

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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19 May 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

In a crucial year for climate and nature we wish to support your government to do everything it can to demonstrate world-leading plans to support the shift to sustainable farming and green global supply chains.

A deal with the Australian government that has tariff and quota free access to the UK market is likely to drive a coach and horses through the UK's ambition to 'build back greener' and be a world leader on sustainable farming and supply chains, a key pillar for your government at COP26.

We were pleased to hear you championing the Government's ongoing commitment to 'protecting the natural world' and 'the highest standards of animal welfare' in the Queen's Speech, and only yesterday we applauded the introduction of a 2030 species target in the Environment Bill. It feels inconsistent, to therefore be prioritising a deal – with a laggard on global climate action - that undermines high UK standards on the environment and animal welfare by forcing UK farmers to compete with outdated models of agricultural production.

Global Britain can be a force for good, where the UK builds trading relationships that make us a stronger and more resilient, greener nation, one that is leading in sustainable agriculture and industries of the future, not aligning with laggards on climate and nature or making our farmers compete with old models of farming we want to move away from.

Zero tariff and zero quota access to the UK market should be reserved for agricultural systems operating on a par with the UK's climate policies, its commitment to restore nature and its high environmental and welfare standards, as well as those countries that support the UK's strong commitment to ensuring imports are deforestation free.

At this stage, without setting quotas or responding to the Trade and Agriculture Commission's recommendations for a set of core standards, we see this deal setting a very dangerous precedent for future trade deals.

Leadership
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New free trade agreements should support measures for our global transition to more sustainable agriculture and no trade deal should be undertaken before those standards have been put in place and/or protected through a system of quotas.

We all want the UK to reap the economic rewards of forging new global trading partnerships that benefit our society and the planet, but it is not worth the rush to do a deal that adds up to a relatively small economic gain, just 0.02% to GDP over 15 years, if the outcome causes significant damage to the planet.

We urge you to take the time and make the right deal for people and planet.

Yours sincerely,

Shaun Spiers, Executive Director, Green Alliance

John Sauven, CEO, Greenpeace

Hilary McGrady, Director General, National Trust

Beccy Speight, CEO, RSPB

Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain

Emma Rose, Director, Unchecked UK

Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link

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