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FARMING ISN'T JUST ABOUT FOOD PRODUCTION, IT'S PART OF SOMETHING FAR BIGGER. THIS GOVERNMENT WAS VOTED IN ON THE BACK OF A PROMISE ABOUT FOOD STANDARDS. FOOD IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR EXISTENCE. HOW CAN IT BE CONSIDERED A BARGAINING CHIP WHEN IT'S THE VERY ESSENCE OF WHAT WE NEED TO LIVE AND SURVIVE EVERY DAY.
 ”

NIKITA GARNER — SMALLHOLDER,
 COUNTY DURHAM



Photo: Glimpse



STAND UP FOR BRITISH STANDARDS

IN RECENT WEEKS, YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD FROM CONSTITUENTS ABOUT WHY THEY WANT YOU TO STAND UP FOR BRITISH STANDARDS IN NEW TRADE DEALS. THEY'VE ASKED YOU TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT ON THEIR PROMISES NOT TO REDUCE HIGH STANDARDS ON FOOD QUALITY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE FOR UK PRODUCERS AND FOR THE FOOD WE IMPORT.

WWF has been working with local restaurant owners, farmers, food producers and community leaders in your region to celebrate high quality and high standard produce.

Protecting high standards, leading the world in promoting a greener trade system, and exporting British expertise: your constituents told us this is what they want to see from the government, because such action reflects the values of the UK, would help preserve jobs, keep us all healthy, and look after our beautiful countryside for generations to come.

WWF, TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Right now, the UK is negotiating new trade agreements across the world as an independent nation – an exciting opportunity that we haven't had for 50 years. The decisions made in these deals will impact our climate, our health and the health of our planet for generations to come.

WWF welcomes the government's manifesto commitment that they will not lower food, environmental or welfare standards in trade deals. However, while no country goes into a trade negotiation with the intention of lowering standards, the reality is that trade-offs happen – cars for data or food for financial services.

We're calling on MPs to Stand Up for British Standards. UK agriculture is rightly moving towards a more sustainable future because caring for our planet is at the heart of our values. Standing up for standards is what people want because it is the right thing to do, as shown by over 2.5 million people who took action over the summer, signing petitions and writing to their MPs.



Scarecrows appeared in towns including Stoke-on-Trent, Dewsbury and Bishop Auckland – bringing the campaign's message from the country to towns: British food standards are under threat and MPs, business owners and shoppers should stand up to protect them.

Photos: Glimpse

OPPORTUNITY

Trade will offer exciting opportunities for the UK to strike deals that allow us to export our ever-growing environmental expertise, from green technology to producing high quality food that maximises the public goods that sustainable farming can provide – carbon sinks, habitats, improved water and air quality. To do so, we should prioritise deals with countries that share these priorities, and back up promises with legislation.

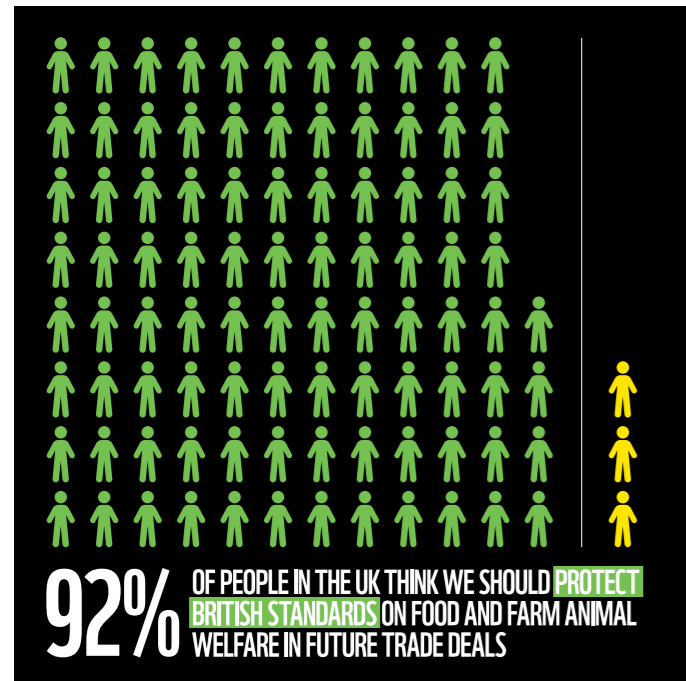
PROTECTING STANDARDS

The government must be clear with the public, and our trading partners, that the UK will not accept imports of food that damage the environment, or which could lead to downward pressure on domestic regulation by undercutting UK producers on price.

It is not a question of simply allowing consumers to 'choose' high standard produce on supermarket shelves – up to 50% of UK food is consumed out of the home, with no origin labelling. Companies providing food for public services, in hospitals and schools for example, have an obligation to achieve best value for money in their procurement and so could be forced to purchase low-standard produce. Moreover, some of our negotiating partners want to reduce food labelling requirements as part of trade agreements, calling such measures a technical barrier to trade. We simply would not know the difference in what we're eating.

With each trade negotiation, we must continue to hold the government to their manifesto commitment to maintain domestic and import standards. A simple and effective guarantee would be to guarantee parliamentary approval of any reduction in standards – ensuring MPs have a final and fully informed say over what food comes into the UK.

◀ People are rightly proud that Britain produces high quality and healthy food, but they also trust that wherever their food comes from, it will meet these standards – 75% think standards shouldn't be lowered for the sake of a trade deal.



“ THE MILK AND THE CREAM WE BUY FROM A FARMER WHO'S BASED IN TIDESWELL. GREAT BRITAIN HAS A VERY, VERY GOOD REPUTATION FOR THE QUALITY OF THE FOOD THAT WE PRODUCE. WE NEED TO MAINTAIN OUR INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION. ”

YEE KWAN — YEE KWAN ICE CREAM, SHEFFIELD

ENHANCING SCRUTINY

The Trade and Agriculture Commission and amendments to the Agriculture Bill provide a useful layer of scrutiny of each trade deal – but they do not amount to a clear statement that the environment is central to UK trade policy, nor do they improve parliamentary scrutiny, or prevent the diminution of standards. The current Commission membership and remit does not reflect the breadth of issues at stake.

WWF would like to see a more transparent and inclusive process in the development of UK trade policy and the approval of trade deal. Amendments to the Trade Bill should include guaranteed parliamentary oversight at every stage of negotiations, from setting objectives to voting on the final deal. Such provisions are guaranteed for legislatures in many countries. Government should bring together the right people to develop a world-leading trade policy that has a net-positive impact on people and planet and promote a race-to-the-top.



RAISING GLOBAL AMBITION

Across the world, there is growing concern that the current system of global trade is not set up to deal with the challenges of the 21st century. Organisations such as the WTO are increasingly taking an expansionary view of their rules to allow countries to regulate for action on climate and nature.

The UK government should take advantage of this opportunity with a smart and even handed approach to developing environmental standards that support the shift to more sustainable agriculture at home and in our supply chains. Government should be proactive, working with the WTO to design and apply environmental standards in a way that fits with international rules.

The UK government should work with like-minded countries to be at the vanguard of bilateral trade deals and plurilateral arrangements that will help **deliver a trading system fit for the 21st century.**

This is an exciting opportunity for the UK on the world stage. **A greener global Britain should not be waiting for change, but leading the transition to sustainable food, farming and trade.**

◀ Without safeguards, imported products could include meat from countries where animal antibiotic use is considerably higher, crops treated with pesticides banned in the UK, or industrially produced food from megafarms illegal in the UK.

In County Durham, West Yorkshire and North Staffordshire, 68% of people are concerned about the possibility of there being more mega farms in the UK in the future.

Photo: Adobe

Photo: Glimpse

“ AS A CHEF, UNDERSTANDING WHERE MY FOOD COMES FROM IS ESSENTIAL... MY CREATIVITY THRIVES ON THAT. FORGET THE CHLORINATED CHICKEN, IT'S THE OTHER THINGS. LOSS OF JOBS, LOSS OF FARMING. LET'S DO WHAT'S RIGHT AND LET'S REALLY GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY. ”

CRIS COHEN — FEASTED, STOKE-ON-TRENT

For more information, or if you would like to arrange a meeting, please contact David Walsh, Public Affairs Specialist, dwalsh@wwf.org.uk

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