

# SPS Certification Working Group

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **URGENT CALL FOR NEW VETERINARY AGREEMENT AS RESTRICTIONS CAUSE SHARP DROP IN BRITISH EXPORTS TO THE EU AND THREATENS THE VIABILITY OF UK BUSINESS**

*Food and feed trade associations, hauliers, farmers and veterinary and environmental health professional organisations have joined together to propose in a new report an urgent new veterinary agreement and streamlined processes to resolve crippling restrictions to exports to the EU, Britain's largest trading partner.*

**Roger Gale MP, who sits on the cross-party UK Trade and Business Commission, said:**

*"This important report highlights the systemic challenges facing food exporters and the need for urgent solutions. This will all help inform the cross-party recommendations we are developing on how current barriers to trade with the EU can be addressed."*

The cross-party UK Trade and Business Commission will be examining this issue in detail at its [evidence session](#) today on a potential EU-UK veterinary agreement, which will hear from leading industry representatives including the British Veterinary Association, British Poultry Council, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the National Farmers Union.

For the last five months British exporters have faced often insurmountable difficulties with post-Brexit red tape and disruption at the UK-EU border. The new relationship between Great Britain and the EU (from 1 January 2021), has meant that British businesses now face a plethora of new requirements imposed on exports to the EU. These include international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) controls which significantly add to bureaucracy, cost and time.

This is having a profound negative impact on the amount of food exported to the EU. The ONS reports a sharp drop in exports - a decrease of £8.9 billion to £137 billion in the first quarter of 2021, significantly impacting the viability of businesses in Great Britain.

Businesses are working incredibly hard to navigate these new barriers but Government help is needed. The **SPS Certification Working Group**, a cross-industry, veterinary and

environmental health group, in its new report *Minimising SPS Friction in EU Trade*, today (Thursday 10 June) **calls on the Government to help resolve the severe impact on trade through a new approach by:**

- Improving current systems to remove archaic bureaucracy, reducing time, error and costs;
- Reviewing requirements for inspection and certification;
- Negotiating a form of mutual veterinary agreement with the EU which would ease problems trading food and feed between GB and the EU and GB to NI, and from EU to GB when full SPS import controls take effect in 2022 when, arguably, the situation will worsen further.

As Nick Allen of British Meat Processors Association explains: “The rigid but inconsistent enforcement of ‘third country’ trading rules is eroding the profitability and potential viability of exporting products of animal origin to the EU and NI - even though the differences between the food standards are virtually non-existent.”

If traders are to survive and thrive under the UK’s established Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the EU, new ways of managing the system must be developed to secure the sustainability of businesses going forward. Especially since the situation is likely to get much worse next year when full import controls take effect.

**The report, *Minimising SPS Friction in EU Trade*, calls on the Government to engage with the EU to build a system that works for exporters rather than against them.** Without Government support in investing in sufficient resources and systems, a detrimental effect on the sustainability of British businesses can be expected.

The Report is available on the industry EU Exit Food Hub (<https://euexitfoodhub.co.uk>) and on Working Group members’ websites.

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- Meat [info@britishmeatindustry.org](mailto:info@britishmeatindustry.org)
- Official Veterinarians [media@bva.co.uk](mailto:media@bva.co.uk)
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### **Notes to Editors**

The AHDB has also recently published figures on the impact of the new requirements on trade, showing a 28% decrease in value of food and live animal UK exports to the EU in Q1 of 2021 (<https://ahdb.org.uk/Eu-exit-Q1-trade-data-UK>).

### **The SPS Certification Working Group**

The Working Group is made up of food and feed trade associations, hauliers, farmers and veterinary and environmental health professional organisations, working together to minimise trade friction in Export Health Certificate (EHC)/SPS products between GB and the EU/NI by identifying issues and proposing solutions to Government and its Agencies.

The total value to the UK economy of the members of the Working Group is well in excess of £100bn per annum.

Members of the SPS Certification Working Group include:

Agricultural Industries Confederation	<a href="http://www.agindustries.org.uk">www.agindustries.org.uk</a>
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board	<a href="https://ahdb.org.uk">https://ahdb.org.uk</a>
Association of Independent Meat Suppliers	<a href="http://www.aims2001.co.uk">www.aims2001.co.uk</a>
British Frozen Food Federation	<a href="http://www.bfff.co.uk">www.bfff.co.uk</a>
British Meat Processors Association	<a href="http://www.britishmeatindustry.org">www.britishmeatindustry.org</a>
British Poultry Council	<a href="https://britishpoultry.org.uk">https://britishpoultry.org.uk</a>
British Veterinary Association	<a href="http://www.bva.co.uk">www.bva.co.uk</a>
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	<a href="http://www.cieh.org">www.cieh.org</a>
Chilled Food Association	<a href="http://www.chilledfood.org">www.chilledfood.org</a>

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Cold Chain Federation	<a href="http://www.coldchainfederation.org.uk">www.coldchainfederation.org.uk</a>
Council for Responsible Nutrition UK	<a href="http://www.crnuk.org">www.crnuk.org</a>
Dairy UK	<a href="http://www.dairyuk.org">www.dairyuk.org</a>
Fresh Produce Consortium	<a href="http://www.freshproduce.org.uk">www.freshproduce.org.uk</a>
Foodchain and Biomass Renewables Association	<a href="http://www.fabrauk.co.uk">www.fabrauk.co.uk</a>
Health Food Manufacturers Association	<a href="http://www.hfma.co.uk">www.hfma.co.uk</a>
International Meat Trade Association	<a href="http://www.imta-uk.org">www.imta-uk.org</a>
National Farmers Union of England and Wales	<a href="http://www.nfuonline.com">www.nfuonline.com</a>
Pet Food Manufacturers Association	<a href="http://www.pfma.org.uk">www.pfma.org.uk</a>
Proprietary Association of Great Britain	<a href="http://www.pagb.co.uk">www.pagb.co.uk</a>
Provision Trade Federation	<a href="http://www.provtrade.co.uk">www.provtrade.co.uk</a>
Rice Association	<a href="http://www.riceassociation.org.uk">www.riceassociation.org.uk</a>
Road Haulage Association	<a href="http://www.rha.uk.net">www.rha.uk.net</a>
Specialist Cheesemakers Association	<a href="http://www.specialistcheesemakers.co.uk">www.specialistcheesemakers.co.uk</a>
UK Flour Millers	<a href="http://www.ukflourmillers.org">www.ukflourmillers.org</a>