers and umbrella companies operating in the agency worker market. Additionally, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) tackles labour exploitation and modern slavery. It also operates the gangmasters' licensing scheme for suppliers of labour in agriculture and fresh fruit supply chains. The GLAA has police powers to enable its officers to prevent, detect and investigate serious labour exploitation across the entire economy.

The government is fully committed to protecting the rights of migrant workers and ensuring their safety in the workforce, including seasonal workers in agriculture. We have made clear our commitment to protect workers from abuse and to crack down on employers who try and profit from exploiting vulnerable people.

In December 2020 the government extended the Seasonal Workers Pilot for one year and expanded the number of visas from 10,000 to 30,000. The pilot requires operators, who will be licensed by the GLAA, to ensure that all workers have a safe working environment and are placed with farms who adhere to all relevant legislation. This includes:

- paying the National Minimum Wage
- proper pay that includes time off and breaks
- fair treatment
- safe hygienic accommodation
- their passport never being withheld from them
- putting in place robust systems for the reporting of concerns and rapid action.

Farmers will also be vetted to ensure that living and working conditions are of a suitable quality. The Home Office and Defra will monitor the scheme closely. This will ensure that operators adhere to the stringent requirements set for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the seasonal workers.

FCDO aims to encourage good business and investment behaviour, illustrated through CSR projects, into mainstream business approaches. FCDO's work on agriculture in developing countries advances this ethical approach to business and trade by working with agribusinesses and small-scale farmers to make trade in agricultural produce more sustainable and inclusive. FCDO has been supporting 40 commercial agriculture programmes which have already reached over 20 million farmers in poor countries. We endeavour to support many of these to grow into suppliers for the UK through sustainable food and agriculture supply chains.



RECOMMENDATION 7: Labour Rights

“The UK government should seek to build global coalitions to promote and protect labour rights of workers in key supply chains. Our research suggests the UK might focus first on supply chains for bananas, rice, cocoa, coffee and tea. It should work within the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as a founding member, to push for the 8 ILO fundamental Conventions to become an assessment of performance on labour rights linked to trade, rather than a registration exercise.”

The government is already building global coalitions to advance and protect labour rights of workers in key supply chains. One example of this is through the work the government is doing with Fairtrade, in partnership with Mondelēz International. This project seeks to ensure that cocoa farmers and their families are resilient to the pandemic and to accelerate income diversification through climate-smart farming. Nine farmer unions (representing 22,500 workers) in the cocoa growing regions of Ghana will receive grants to maintain their productive base. They will also be able to diversify their income through start-up capital for new business models. Total funding of over £1.1 million comes from partner match funding and UK Aid. This project in the cocoa sector includes a focus on women and managing risks of child exploitation.

The government is already focusing on key supply chains, including some of those referenced in the recommendation. In summer 2020 the government launched the Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (£4.3 million from UK aid and £2 million from businesses). This seeks to enable vulnerable people and supply chains in the agriculture and garments sectors to recover from and remain resilient to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19. Future work by the

UK will continue to focus on supporting key food and medical supply chains, potentially including bananas and rice, to be more resilient.

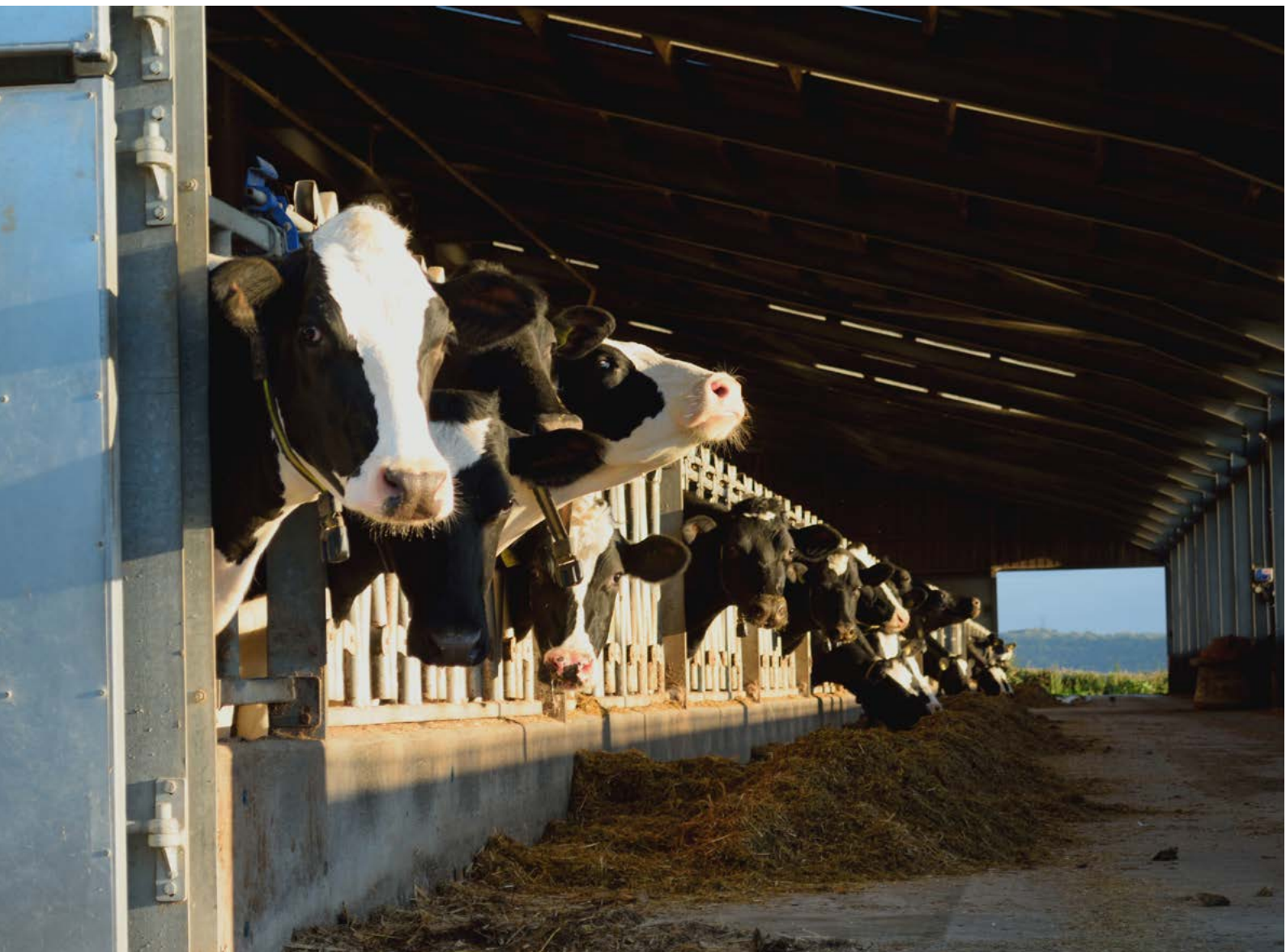
FCDO’s Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme formed a partnership with Twinings. The programme aimed to improve conditions for female workers in tea estates in India by supporting women’s rights and empowerment. The partnership has strengthened the ability of tea estate management to prevent and respond to cases of gender-based violence and harassment.

The UK is committed to ending modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking worldwide by 2030, as unanimously adopted in the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. The government is using major events such as the G7, G20 and UN General Assembly (UNGA) to forge international consensus and steer action on these issues. At the 2021 G7 Summit, G7 Trade Ministers were tasked with identifying areas for strengthened cooperation and collective efforts towards eradicating the use of all forms of forced labour in global supply chains.

The UK is playing a leading role and is the first country to require businesses to report on how they are preventing modern

slavery in their global supply chains. To further enhance supply chain transparency, in March 2021 the government launched an online registry where modern slavery statements can be published in one place. This enables investors, consumers and civil society to scrutinise and monitor the actions different organisations are taking to prevent modern slavery.

The UK jointly launched the 'Principles to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains' with the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand at the UNGA in September 2018. These Principles commit governments to implementing a range of measures that help address modern slavery in global supply chains. It builds on the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, which has now been endorsed by more than 88 countries.





RECOMMENDATION 8: Tariff Liberalisation

“The UK government should take an ambitious approach to the liberalisation of the UK’s import tariff regime, for countries that can meet the high standards of food production expected from UK producers. It should work with trading partners within future FTA negotiations to lower tariffs and quotas to zero where equivalence is demonstrated for these standards. These standards must be aligned with core global standards, and the UK government should take an active role in strengthening standards via international forums.”

The government welcomes the recommendation for the UK to take an ambitious approach to trade liberalisation while defending domestic standards through trade policy.

The UK has started talks with new trade partners including the USA and New Zealand and is concluding talks with Australia to seek further reductions or removal of tariffs. Our trade deals will offer great opportunities for UK businesses. At the same time they will ensure fair and reciprocal access, taking into account sectoral sensitivities and the degree of equivalence demonstrated with our food production standards.

The government has been clear that we are also firmly committed to upholding the UK’s high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. We will promote robust food standards nationally and internationally, to protect consumer interests, and to ensure that consumers can have confidence in the food they buy. The UK also continues to be a global leader on climate action. This is demonstrated by our implementation of the 2008 Climate Change Act, including by legislating for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The government immediately acted upon the first pillar of this recommendation, matching our long-stated commitments to uphold our high standards with action in our talks with Australia. We secured ground-breaking animal welfare commitments which explicitly recognised the importance of high animal welfare standards, non-regression and cooperation between Australia and the UK in international forums. This deal also publicly affirms our shared commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement, an ambitious global action plan to fight climate change.

The government continues to keep international development and poverty reduction at the heart of the UK’s trade and investment policy. We will ensure that our approach to FTAs and wider trade policy enables developing countries to take full advantage of market access. The government is exploring how developing country governments, businesses and farmers can be supported to improve their capacity to meet standards and regulations to trade.

The government will use our influence at the WTO and other multilateral bodies to argue for better and fairer trading rules. We will also push to strengthen environmental, animal welfare, food safety, human rights and labour standards globally.



RECOMMENDATION 9: Trade Impact Assessments

“The UK government should strengthen impact assessment of trade policies and agreements by improving qualitative assessment on health, welfare, biosecurity and environment. Modelling in assessments should go beyond trade flows and address wider consequences such as impact on UK food prices. Assessment of trade deals with developing countries should assess growth and development of the partner country, as well as the UK.”

The government is committed to improving the assessment of our trade policies. DIT publishes scoping assessments on the impacts of new FTAs in advance of negotiations alongside the results of comprehensive consultation exercises. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment is published prior to implementation.

These include assessments, both quantitative and qualitative, of impacts on the environment, including emissions, air and water quality and biodiversity. They also cover the potential economic impact on the partner countries and other developing economies.

DIT works closely with departments across Whitehall to consider new analysis, methodology and evidence on environmental, regional, demographic,

animal welfare and other social impacts of trade agreements. Government analysts also regularly engage with analysts from each of the devolved administrations on trade analysis and the government’s FTA programme.

DIT is also currently developing the tools and evidence for future monitoring and evaluation of FTAs including qualitative and quantitative evidence of FTA effects in a range of areas.

The government regularly engages with external stakeholders to seek feedback on the analytical approach, content and accessibility of scoping and impact assessments. As an example of this, DIT has commissioned a panel of experts to review and ensure that DIT has the most appropriate tools and analysis to inform our trade negotiation capability.



RECOMMENDATION 10: Consultation and Engagement

“The UK government should ensure consultation and engagement on FTAs, from the early stages of inception of a prospective agreement and throughout negotiations, is transparent, thorough, and more detailed than it is currently, whilst recognising the need for confidentiality.”

The government recognises the importance of enabling effective scrutiny of our trade policy.

The Trade and Agriculture Commission report recognises the steps the government has already taken to enhance scrutiny of the UK’s new FTAs. Under the Agriculture Act 2020 and Trade Act 2021 the government will report on the extent to which trade measures in new FTAs are consistent with UK levels of statutory protection in relation to human, animal and plant life and health, animal welfare and environmental protection.

The role of the Trade and Agriculture Commission has also evolved. The new Trade and Agriculture Commission will play an important role as an independent body helping to scrutinise new FTAs and providing advice to inform the government’s report.

In line with the Trade and Agriculture Commission recommendation, the government has put measures in place to ensure detailed and transparent consultation and engagement on FTAs from the early stages of a prospective future FTA negotiation. For trade talks with the US, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and CPTPP the government set out our negotiating objectives. It also undertook an initial economic scoping assessment and conducted one of the largest ever public consultations undertaken by the UK government. The responses were used to inform our approach to negotiations.

The government has since extended these arrangements to new FTA negotiations,

launching consultations on our trade arrangements with Canada, Mexico and India. The Trade and Agriculture Commission report highlights the need for consultation to be fully joined-up with the impact assessment process. Following the completion of negotiations, independently scrutinised impact assessments will be published which will draw on all available sources of evidence, including consultations.

The government agrees with the Trade and Agriculture Commission’s recommendation for deep and thorough engagement across the UK. DIT has set up several expert groups to ensure that our trade policies are well-informed and evidenced and reflect the interests of the whole of the UK.

These include, but are not limited to, the:

- Strategic Trade Advisory Group ([STAG](#))
- Trade Advisory Groups ([TAG](#))
- the Trade Union Advisory Group ([TUAG](#))
- Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)
- the [Board of Trade](#).

Through these groups the government can draw on expert advice and insight from across industry, academia and civil society.

The groups’ functions range from high-level strategic discussions on the shape and ambition of the UK’s trade policy to detailed discussions and engagement on specific negotiations.

These can include the confidential sharing of text and information with external stakeholders.

As we continue to shape the UK's future trade policy, the government recognises that it is essential to listen to stakeholders to understand their priorities and views. The government wants organisations, in every part of the UK, to feel fully engaged with our trade policy. The Trade and Agriculture Commission identifies the importance of the government working with the devolved administrations to ensure that they have a meaningful role in shaping the UK's approach to trade.

The government agrees with the Trade and Agriculture Commission and has established forums dedicated to discussion of trade policy issues, including the Ministerial Forum for Trade.

This is supported by a genuine two-way exchange of information and views and a substantial amount of day-to-day technical engagement. The government will look to build on this positive relationship to ensure devolved administration support for the UK's trade policy from FTAs, WTO, market access to export promotion and inward investment.

The government will continue to ensure effective and transparent consultation and engagement on our ambitious FTA programme. In doing so we will ensure that the arrangements put in place are appropriate to the UK's unique constitutional set-up. Taken together, the UK's approach is as strong as – and in places stronger than – comparable Westminster-style democracies, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.





RECOMMENDATION 11: Assurance and Certification

“To ensure that future trade policy incentivises and builds trust with trading partners, the UK government should implement a robust, risk-based audit, assurance and certification process. This could include an end-to-end Trusted Trader network to ease border checks from authorities in exporting countries on sealed loads. The UK should fully explore the use of SMART as well as recent technology such as blockchain to further reduce friction points at the border and along the whole supply chain. Future agri-food risk assessments should be conducted in a transparent way, that includes publishing the findings, at a commodity and country level.”

The government welcomes this recommendation which reflects ongoing government work.

The UK Office of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Trade Assurance is developing and implementing robust audit and assurance processes, replacing functions previously carried out by the European Union. The UK Plant Health Risk Group (UKPHRG) has also now completed the development of a robust audit and assurance process for phytosanitary purposes.

Across government, departments are developing long-term objectives and aspirations for a modern, facilitative border that enhances trade and the UK’s biosecurity, linking into other work currently underway. The cross-government 2025 UK Border Strategy, published in December 2020, sets out a number of ambitious transformations needed to deliver a modernised, intelligence-led, technology enabled UK border that will be the most effective in the world. We are also exploring the potential benefits of a Single Trade Window for the UK and how a cross government ecosystem of trust, based on expanding the existing AEO (Authorised Economic Operator) scheme could deliver benefits to traders and government. By taking a “whole-of-government” approach we hope

to deliver a more efficient and collaborative approach to border development.

The Cabinet Office’s Border Protocol and Delivery Group is leading work on a cross government trusted trader scheme, as set out in the 2025 UK Border Strategy. As part of this HMRC is also working to improve and modernise the process of applying for and operating customs authorisations.

As part of the phased introduction of EU-GB plant health import controls Defra is exploring possible options for performing these health controls away from the border. Any proposals would be subject to consultations with industry to ensure that our high standards of biosecurity are maintained.

The Food Standards Agency has developed a risk analysis process based on international standards to support science and evidence-based regulation. This will be operated on a four-country basis as far as possible, with Food Standards Scotland. They will use this process to support advice given to government, business and consumers on food safety risks. Where appropriate, animal welfare, environmental and economic impacts will also be considered when providing advice to Ministers. The FSA will publish its risk management advice and the evidence and analysis on which it is based.



RECOMMENDATION 12: Overseas Knowledge and Insight

“The UK government should work with the industry to increase investment in knowledge and insight of overseas markets. It should conduct systematic mapping of the sector’s competitive advantages. It should review how it might encourage inward investment that would helpfully expand the UK’s trading capacity. Particular focus should be placed on opportunities for agri-food focused small and medium enterprises (SMEs).”

A strong evidence base and detailed market insight will help government and industry focus effort and resource on the markets and sectors with the best opportunities and greatest demand.

Much information is already being routinely gathered, including statistical information showing changing patterns or volumes of trade and analytical reports. DIT, for example, has published a series of factsheets for each of the UK’s main trading partners, providing an overview of export and investment activity and ease of doing business. Defra has published research reports about exporting to the [UAE, India and the USA](#) which provide detailed insight into these markets.

We do agree, however, that a more systematic mapping of agriculture, food and drink trading opportunities against the UK’s strengths would be valuable. This will help us target how and where best to unlock new markets and expand trading relationships.

This should be a joint endeavour between government and industry. DIT and Defra will determine how best to collectively undertake this. In doing so, they are keen to work with organisations such as the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) and farming unions. A focus on opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) will be particularly important. There is huge potential for these businesses to trade and we are keen to help.

DIT is also leading efforts to secure the expansion of existing foreign direct investors and to help secure new investment into the UK. Sectors which are a priority for investment include alternative proteins and plant-based manufacturing, sustainable packaging and food technology. The government’s new Office for Investment will play a part in securing the right investment in this sector.



RECOMMENDATION 13: Food and Drink Export Council

“The UK government should support and participate in a new Food and Drink Export Council, which would bring together industry and government export leads for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with a rotating chair. The Council would enable UK-wide collaboration, sharing of knowledge and resources, support exporters and market access negotiations, and maximise the benefits of working together whilst respecting the separate approaches in different parts of the UK.”

As the UK becomes an independent trading nation for the first time in nearly 50 years, it is opportune to have a step change in efforts to fully realise the trading potential of the agri-food sector. In support of that goal, DIT and Defra will work in partnership with the devolved administrations and industry to develop an Export Council and agree its remit and membership.

The Council will strengthen partnership working between government and industry and harness all the resource available to ensure an ambitious approach to trade, including opportunities offered by new FTAs. It will bring together agri-food experts to share knowledge, good practice, market intelligence and capacity and thereby help to enhance the UK’s global reputation for quality and standards.

A new Council is a reflection of the government’s strategy to promote exports from all parts of the UK, to help level up the country. The Council will be a genuine partnership and recognise and respect the unique and different approaches to supporting exports that have evolved in the different parts of the UK.

We look forward to working with the devolved administrations and business to determine how that might best work. To provide further support, new DIT teams were recently established in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. These are complemented by a second major DIT site in Darlington and Defra’s regional network.

We will consider how the Council will link to the existing Food and Drink Sector Council (FDSC), a partnership between government, industry and other organisations across the UK and the existing Exports Working Group that stems from the FDSC.



RECOMMENDATION 14: Export Support in England

“The UK government should work with the Food and Drink Sector Council on the industry’s request for a specialist agri-food export body for England. This would provide one-stop-shop trade information, to give it the best chance of success. Government should provide related, additional funding for existing national food and drink export organisations.”

The new UK Food and Drink Export Council will provide a forum for UK wide collaboration to expand exports from all UK nations and regions. As part of this it will coordinate the strong support in place for businesses in England to enable them to seize every opportunity to trade successfully.

There is tailored and flexible support for food and drink businesses in England through the International Trade Adviser network, Regional Food Groups and Local Economic Partnerships. These provide local companies with the support they need to grow their export business or start out on their export journey.

The new UK Food and Drink Export Council will assist businesses in accessing the England or UK-wide support services that government is providing. This will ensure that food and drink firms across every English region have the support they need. These services include:

- The Export Academy: a free service that supports the managers and leaders of small and micro businesses to develop the know how to expand their global operations with confidence

- UK Export Finance, which provides support relating to financing, guarantee schemes and insurance, to ensure that no viable UK export fails because of a lack of finance or insurance from the private sector
- The Internationalisation Fund, which provides match funded grants to support businesses with market research, intellectual property advice, translation services, market visits and other activities
- ‘Open Doors’: a new campaign designed to help farmers and food manufacturers to seize the opportunities offered by new trading relationships and agreements. This campaign includes advice, mentoring, masterclasses and other events that are being rolled out over the course of 2021.

DIT will continue to provide support to businesses across the whole of England, as well as elsewhere in the UK. It will work with local and regional groups and bring them together in a single forum to ensure that any best practice and innovative approaches are shared.



RECOMMENDATION 15: Removing Market Access Barriers

“The UK government should escalate the pace of efforts to remove market access barriers, through FTA negotiations and wider diplomacy. It should work with the agri-food sector to determine whether the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP), which contributes to market access and maintenance negotiations, should be given a wider remit, for poultry, fresh produce and cereals.”

The government has an ambitious programme of FTAs aimed at building relationships with our trading partners to break down barriers to trade and improve market access for UK exports.

In addition, the government pursues trade dialogues with partner countries to build strong trading relationships and help secure better access for UK products and services. For example, Joint Economic and Trade Committees (JETCOs) with countries such as Brazil and India have provided platforms to push for greater market access across a range of sectors. This includes agriculture and food and drink.

The government is also investing heavily in dedicated teams in the UK and our overseas network to help remove barriers facing businesses across sectors. Successes in the agriculture sector have included removing bans on the export of beef to Japan and the USA and securing access for British pork in Taiwan. Defra’s expertise in veterinary trade matters complements this work and is particularly important in helping UK industry to expand its trade in animals, animal products and genetics to new markets across the globe.

DIT’s digital tools have provided a user-friendly online service that makes it easier for businesses to report and find out information on trade barriers. Users can search for barriers, based on sector or location, and

read descriptions explaining the barriers’ effect.

Defra is a full partner in the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP), alongside Export Certification Ltd (ECL) which represents the pork, beef, lamb and related genetics sectors. UKECP plays a major role supporting the government’s trade objectives. This association is in place to achieve SPS and veterinary approvals for new non-EU country markets. It also ensures that access for existing markets is aligned to industry market priorities. The partnership has been successful in expanding market access for ruminant products, including the recent opening of the Japanese and American markets for UK beef in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Defra and the wider government appreciate the success of the UKECP model. We would welcome the evaluation and application of relevant lessons to other agri-food products, as set out in the recommendation, to further accelerate the expansion of market access opportunities.

Defra already works closely with trade bodies such as the Export Certificate User Group for poultry, the Shellfish Association for Great Britain and many others. These strong relationships have also achieved significant export wins for UK industry, including access to Singapore for day-old chicks and table eggs.



RECOMMENDATION 16: Increasing Overseas Resourcing

“The UK government should rapidly increase its overseas resourcing, by expanding its network of agri-food experts based in embassies in target markets. These experts would form part of the network of trade staff reporting to Her Majesty’s Trade Commissioners. This should be done in collaboration with, and supported by, key sector organisations. These experts should focus on market access and opening up trade opportunities.”

Building overseas capability is a vital part of an ambitious approach to exporting. Overseas representatives are particularly valuable in helping to negotiate new market access. Once markets are open or new trade agreements are in place, they can help increase market share for UK companies overseas and promote the UK’s strong offer.

There is already an extensive network of in-market support increasing our focus on agriculture, food and drink. This includes the government’s network of Ambassadors, HM Trade Commissioners, diplomats and locally engaged staff. There are dedicated agriculture, food and drink counsellors in Beijing and Dubai.

The devolved administrations also have representatives in many markets.

The government acknowledges that more needs to be done to strengthen this overseas network. We are looking at how capacity could be developed, particularly in markets in Asia, the Middle East and North America, where opportunities are growing most significantly. We will work in partnership with industry to identify those markets that would most benefit from additional resource. Alongside this we will explore how business representative organisations might also build their capacity overseas.





RECOMMENDATION 17: Reviewing Marketing and Promotion

“The UK government should review marketing and promotional activities for agri-food exports, particularly under the banner of the GREAT campaign. It should place a greater focus on developing campaigns sensitive to the needs of UK nations and regions and promoting goods relevant to specific overseas markets. This could be done through the proposed new Export Council in collaboration with the devolved administrations.”

Strategic marketing of the UK’s agriculture, food and drink sector is important. If we are to keep in step with our competitors our approach needs to be bold, energetic and impactful. We should aim to create a much more visible presence overseas.

The GREAT campaign, established in 2011, is the UK’s international brand marketing campaign and works closely with UK businesses, not for profit organisations and high-profile figures to promote the best of the UK abroad. The Food is GREAT campaign has, to date, played an essential role in building awareness and demand for UK products and providing a catalyst for export growth. The recently revitalised GREAT campaign will build on this and look to continue showcasing the very best of the UK’s offer.

The government continues to evolve our business support and marketing. DIT’s ‘Open Doors’ campaign is a high-profile domestic facing agri-food export promotion campaign.

It aims to highlight opportunities for growth in overseas markets and encourage more UK food and drink businesses to export.

The proposed UK Food and Drink Export Council could bring together the UK Government and the devolved administrations to review how we might collectively achieve a step change in marketing to help UK businesses pursue routes to markets for those products for which the UK has a competitive edge. The Council will need to consider how to respect individual approaches to marketing, as well as opportunities to work together on the presentation of the UK’s collective offer to the world. We will aim to represent the UK at major events and conduct bespoke events whilst developing an impactful overall communications strategy. This should be a collective endeavour with industry. We look forward to discussing how to execute this with major business organisations.





RECOMMENDATION 18:

Reviewing Public Procurement for Food

“The UK government should review the current public procurement plan for food. In addition to achieving value for money and meeting nutritional requirements, it should maximise the opportunity to source from the UK, source sustainably and improve the transparency of the sourcing process.”

The government welcomes this timely recommendation and we are pleased to note that it aligns with our ambitions for public sector food procurement. We want the public sector to lead by example, supporting local food and farmers, high production standards and sustainable produce.

The current Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) and Balanced Scorecard provide a framework to balance cost against a range of vital requirements including sustainability, seasonality and nutrition. Whilst reflective of policy best practice at the time of development, we agree that the GBSF should be reviewed to reflect government priorities and latest evidence. A consultation on the GBSF nutritional standards was undertaken in 2019 and updates were published in July 2021.

We have further committed to a consultation on strengthening the GBSF early next year. Alongside ensuring our policy reflects best practice, the consultation will examine ways to promote higher take-up of local,

sustainable and healthy produce in the public sector. To support the consultation, we will refresh the assessment of spending on food and drink by public sector bodies.

Enabling the uptake of more local produce in the public sector will be done in compliance with the UK’s procurement regulations, the WTO Government Procurement Agreement and other international obligations.

While these regulations prevent public sector organisations from giving express preferences for the procurement of British products, services and suppliers, there is scope to promote UK products based on their own merits.

The government is also developing the Buying Better Food Framework, a new procurement system for food produce which aims to simplify the route into the public sector for suppliers. The framework supports the government’s commitments on engaging with SMEs and enabling the public sector to buy more local food. It is, therefore, an approach that we want to champion.



RECOMMENDATION 19: Country of Origin Labelling

“The UK government and the food industry must work together to improve country of origin information in the loose food, food service and out of home supply chains. This will respond to consumer appetite for more trust and transparency in those supply chains. This should form part of a broader agenda to support these supply chains as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The government wants people to buy British and recognises the importance of supporting producers and businesses in the UK to adapt to changing consumer behaviour. It is encouraging to see that consumers value country-of-origin information as part of a desire to help support producers and businesses in the UK.

The government is working to address business and consumer interests concerning food labelling. We commissioned Henry Dimbleby to review the UK’s food system. We will respond to this with a Government Food Strategy White Paper within 6 months of the release of part 2 of his report. The Government White Paper will set out a strategy that will support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and affordable. It will also support people to live healthy lives and protect animal health and welfare.

The government remains committed to working with the food industry to meet the aspirations of consumers about greater transparency in food labelling. Origin labelling, along with many other pieces of information, is already seen on many pre-packed foods. Now that the UK is no

longer bound by EU rules, we can review food labelling requirements to ensure that the information provided supports the food choices of UK consumers. This can include exploring the labelling principles that could extend to the catering sector – restaurants, fast food outlets, business canteens and institutional catering. This could be through a mandatory or a regulated voluntary scheme. Options will be considered in consultation with industry and may be subject to public consultation.

While the government recognises the opportunity this presents to businesses, the benefits of any proposed changes will be assessed against the cost of implementation, and our commitments at the WTO.

Food labelling is a devolved matter. The government will therefore work closely with the devolved administrations (informed by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland) on the practicality of introducing any new mandatory or voluntary rules on country-of-origin labelling. This will include the food service sector, out of home sector and loose food supply chains.



RECOMMENDATION 20: Structured Engagement

“The UK government should conduct structured engagement with governments, agri-food businesses and charities in developing countries and agri-food businesses in the UK with developing country interests. It should draw on this engagement to facilitate the building of relationships and enhanced understanding of where UK investment would have the most positive impact. It should also underpin closer collaboration between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), DIT and Defra on agri-food trade policy, regulation and other activity.”

The government engages regularly with external stakeholders to inform policy development, including on agri-food trade policy with developing countries. This engagement includes business representatives, academics and civil society organisations. This is supported by the work we do through cross-government thematic working groups, trade advisory roundtables and public consultations.

The government regularly engages with partner governments, including developing countries, on the implementation of their trading arrangements. Following a public consultation we are now reviewing stakeholder comments to see how we can further improve our new UK Developing Countries Trading Scheme, which provides preferential access to 70 developing countries. The scheme will be implemented in 2022.

The FCDO/DIT Trade for Development team draws on these consultations to inform the design of aid programmes. These help developing countries to participate in and benefit from global trade, including in the agri-food sector. For example, the UK Trade Partnership (UKTP) programme helped 7 African companies to participate in the Food Matters Live Trade Fair (London based) in October 2020. The event hosted 90 exhibitors and over 800 visitors. UKTP

exhibitors included cocoa producers from Ghana, a women-owned cashew nuts processor from Côte d’Ivoire, a leading horticulture firm from Zimbabwe and a vanilla cooperative from the Comoros.

The government also supports opportunities for businesses globally, including from the UK, to source responsibly from developing countries. For example, CDC Group, the UK’s development finance institution, has approximately \$550 million invested in the food and agriculture sector across Africa. These investments help create and strengthen markets in the African food and agriculture sector and benefit global supply chains, including to the UK. CDC remains committed to investing in agri-businesses and value chains for export-oriented crops in Africa over the next five years.

Officials from FCDO, Defra and DIT work together in several areas relevant to trade in food and agriculture products, bringing complementary expertise and experience to cross-government discussions. There is also strong alignment and collaboration between all three departments at ministerial level. For example, the Minister of State for the Pacific and the Environment is a joint post shared between FCDO and Defra. FCDO and DIT share Ministerial responsibility for the joint FCDO/DIT Trade for Development team.



RECOMMENDATION 21: Aligning Trade, Aid and Climate Change Policies

“The UK government should align its trade, aid and climate policies relating to agri-food. Teams across government should establish clear, specific programmes to ensure that they are cooperating on this and aligning budgets and priorities. Particular support should be provided to smaller businesses and poorer producers. It should help them to improve climate resilience. It should help them to meet standards in export markets so they can better access the benefits of global trade. It should also be targeted towards helping them shift into the ‘added value’ space of processing and packaging their own raw commodities, which will create lasting economic growth.”

Alignment of trade, aid and climate policies in the agri-food sector is imperative to ensure developing countries can continue to:

- produce and access nourishing food
- participate in the global economy
- adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The joint FCDO/DIT Trade for Development team plays an important role in coordination across government to define the role of trade policy in promoting sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

The government is strengthening our capacity to address climate and environment issues through trade. We are pursuing this in talks with developing country partners, through existing policies and programmes and by exploring opportunities to include environment provisions in trading arrangements. Developing trade relationships also opens opportunities for communication on related issues, including zoonoses and other emerging health risks, as well as science and research partnerships.

FCDO’s Conceptual Framework on Agriculture puts climate-smart agriculture at the centre of the government’s approach to agri-food programming and policy in developing countries.

Through our programmes on climate-smart agriculture, the government has aimed to reduce emissions from agriculture and to build climate resilience in developing countries. As one example, FCDO’s contribution to the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme has supported almost 5 million farmers to cope with the effects of climate change.

To support COP26, the UK has launched the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, a government-to-government initiative bringing together major producers and consumers of essential agricultural commodities to agree a shared vision for a sustainable land economy.

Standards in agri-food markets, including the UK, are difficult for many developing country producers to meet, particularly small-scale producers and businesses.

These difficulties prevent developing countries from utilising full preferential access through FTAs or under the preference scheme.

The UK is committed to helping developing countries integrate into the global economy. We have supported a range of initiatives including commercial agriculture programmes. With FCDO support, in 2020, these reached over 20 million farmers in developing countries and helped many gain access to export markets, including the UK. In addition, between 2018 and 2021, the UK funded the Commonwealth Standards Network. This has promoted awareness and use of international standards across the Commonwealth, including in agri-food sectors, to help reduce the costs of intra-Commonwealth trade and enhance trade with non-Commonwealth partners.

Trade has significant potential as a route to poverty reduction in developing countries, if smaller, more vulnerable producers and businesses are supported to access markets. Investment in domestic and regional value chains underpins inclusive participation in trade. UK support includes

the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness programme. This strengthens regulatory oversight of safety and quality in the poultry sector in Malawi and safety and quality practices in the dairy sector in Nepal.

Successful transformation of agricultural sectors in developing countries depends on the ability of farmers to participate in value addition. CDC Group has invested in multiple value addition and processing businesses and will continue to do so. Additionally, the UK's support through AgDevCo (which supports SMEs in the agriculture sector in Africa) has benefited over 400,000 farmers and created over 15,000 jobs across the agricultural value chain in Africa.

The government, through our enhanced trade and development offer, is seeking ways to help exporters in developing countries to add value to their exports. One way in which we are doing this is by considering how the UK's preferences scheme might improve value addition opportunities for eligible developing countries.





RECOMMENDATION 22: Working with Like-Minded Countries

“The UK government should adopt a bolder, more confident and less understated approach to working with like-minded countries or in pluri- or multilateral discussions. It should apply this to influencing necessary reforms to the international rules for trade and standards. These objectives should be embedded in a common strategy so that they can be pursued in all relevant multilateral negotiations and forums. The international activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be recognised and supported where there is common cause.”

The government welcomes this recommendation. We see food and agriculture standards as essential for the UK’s trade agreements, UK and global food security, an inclusive green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and a resilient global economy.

The UK has taken its independent seat at the WTO and OIE and will increasingly play a leadership role with a view to shaping and raising global standards. The UK has permanent representation at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), facilitating continued UK influence in FAO processes. The government is also using our Presidencies of COP 26 and G7 to encourage ambitious action to increase the sustainability of global food systems and food and agriculture supply chains.

This recommendation also aligns with existing strategies to engage with the Codex Alimentarius on food standards. Here the government is an active member and supports a Vice-Chair from the UK as part of the Executive.

The government will focus on strengthening food safety, plant health and agricultural supply chains. This will contribute to our goal of spending Official Development Assistance (ODA) on promoting competitive and modern trade as well as economic development.

In conclusion, the government fully intends the UK to pursue a bold, proactive approach internationally in line with our aspirations for a Global Britain.



The Department for International Trade (DIT) helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

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