May 2020

Thank you for contacting me about food standards and future trade deals.

I fully recognise the importance the public attach to the UK’s high standards of food production, and the unique selling point it provides for our farmers, whose high-quality produce is in demand around the world.

I know that that in trade negotiations the Government will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards.

Without exception, all animal products imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements from all trading partners, including the EU and others, will have to meet our stringent food safety standards, as they do now.

These standards have been built up over many years and have the trust of the public and the world. I know the Government will not adjust those standards to secure a trade deal.  The standards will be based on science and decided by the UK alone.

I want to see a vibrant and resilient farming sector in the UK, and the UK’s newfound status as an independent trading nation could benefit our farming industry. Indeed, new free trade agreements could lead to gains for UK agriculture.

For example, analysis by the Department for International Trade shows that an agreement with the US will deliver economic gains for the agri-food sector.  Opening the vast US market could help boost UK farmers’ incomes and reduce their input costs, making them more competitive, more productive and more profitable.

I hope this response has provided a measure of clarity and reassurance. Thank you again for taking time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**