

IMTA calls for government to address practical implications so Brexit opportunities can be seized

Theresa May's speech confirmed that the UK will be leaving the single market and that a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement will be sought with the EU which will leave the UK open to trade deals with other partners around the world. The International Meat Trade Association which represents importers and exporters welcomes The Prime Ministers' advocacy of a 'truly global Britain'. We hope to see the UK reach many free trade agreements in future which benefit the meat trade, enhancing UK food security and consumer choice and facilitating the export of British products around the world. However, leaving the single market means it is of paramount urgency that infrastructural challenges are addressed in order that the opportunities presented by Brexit can be grasped.

We are glad that The Prime Minister is calling for continued tariff-free trade with Europe and cross border trade that is as 'frictionless as possible'. In an industry where supermarket shelves are filled just in time any delays at borders would be problematic. In the meat sector currently non-EU imports must be checked by a vet at a border inspection post (a hygienic facility for the inspection of foodstuffs) and the industry needs a clear view of how EU imports will be treated post-Brexit. If the UK is to continue exporting meat to the EU there is a big question around whether it will face veterinary checks, tariffs and requirement for customs clearances.

There is concern in the food industry that May's objectives on immigration centring on access to 'the best and brightest' does not take in to consideration the necessity for non-graduate workers to fill roles across the UK's largest manufacturing industry. The government must find a way for the industry to continue to access EU workers.

Certainty, which has been highlighted as The Prime Minister's number one objective, is crucial to business. With many contracts being agreed up to 18 months in advance and investment decisions sometimes taking even longer, the industry needs to know what the future trading rules will be as soon as possible. Similarly a phased approach will be welcomed by the industry to allow businesses to adapt to the new trading environment.

IMTA is keen to work closely with Government to ensure the practical aspects are covered to enable the UK to make the most of its opportunities.

[The International Meat Trade Association](http://www.theinternationalmeattradeassociation.org)

For more information on this topic or others please contact info@imta-uk.org or ring +442074890005