May 2020



Thank you for contacting me about the Free Trade Agreement between the UK and the US.

The Secretary of State for International Trade and Development recently announced that the Government will be publicly launching free trade agreement negotiations with the US. These negotiations continue over a period of a few weeks and will be carried out by video conference, ensuring that talks can progress during the Covid-19 pandemic.

More trade is essential if the UK is to overcome the unprecedented economic challenge posed by Covid-19 and new trade agreements are an important part of the long-term economic recovery. A US trade deal should lead to an increase in trade and benefit every region and nation of the UK. Any future trade agreements must work for UK farmers, businesses, and consumers, and uphold food safety, animal welfare standards and environmental protection. Quality, safety and performance will continue to be paramount.

A UK/US free trade agreement will aim to secure comprehensive, far-reaching and mutually beneficial tariff reductions and will increase access to the US market for UK businesses, and lower prices and increased choice for UK consumers. It will also enable the UK to protect its interests when threatened by unexpected surges in imports of goods or unfair trading practices, while making the appropriate commitments to transparency, due process and proportionate use of trade remedies. It will also remove trade distorting tariffs.

Over 31,600 small British businesses are already exporting goods to the US. The Government will seek to include a specific SME chapter in a US free trade agreement to support and further stimulate this trade.

The Government will set global best practice by future-proofing the agreement to take account of changing technology and developing areas of the economy. For example, the Government will secure cutting-edge provisions which maximise opportunities for digital trade across all sectors of the economy.

I hope you are assured that the negotiators will drive a hard bargain for all British industries and people and are committed to securing that the NHS, the price it pays for drugs and its services are not for sale. There will be no compromise on high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. It is in the interests of both the UK and US to reach an agreement on all these issues.

The Government is committed to transparency and will ensure that parliamentarians, UK citizens and businesses have access to the information they need on these negotiations.

Thank you again for taking time to contact me.



Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**