



National Pig Association

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Date: 7 June 2022

Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State
Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
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Dear Secretary of State,

We write to ask for your support with discussions around the development of a live animal Border Control Post (BCP) at, or near to, the port of Calais in France. We cannot stress enough how reliant the UK livestock sector is on the export market of high value breeding stock. Across our livestock sectors it is a vital part of specialist breeding companies and many individual farm businesses. It is a trade worth millions of pounds – over £2.5m for the beef sector, around £7.6m per year for the sheep sector, and tens of millions for the pig sector. Having been unable to export since January 2020 it is now becoming critical for those affected. Several breeding companies have indicated that they may have to cease trading in this country as a result and individual farmers involved in this trade have suffered serious losses with some even pushed to move stock via longer journeys through Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

UK breeding stock is traded globally due to our high health status, the need for genetic diversity and demand for our world-class genetics. Trade and movements are done so with the upmost of care and traceability to ensure animal health and welfare are not compromised. As such this part of our livestock industry has an important role to play in the national and global food chain and within the British economy given that breeding pigs, cattle and sheep carry a much higher value than those produced for meat.

We have been engaged with the companies in France that are exploring options in and around the Calais port area to establish a BCP since before the UK left the EU and progress has been excruciatingly slow. Currently there are two potential sites which have been identified but no definite plan in terms of how and when these will be fully operational. We understand that the Commission and French authorities have not eased the process to date and have continued to create barriers to progress, despite outwardly appearing supportive. We are now being told that an additional risk assessment of the surrounding area will be required for the proposed site at Coquelles, near Calais and should a facility within Calais Port be considered it would need to go through a lengthy

tendering and planning permission process, which could result in a further 18-month delay. This would signal the end of trade in breeding stock for many.

We recognise that the final decision on this matter does not lay with your department, however, we ask that you use your considerable influence and intervene on our behalf, using any means at your disposal to facilitate discussions and highlight the opportunities that breeding animals from the UK offer both the French, and wider European, livestock sector to your Commission and French counterparts. The UK has implemented a checking system at the point of destination ahead of live animal border control posts being operational, this is an interim measure European nations could also be encouraged to explore. Trade prior to EU exit was strong and can offer gains both in terms of genetic improvement and a viable business opportunity for the company which establishes a BCP in France.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Mutimer
Chairman
National Pig Association



Neil Shand
Chief Executive
National Beef Association



Tom Bradshaw
Deputy President
National Farmers Union



Phil Stocker
Chief Executive
National Sheep Association