

My question during the Statement on EU Exit: Negotiations and the Joint Committee, 19 October 2020

Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): Has my right hon. Friend seen how much popular and excellent quality fresh food there is in our supermarkets with the Union flag on the packaging? Will he confirm that if the EU insists on high tariffs on food trade, where it sells us massively more than we sell it, that would be a huge opportunity for our farmers to grow and rear more for the domestic market and get back the huge amounts of market share stolen from them under the common agricultural policy?

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr Michael Gove): My right hon. Friend makes three very important points. The first thing is that UK producers are doing a fantastic job in increasing production in a sustainable way. Championing the quality of UK produce is something that we should all do and recognise, whether it is Orkney cheddar or Welsh lamb, that the UK flag is a symbol that connects quality not just to our consumers but worldwide.

The second point that he makes, which is absolutely right, is that the common agricultural policy has been harmful, and our escape from it will ensure both that our farmers can prosper and that our environment can improve. His third point is that we should be confident not just that we can sell more excellent produce here in the UK but that, as we emerge into the world as a global free-trading nation, new opportunities to sell our excellent produce are available to our farmers, and he is absolutely right to be optimistic.