



Save Our Food, Save Devon Farms

Open letter to Selaine Saxby, MP for North Devon.

Dear Ms Saxby

We write to you asking that you support key amendments relating to food standards that have been made to the Agriculture Bill in the House of Lords when you debate and vote on these next Monday, October 12th 2020.

It is well known that British food standards, in alignment with EU standards, are far superior to American "standards". These allow for chlorinated chicken, high levels of antibiotics and hormones in beef and of pus in milk, pigs to be kept in crates in which they cannot turn around, and chemicals which are illegal here - for good reason - to be generally used in agriculture.

The regulation of food standards and animal welfare is something the British public care deeply about, and the livelihood of British farmers, and the landscape shaped by the farms of Devon in particular, would be threatened by any influx of substandard food, from the USA or anywhere else.

For this reason, the National Farmers Union (NFU) organised a petition, now with over a million signatures, calling on the Government to "put into law rules that prevent food being imported to the UK which is produced in ways that would be illegal here." This government has declared its commitment to parliamentary sovereignty and yet the UK-US Trade Deal is being negotiated in secret, and with *no requisite of parliamentary scrutiny or approval*. It is also clear that the NHS, and the price of medicines, are by no means "off the table" in these secret negotiations.

In May, the Conservative MP for Tiverton and Honiton, Neil Parish, put forward an Amendment (new Clause 2) to the Agriculture Bill to put the defence of food standards into law. This Amendment, backed by all opposition parties and 22 Conservative MPs, was defeated. We were very disappointed that you voted *against* this amendment. The excuse of "not tying the negotiators' hands" is not acceptable. The NFU has asked the Government to set up a Trade, Food and Farming Standards Commission to scrutinise and make recommendations on *all* trade deals, but this has not been done.



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We now look to you to commit to doing everything you can to protect food standards and ensure that “Parliamentary sovereignty” is not an empty slogan?

You now have the chance as our representative in Parliament, to show your support for our local farmers and many others in your constituency who want to see clearer protections of food standards written into the current Agriculture Bill, by voting for the following Lords amendments:

The first is in the name of Lord Granchester, (89ZA) which seeks “a requirement for agricultural and food imports to meet domestic standards” and the second is in the name of Lord Curry of Kirkharle, (101) which gives powers to the Trade and Agriculture Commission to give MPs full scrutiny of its findings and recommendations in relation to future free-trade deals.

We await your response with interest.

Yours sincerely

North Devon Constituency Labour Party



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