



National Sheep Association

NSA policy position on a 'no deal' Brexit

With time running out for the UK to secure a Brexit deal with the EU, let alone one that works for UK sheep farmers, NSA believes urgent and important steps are needed.

In line with the Technical Notices released by the UK Government, NSA has developed this policy position specific to a no deal scenario.

The sheep sector is set to be hit particularly hard by a no deal Brexit because we currently export around 35% of production and, of that, 96% goes to EU destinations. The UK is a net exporter of sheepmeat, but only marginally. We produce around 290,000 tonnes, export 90,000 tonnes and import 100,000 tonnes. If we lose our exports and imports continue, prices will collapse and many farmers will struggle to sell at all. NSA therefore expects the UK Government and the sheep industry to work together to protect the industry in the result of a no deal and ensure sheepmeat imports do not undermine domestic produce.

Imports and exports

- In the result of a no deal, the UK will be an 'unlisted third country' with no export access to the EU. NSA therefore expects the UK Government to work and negotiate with the EU to ensure the UK is secured as a 'listed third country' as soon as is achievable possible.
- Once the UK is listed it will have to operate to WTO rules and trade within a tariffs structure. NSA therefore call on the UK Government to support farmers with the cost of export tariffs to the EU, using the funds not sent to the EU to cover the cost of the 'divorce bill'.
- While the UK cannot export to the EU it will need to be able to fall back on domestic markets. NSA believes the UK Government must close its import doors for sheepmeat at least until export trade has viably resumed, to prevent our markets becoming oversupplied with products. This would be challenged, but a review of standards worldwide to ensure our own exacting environmental and welfare standards were being met should be carried out.
- Other sheepmeat-producing countries are already looking to secure free trade deals with the UK. NSA expects the UK Government to use WTO clauses to protect our sheep industry on environmental, cultural and social grounds. The Government should not agree trade deals that will be to the detriment of our own industry, particularly when that industry has such close environmental, landscape, cultural, and social relationships.

Domestic markets

- NSA believes an urgent requirement of the UK Government is to enable investment in storage and freezer capacity, to ensure facilities are in place should Britain lose its ability to export to the EU and that sheepmeat products can be stored and not wasted.



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National Sheep Association is an organisation which represents the views and interests of sheep producers throughout the UK.
NSA is funded by its membership of sheep farmers and its activities involve it in every aspect of the sheep industry.

your business your future

- Given assurances, the industry would be able to adapt over time to ease out seasonal trends. A clear message is needed from the top if levy bodies and industry stakeholders need to shift their focus to encourage changes in sheep farming systems (extended lambing and later finishing of old season lambs) and drive product development and the extension of the sheepmeat product range. Investment aid will also be needed for freezer / cold storage to underpin an extension in market supply.
- NSA asks that the UK Government puts measures in place to ensure that where sheepmeat is procured through public funding, such as for the UK armed forces, school dinners and hospital meals, it is British sheepmeat.

Rural funding

- NSA expects the Government to pass the Agricultural Bill as soon as is achievable possible to provide farmers with security and consistency with their farm payments. NSA further expects quick clarity on the new system to replace the EU Basic Payment Scheme, to reassure farmers of the future of their businesses.
- NSA again calls on the UK Government to reconsider the list of 'public goods' that it will provide payment for. The list must include the provision of nutritious food and its contribution to culture and food security.

Devolved nations

- NSA calls on the devolved nations to consider carefully farm support and legislation in their devolved Agricultural Bills. Trade disparities between the four UK nations should be avoided at all costs.

Geographical indicators

- NSA expects the EU geographical indicators (protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (PGI)) used to identify UK products to be maintained whatever the outcome of the negotiations and would see this as an important part of developing our domestic market in the event of a no deal. In addition, we expect the Government, during trade negotiations with third countries and with the EU when applying to be a 'third country' to the EU, to ensure our geographical indicators are protected.

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