

Media Release



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NPA Press Release

NPA warns of perfect storm after Government rejects tariff pleas

The National Pig Association (NPA) warned of a 'perfect storm' for UK pork production after the Government rejected its calls to review damaging no deal import tariff plans.

NPA chairman Richard Lister expressed fury at the decision, which he said would force UK pig farmers out of business and open the UK's gates to a flood of imports produced to health and welfare standards outlawed in the UK. With an October 31 no deal Brexit appearing ever more likely, he asked the Government to urgently reconsider its decision.

Under the proposed tariff regime, originally announced in March, tariffs on pork would typically equate to around 3-5%, which would have minimal impact on importers. This would apply equally to imports from the EU and the rest of the world. This contrasts with the tariffs of up to 45% the UK currently has in place as a member of the EU. These tariffs protect UK consumers and producers from cheaper, lower standard imports.

The UK currently exports, tariff free, £300 million of pork products to the EU each year, but under a no deal scenario, these exports would incur stiff EU tariffs, jeopardising this vital market.

The UK decision also comes at a time when the US is becoming more protectionist. The NPA has today written to International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and Defra Secretary Theresa Villiers expressing 'grave concerns' regarding recently announced tariffs of 25% imposed on EU pork and a range of other products by the US. This followed a World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruling on US retaliation rights in the EU-USA Airbus dispute.

This will, again, seriously affect the competitiveness of high welfare UK pork exports to the US, worth £33m in 2018.

Adding to the industry's concerns, it emerged in media reports over the weekend that Ms Truss will press for a lowering of food standards to facilitate a future trade deal with the US.

"The situation, as it stands, could be an absolute perfect storm for the UK pig sector. The consequences could be catastrophic," NPA chairman Richard Lister warned.

"My message to the Government is clear: Do not sacrifice the UK pig sector in pursuit of cheap food and future trade deals.

"A no deal is currently looking like a very scary prospect for the pig industry. New EU tariffs could ruin our vital EU export trade – and now pork exporters are facing new US tariffs, which will also compromise that trade.

“And yet we are preparing to allow cheap imports in from all over the world that will undercut our producers. And if recent reports are to be believed, the Government is preparing, despite all its previous assurances, to sacrifice the high standards UK pork production is built on to ensure the supply of cheap food continues if we can no longer trade freely with the EU.

“UK pork production would be seriously and irrevocably damaged in this scenario as producers are forced out of business and production is exported abroad. Consumers will lose out too – forced into accepting lower standard imported products and no longer able to access the range of high quality, British pork produced in a variety of production systems and to world leading standards.

“UK pig producers feel let down and very uncertain about what lies ahead. We urge the Government to think again.”

Notes to editors

1. See the NPA’s press release demanding a review of no deal pork tariff rates [here](#)
2. See the NPA’s letter to Trade Secretary Liz Truss expressing ‘grave concern over new US pork tariffs [here](#)
3. See the latest version of the NPA’s Brexit briefing [here](#)
4. See AHDB’s comparison of current EU pork tariffs and proposed UK tariffs [here](#). For example:
 - While UK exports of sausages to the EU would face tariffs in excess of €100/100kg, there would be zero tariffs on imported sausages.
 - Some UK ham exports to the EU would face tariffs of €151.2/100kg (36%), compared with UK import tariffs of just €19.9/100kg (5%).
 - UK fresh pork exports would face tariffs of €86.9/100kg (35%), compared with UK tariffs of €11.4/100kg (5%).

More information

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