

Environment Secretary's letter to the food and drink industry

To those who continue to feed the nation,

In light of the ongoing challenges we face as a country with Covid-19, I want to pay tribute, once again, to all of you working within our food and drink supply chains as you continue to feed the nation under such difficult circumstances. The country is grateful for all that you have done and continue to do.

I know it has been a difficult 12 months, and many of you will have had a tough Christmas period, unable to see your family and friends. Some of you tragically may also have lost loved ones or colleagues. For this reason, and at a critical time for our country, it is more important than ever that we all continue to play our part to ensure those working in roles throughout the entire food and drink supply chain, from farm to fork, feel safe.

Whilst the vast majority of the public are protecting our NHS and other key workers by following the guidance on social distancing and face coverings, there are some who are not following the rules in the way that they should be, despite the risk posed by this virus. This is entirely unacceptable and I understand the concerns you will have about this. When you go into the workplace, you have the right to feel safe and I am committed to making sure that you do. Everyone has a role to play to help limit the spread of the virus and protect one another and the Government will continue to make this clear to the public.

Food businesses have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure workplaces are as Covid secure and as safe as possible, from managing capacity in shops, to encouraging customers to comply with regulations and guidance to keep us all safe. In the last few days, supermarkets have stepped up again, building on previous work, to further tighten their measures.

I am enormously proud of the work that you have done, and I want to thank each and every one of you. You have been, and continue to be, the hidden heroes of this pandemic.

George Eustice