



## IMTA meeting with Minister Zac Goldsmith

22nd April 2020

### Background

- [REDACTED] IMTA Chairman chaired the meeting. [REDACTED] (IMTA CEO), [REDACTED] (Lamex) and [REDACTED] (Alliance) joined the IMTA delegation.
- [REDACTED] UK Agrifood Counsellor from the British Embassy in Beijing joined the IMTA delegation as one of the core agenda items was export market access for China.
- Minister Goldsmith was accompanied by around 12 Defra officials from a range of different areas within the department including market access, tariffs and trade, veterinary.

### Introduction

- [REDACTED] invited Minister Goldsmith for a tour of Smithfield followed by breakfast when things return to normal. Minister Goldsmith said that when things do return to normal, he would love to take up that offer.
- As it was the first meeting with Minister Goldsmith IMTA talked about carcass balance and why we need imports and exports, referring to the [IMTA Self-sufficiency myth](#).
- Minister Goldsmith explained that he is a Minister within Defra, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development. His portfolio covers Oceania, trade, environment, climate change, forests and nature as well as animal welfare. He explained that though the issues IMTA wanted to discuss were not directly in his portfolio that his role in the discussion would be to hear the challenges and issues raised and ensure that they are reflected within Defra positions.

### Coronavirus

- IMTA commended Defra for the system that it had implemented for triaging and escalating issues in this period. IMTA mentioned that [REDACTED] of Defra and The RPA must be thanked in particular for their assistance in relation to issues that IMTA raised in relation to tariff rate quotas and documentation resulting from the situation with coronavirus.
- Cold storage – some cold stores are stating that they won't accept any more goods, some will only work with priority customers at this time.

### Export market access – China

- There was a discussion around the need to accelerate progress in opening up UK meat exports to China.
- Though the UK has access at present for pork and is nearly there for beef the UK needs to finalise access for beef and get access for poultrymeat and for lamb. Ray Smith said that the questionnaire is ready for lamb.
- Minister Goldsmith asked what getting market access for poultrymeat would do in terms of The Conservative Manifesto commitment to 'redoubling of exports'.

[REDACTED] CEO - [The International Meat Trade Association](#)

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- IMTA export director [REDACTED] highlighted to importance of the Chinese market due to its volume but also due to how they value cuts that do not naturally have a market in the UK. Examples were given of price differentials for particular products and it was agreed that IMTA would follow up with some more specific data to highlight the potential export opportunity in the Chinese market for UK meat. There is an industry concern for the lamb sector in relation to Brexit (e.g. in relation to export to the EU which happens at present) and if the UK had access for lamb to China that would help.
- [REDACTED] said that China is the first, second and third most important market for UK meat exports.
- [REDACTED] said that based on very conservative figures provided by The British Poultry Council that 5 years of poultrymeat export to China could see £279million (over the 5 years).
- IMTA Chairman [REDACTED] said we need more work on China and need Ministers to engage with China to progress our access.
- There was a discussion about how fluid UK consumer demand is. [REDACTED] explained that UK consumers have a narrow bandwidth about what products they are comfortable cooking and at present there is a lot of product sitting in cold stores.
- IMTA highlighted the need for acceptance of electronic/scan copies of export documents in key markets. IMTA said that the situation with regard to coronavirus had really highlighted the need to move faster towards more long term electronic/scan copy systems for the documentation that underpins trade.

## Brexit

### IPAFFS:

- IMTA raised the fact that with the UK currently building a system to replace TRACES, the EU system in which veterinary documentation for imports is submitted that it is imperative that all functionality was completed ahead of the system going live.
- From the IPAFFS system we have seen demo'd so far it looks very good. However IMTA understands that though work is underway on 'cloning functionality' which is key for NZ imports we just wanted to flag that it is absolutely critical that this functionality is ready for when the system goes live otherwise it would be a backward step in comparison to the EU existing system. Donna Smith explained that companies would need to look at employing additional staff in order to deal with the added administrative burden if the UK system couldn't match that of the EU TRACES system.
- Minister Goldsmith commented that there is full appreciation of the need to bring in that functionality and that IPAFFS will be ready in advance of December. Work is underway on cloning and IMTA's message in previous discussions on this has landed.
- An official added that the cloning functionality is being looked at. IT is focussing on digitising the UK export system. IMTA responded to say that though know the export system has been a long time coming that we do also need the import system to be fully operational.

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## Tariff Policy

- IMTA wanted to highlight that imports are needed to ensure consumer choice and manufacturing inputs and this needs to be reflected in any UK tariff policy as we are not self-sufficient.
- Minister Goldsmith said that the government is very broadly wedded to the concept of free trade and it being positive for consumers and that the government has a commitment to redouble exports and certainly to accelerate trade, though that doesn't mean sacrificing standards. He commented that the final long-term tariff regime will be produced close to the end of the transition.

## Groupage

- IMTA said that though not an issue for discussion at this meeting as it was very detailed that it was felt important to raise the concept of groupage in relation to Brexit just to ensure it is on the radar at Defra. IMTA stressed the need for a detailed conversation at a high level within Defra on this subject. IMTA said this was something that BMPA, BPC and AIMS were also keen to discuss in more detail as it was a shared concern.
- Minister Goldsmith commented that this is an issue that is on the radar of officials and government will do what it can to ease requirements for companies with complex supply chains. We are keen to create as simple and frictionless regime as possible on groupage.
- An official added that the scheme they are working on is for export of groupage consignments for retail but what we need is one that works for fresh meat and will need to have a separate discussion on that. It is the time now to have a more substantial discussion and if IMTA has any knowledge of best practice in trade on how this operates for meat imports from other countries that would be helpful. We need to understand with SMEs and where there are multiple pick-ups how that would work, whether looking at consolidation could work.

## Conclusion

- IMTA offered any assistance or information to Minister Goldsmith and Defra.
- Minister Goldsmith said we need to keep the dialogue going with IMTA, that anything IMTA wanted to follow-up with that didn't cover would be welcome and that data on China would be useful.

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