

Response ID ANON-TMX6-B1ER-S

Submitted to UK-EU SPS Agreement - Call for Information
Submitted on 2026-04-21 11:20:13

About this Call for Information

Would you like your response to be confidential?

No

confidentiality :

About you

Please provide your name or surname.

Full name:
Phil Stocker

Please provide your email address.

Email:
pstocker@nationalsheep.org.uk

What is the name of the organisation you are representing? If you are responding in a personal capacity please leave this blank and proceed to the next question.

Name of organisation:
National Sheep Association

Background

Q1.1. Which of the following best describes you?

I am responding on behalf of a business representative organisation (BRO)

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Business Representative Organisations

Q1.7. If you are responding on behalf of an association or a business representative organisation, how many members do you represent?

5001-10,000

Business or Organisation Registration

Q1.8. Where is your business or organisation registered?

England

If you selected European Union (excluding the Republic of Ireland) or Rest of World (excluding EEA/EFTA) - please specify below. :

Business Sector Information

Q1.9a. What agri-food and agri-goods sector(s) apply to you? Please select all that apply.

Agriculture and Horticulture, Animal Health and Welfare

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Q1.9b Please select all sectors that apply to you.

Livestock, Mixed Farming, Veterinary Activities

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Q1.10. If you are involved in the supply of agri-food, agri-goods or both, what types of goods do you sell or provide services for? Please select all that apply.

Live Animals, Raw hides and skins (other than fur skins) and leather

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Operational Impact

Q2. To what extent will alignment to EU SPS rules require changes to your business or organisation's operations (for example, processes, IT systems, labelling, packaging, reformulation of products, contract amendments)?

Unsure

Q3. What does your business need to do to be ready for alignment? Tick all that apply.

Other

If you selected other please specify briefly.:

Farmers and supply chains will need to know of any practical changes that may be brought about through realignment of rules and regulations.

If you selected 'Other' or want to specify in more detail please use the text box below.

Q3 - Other:

Sheepmeat processors and exporters will need to understand things such as labelling and export control. However we are not confident that Defra are aware of the potential impact on the tens of thousands of small family farms across the UK who supply exporters with raw ingredients. This particularly applies to the area of live animal transport and welfare in Transport, potentially vet medicine usage and withdrawal periods, and maximum residue limits (MRLs) of trace elements and contaminants such as lead. We also have concerns in relation to the NI market, friction in moving live animals (breeding rams and pedigree stock) from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. Despite the Windsor Framework, the requirement for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) and specific residency rules still creates a bottleneck that limits the genetic pool for NI breeders.

We are concerned that little information or discussion has been held on these matters and while we agree with the benefits of a new SPS agreement we are also of the view that industry needs to understand the trade offs that might come with such an agreement.

We believe there would also be a strong need for a 24 month transition period to allow for compliance with the new SPS regulations businesses, farmers and organisations will face in terms of changes to practices, computer systems and procedures in order to comply.

Q4. Considering your response to Q3, what challenges do you anticipate if any?

Q4:

We are concerned that we don't have the slaughtering infrastructure, or supply chain organisation, to comply with reduced live animal journey times, or ambient temperatures at the point of loading should EC regulation 1/2005 be passed in one of its early iterations.

Industry needs to understand these potential risks and we expect Defra to negotiate to allow us to maintain the controls that suit our industry here in the UK.

It is also important to separate the notion of UK border controls and biosecurity from SPS alignment. Resetting and re-aligning with the EU, while related to UK borders, is distinct from the movement of illegal meat into the UK.

Q5. From the point at which you start to make changes, what is the minimum lead-in time that your business or organisation will need to comply with SPS alignment? Changes to lead-in times may refer to contracts, staff training impacts, supply chain and logistic changes for example.

Don't know

Q6. Which types of operational changes will it take your business or organisation longest to prepare for?

Not sure, Other

If you selected 'Other' please specify in the text box below.

Q6 - Other:

It is the operation changes that may be brought about on farm or along the supply chain, or regulatory alignment that bring concern to the majority.

Q7. What support would your business or organisation need to implement the changes necessary to comply with SPS alignment?

Q7:

Until we know the detail of what changes will be brought about through realignment we are not sure.

Business Awareness and Readiness

Q8. Before this Call for Information, had you heard of the SPS agreement?

Yes

Q9. If so, where did you first hear about the SPS agreement?

Government communications

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Q10a. Have you attended any forums or received any official communications from the Government regarding the SPS agreement?

Yes

Q10b. If you have, how useful did you find them?

Slightly useful

Q10c. Would you like to sign up for government alerts?

Yes

If selected 'Yes' please provide an email address below.

Q10c - email :

pstocker@nationalsheep.org.uk

Q11. Under the deal, businesses will be expected to follow EU rules. How confident are you of what these EU rules on specific areas related to SPS are and what they will mean for your business or sector?

Very unconfident

If you answered Unconfident or Very unconfident to this question, please give your reason(s) and provide further information here.

Q11 - text box:

No information has been shared in relation to what rule/regulatory changes may be brought about.

Q12. Are there any specific areas where clarity for your business or organisation is lacking?

Q12:

Yes. What impact will be had on core regulatory requirements such as livestock journey time and transport conditions (loading temperatures, whether time in markets is counted as rest time. We also are not clear about where EU rules have parted company from UK regulations in relation to livestock and what position Defra is taking in the negotiations.

Clarity around the extent to which the EU is stricter on antimicrobials (Regulation (EU) 2019/6) and what divergence has occurred would be welcome. Under the current arrangements, NI must follow EU rules on veterinary medicines. Similarly, gene-editing and maximum residue limits are areas of divergence, in which the UK is comparatively more permissive.

We would also seek clarity around divergence of live animal exports, which is still allowed in the EU.

Wool is often treated as a low-value by product, but under SPS rules, it is a Category 3 animal by product. Moving unprocessed wool from NI to GB for scouring or sale can still face bureaucratic hurdles.

Q13a. Has your business considered making any preparations for future change that may be needed under the SPS agreement?

No

Q13b. If this applies to you, when do you intend to start preparations?

Unsure

Q14a. How do you want to receive important updates from government?

Industry wide forums, Online portal or dashboard

If you answered 'Other' to this question please specify briefly in the text box below.

Q14a - other:

Q14b. How frequently would you like to receive updates and information from us?

Ad hoc – only at key milestones

If you answered 'Other' to this question please specify briefly in the text box below.

Q14b - other:

Q14c. How do you want to get in touch with us about readiness preparation?

Email or mailbox, Regular online engagement, for example working groups

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.:

Q15. What specific forms of communication support would help your business or organisation with readiness?

Guidance documents, Training sessions, Practical advice, Dedicated helpline, Industry forums

If you answered 'Other' to this question please specify briefly in the text box below.

Q15 - other:

Benefits and Costs

Q16. Which of the following present a benefit or opportunity for your business or organisation arising from alignment with EU SPS rules?

Increased exports, Reduced costs of imports, Reduced compliance costs (for example, fewer checks, simplified certification), Improved market access, Greater supply chain flexibility, Enhanced product competitiveness, Better predictability and stability in trade rules

If you answered 'Other' or 'None of the above' to this question, please specify briefly.

Q16 - Other:

Q17. What are the estimated benefits or cost savings for your business or organisation arising from alignment with EU SPS rules? Please provide an estimate using the matrix and briefly describe where these benefits or cost savings arise, for example staff training, certifications in the open text box below.

Q17 - One off cost savings:

Q17 - Ongoing cost savings:

Q17 - Not applicable:

Q17 - Don't know:

£0-10k

Please provide an estimate of costs (where known) and provide a description of the costs (such as where these benefits or cost savings arise, for example staff training, certifications) in the text box below. :

Q18. Following SPS alignment, when do you expect to see benefits, if any, for your business or organisation?

Not applicable

Q19. Are there any financial costs you anticipate incurring as a result of SPS alignment?

Not applicable

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.

Q19 - other:

Q20. If Q19 applies to you, please set out the expected costs to the best of your ability. Please provide an estimate using the matrix and briefly describe where these benefits or cost savings arise, for example, staff training, certifications, contractual arrangements etc, in the open text box below.

Q20 - One off costs:

Q20 - Ongoing costs:

Q20 - Not applicable:

£0-10k

Q20 - Don't know:

Please provide an estimate of expected costs (where known) and provide a description of the costs (such as where these benefits or cost savings arise, for example, staff training, certifications, contractual arrangements etc, in the open text box below. :

Q21. How might your costs go up or revenue go down if there is, for example, no lead time, 6 months lead time or a 12-month lead time? Please complete the matrix and then use the text box below to briefly explain how the costs and reduction in revenue would impact your business or organisation, if applicable.

Q21 - No lead time:

Q21 - 6 months lead time:

Q21 - 12 months lead time:

Q21 - Not applicable:

Increase in cost

Q21 - text:

Supply Chain and Regional Impacts

Q22a. Do you anticipate SPS alignment will affect your supply chain operations? Supply chain operations may effect changes to contracts, updating internal systems and process, staff training etc, for example.

Not applicable

Q22b. If this applies to you, which part of your supply chain do you expect to be affected?

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.

Q22b - other:

Q23a. Do you anticipate SPS alignment to have region-specific impacts on your business or sector?

Unsure

Q23b. If this applies to you, which regions do you expect to be the most affected?

Scotland, Northern Ireland

If you answered 'Other' to this question, please specify briefly.

Q23b - other:

Q24. If this applies to you, what level of impact do you anticipate these regional effects will have on your business or organisation?

No impact

Feedback on the Online Survey

Q25a. Overall, how satisfied are you with our online tool Citizen Space?

Not Answered

Q25b. Please give us any comments you have, including suggestions on how we could improve.

Q25b: