

## Response ID ANON-CPV6-3635-G

Submitted to **Consultation on trade negotiations with the United States**

Submitted on **2018-10-09 22:41:14**

### Privacy and confidentiality

**Do you consent for the voluntary information you provide in this consultation to be used as part of the Government's published consultation response?**

Yes

**If you answered no to this question, please give your reason.:**

**Do you consent for the Department for International Trade, or organisations working on their behalf, to contact you regarding the responses you have given?**

Yes

### Who are you responding as?

**What is your name (first name and surname)?**

**Name:**

Philip Stocker

**What is your email address?**

**Email:**

pstocker@nationalsheep.org.uk

**Please tell us who you are responding as?**

Non-governmental organisation – In an official capacity as the representative of a non-governmental organisation / trade union / academic institution / other organisation.

### Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - about you

**What is the name of the organisation (e.g. trade union, interest group, charity or academic institution) you are responding on behalf of?**

**Organisation:**

National Sheep Association

**Which area does your organisation represent?**

Food, Environment, Animals, Farmers

**If you selected other, please tell us which area your organisation represents in the box below:**

**How many members does your organisation represent in total?**

5001 – 10000

**Does your organisation have a presence in, or operate in, the United States?**

No

### NGOs - Questions about the UK's future trade relationship with the United States

**Have any of your members been in contact with your organisation about the prospect of a free trade agreement (or related trade talks) with the United States?**

Yes

### NGOs - The UK's future trade relationship with the United States - priorities

**What would you want the UK government to achieve through a free trade agreement (or related trade talks) with the United States, and why?**

**Please supply your answer and any supporting evidence below:**

We refer you to the responses the NSA has given to the consultations on New Zealand and Australia, both large scale sheep producing nations, and highlight the fact that a free trade agreement between the UK and the US could have a potentially similar outcome for the UK sheep industry ie more competition from a lower cost product, but due to differing reasons. Whereas the UK is a major global player in sheep production and export trade, the US has a small sheep industry and is a net importer of lamb. Sheep meat consumption in the US is low, but the population is high and a small increase in per capita consumption could offer opportunities for the UK sheep industry.

The NSA understands that sheep production in the US is niche and the US product, heavy and late matured carcasses producing large cuts and high levels of fat, is not well aligned to any modern US consumer demand that is preferring leaner and smaller cuts that are typical of UK production. We understand that NZ and Australia export significant volumes to the US, and that Iceland have a premium seasonal supply. These nations produce lamb and sheepmeat products similar in weight and fat cover to the UK, suggesting that market opportunities exist for the UK. In addition there is a growing interest in the US for grass reared red meat as a healthy premium product, differentiated from a mainstream offering of cereal fed/ feedlot type red meat. The UKs sheepmeat production suits this growing and premium interest well with most of our lamb being grass fed.

However, the UKs sheepmeat market currently exists of around 60 - 65% of our production consumed domestically and 35 - 40% exported. Our relatively strong domestic consumption may not always be the most lucrative market but it is reliable, it is not affected by trade disrupting market or political volatility, and it creates a vitally important connection between UK consumers and producers, helping with an understanding of how food is produced. Consequently we would be opposed to a UK/US trade agreement that increased the volumes of lower cost meat generally onto the UK market and that resulted in the UK reducing its share of the domestic market and seeking increased opportunities globally. We are of the opinion that we should set optimal targets for self sufficiency in sheepmeat, accepting that exports and imports are important, but that we should be striving to at least not drop below our current balance.

Many UK consumers purchasing decisions are made on price, and this comes from a general cheap food policy as well as a highly competitive retail sector that competes heavily on price. We would want the UK Government to avoid a trade relationship that resulted in new imports to the UK of cheaper meat - beef and poultry in particular. We are of the opinion that this would damage our own livestock industry and put pressure on our high environmental, animal welfare, and social standards.

The UK has high expectations and requirements relating to farm and environmental, and animal welfare standards. US standards are different and align with a different culture and consumer demand that is not compatible with that of the UK. The NSA would expect the UK government to require the same high standards for any agricultural products entering the UK - not a loose equivalence programme but the same exacting standards that our producers meet. Sheep farming is a long established business activity in the UK, keeping rural communities and economies active and maintaining landscape, environments, and natural capital, in particular soils. Any decisions that damage our industry will have impacts the go beyond business success, and must be avoided. We would expect our Government to fully consider the impacts on the UK sheep industry of a free trade agreement between the UK and the US and to ensure the inclusion of measures to protect our industry.

**Which of these areas of a free trade agreement best describe the priorities that you have outlined above?**

Products Standards, Regulation and Certification, Competition, Labour and Environment, Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) Policy

**NGOs - The UK's future trade relationship with the United States - concerns**

**What concerns, if any, does your organisation have about a free trade agreement (or related trade talks) with the United States, and why?**

**Please supply your answer and any supporting evidence below:**

We are concerned that a new trade relationship would be eagerly sought by the UK and that full consideration, and safeguarding individual industries, may be overlooked. In particular we are concerned that the US would demand access to the UK market for chicken and beef in return for opening their markets to our products. Although we have been given assurances that no food products will be allowed into the UK unless of the same exacting standards required of our producers we are highly concerned that a desire to agree a free trade deal with the US would result in going back on this commitment. High volumes of low cost US beef and chicken would depress UK prices of meats generally and put unfair pressure on UK producers. We would be concerned that greater competition from lower price meats generally would put pressure on UK sheep meat prices and that this would have a negative economic, environmental and social impact. We would be most concerned that a trade relationship would require the UK to accept agricultural products produced to standards that are not allowed here in the UK and without a requirement for clear labelling, particularly in catering outlets - effectively undermining our domestic market, putting pressure on our high standards, and forcing UK producers to explore more export opportunities. We are concerned that we would be pushed towards exporting more and importing more food stuffs, and that this would have a negative effect on the relationship between UK consumers and producers and increase further the disconnect between citizens and how their food is produced.

**Which of these areas of a free trade agreement best describe the concerns that you have outlined above?**

Tariffs, Rules of Origin, Products Standards, Regulation and Certification, Public Procurement, Labour and Environment, Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) Policy

**NGOs - The UK's future trade relationship with the United States - other comments**

**Is there anything else that you would want to say about the UK's future trade relationship with the United States?**

**Please supply your answer and any supporting evidence below:**

We have seen interest from the US sheep industry in some of our sheep genetic breeding material (embryos and semen), due to a serious lack of genetic diversity within breeds. There are health/disease status challenges to overcome in accessing this market and while this interest and demand is encouraging we would be concerned that there will be a quid pro quo required that would require the UK to accept US meat imports. NSA would be highly concerned about the impact of greater volumes of low priced meats and proteins, often produced in ways that would not meet the approval of UK consumers. We would oppose any agreement that resulted in US meat coming into the UK, we would expect the same standards of production to be met, and if imported meat were to be approved from the US we would expect a mandatory labelling code that enabled easily informed purchasing decisions.