

UK-wide consultation into dairy sector to tackle supply chain issues launched

The UK Government working with the devolved administrations have today [launched a consultation](#) seeking to end any unfair practices across the UK's dairy sector.

[Evidence gathered during the Groceries Code Adjudicator Call for Evidence in 2016](#) highlighted how unfair practices have persisted in the dairy industry. This consultation will explore whether regulations could be introduced to ensure farmers are treated fairly.

This evidence suggests unfairness in the supply chain has sometimes been caused by milk buyers having the power to set and modify the milk price in a contract, often with little notification. This leads to uncertainty and pricing that can be unfair to dairy farming businesses.

To supplement wider efforts to support dairy farmers during the coronavirus pandemic and into the future, the UK Government with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have worked together to today launch a consultation seeking views from dairy farmers and processors across the whole country on whether future regulation could be used to strengthen fairness and transparency.

Proposals include an option to introduce a mandatory pricing mechanism within all contracts between dairy farmers and processors.

This would ensure the price paid for milk produced by the farmer is formally agreed within the contract, and that contract negotiations take place in a clear and transparent way.

Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

It is absolutely vital that our dairy farmers are paid fairly for their high quality produce and I am committed to cracking down on any unfair practices within the UK dairy industry.

I welcome all views to this consultation to determine how best we can guarantee fairness across the supply chain. This will help the industry continue its vital role in feeding the nation and ensure our dairy farmers can continue to be competitive in the future.

Scottish Rural Economy Secretary, Fergus Ewing, said,

I encourage all dairy farmers, processors and their representatives to take part in this consultation and ensure that their voices are heard on this matter.

Milk prices can vary and are often changed at short notice for a variety of reasons which can cause major issues for farmers in Scotland and across the UK.

It is vital that we look at any opportunity to address any potential imbalance that exists between buyers and producers and bring our supply chains closer together.

Welsh Government Rural Affairs Minister, Lesley Griffiths, said:

The proposals we are consulting on today aim to ensure our dairy farmers get the fair price for their high quality produce they deserve and have fairer conditions for their milk contracts. I urge the sector, farmers and anyone with an interest to get involved and have their say.

Today's consultation is just the latest action we are taking to support the sector during the challenging times of this pandemic. We will continue to work with the sector during these unprecedented times, so together we can ensure a resilient future for our Welsh dairy industry.

Northern Ireland Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Edwin Poots MLA, said:

I am committed to raising the issue of fairness for dairy farmers in the marketplace in the strongest possible terms. I am pleased that Northern Ireland stakeholders will have the opportunity to take part in this UK-wide consultation and I strongly encourage all Northern Ireland stakeholders to respond accordingly.

Today's announcement is the latest action from UK governments to support dairy farmers, following the [Dairy Response Fund in England](#), which [opened for applications](#) on Thursday 18 June and [a similar support scheme in Wales](#) last month, which enables eligible English and Welsh dairy farmers to access up to £10,000 each to help them overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

This builds on recent action to [temporarily relax some elements of UK competition law](#) to allow suppliers, retailers and logistics providers in the dairy industry to work more closely together on some of the challenges they are facing.

RWM partners with the British Geological Survey

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a leading global geological survey and the UK's national geoscience agency, and RWM work together to provide expertise, research and information to support the UK's geological disposal programme.

The two UK government organisations today jointly published a five-year agreement setting out the framework for collaborative work at strategic, technical and operational levels. This will fulfil a key role in helping us understand and assess the rocks below the surface and their suitability for a UK Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) as we move through the process of finding a suitable site and a willing host community.

A GDF is a highly-engineered network of vaults and tunnels built into the rock many hundreds of metres underground designed to safely and permanently dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

The MoU sets out ways of working between RWM and BGS, and describes key principles and areas for collaboration, including strategic planning, site characterisation, stakeholder engagement, research, training, communications, and information exchange.

PDF, 197KB, 7 pages

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This partnership between these two independent organisations will enable world-leading UK applied research in environmental geosciences to contribute towards delivering a GDF.

Karen Wheeler, Chief Executive of RWM said,

Delivering a Geological Disposal Facility to permanently deal with UK's higher-activity radioactive waste is the right thing to do. BGS will play a key role in ensuring we receive expert impartial advice as we work on this vital national programme. Their expertise in UK geoscience is unparalleled and crucially they will help us fully understand the rocks below the surface and their suitability for a GDF.

Dr. Karen Hanghøj, Director of BGS said,

The agreement with RWM will help to maintain BGS's impartiality whilst enabling us to provide the high-quality and objective geoscientific knowledge and expertise required for the delivery of a UK Geological Disposal Facility. BGS research will help to progress the UK's understanding about the rocks below its surface, and their suitability for hosting a GDF, as the importance of finding environmentally sound solutions for the issue of radioactive waste disposal grows. It's also important that communities and their representatives understand how geoscience plays a role in the process of evaluating sites for suitability, and this will form part of our work.

[Farmers invited to shape new Environmental Land Management scheme](#)

Farmers and interested parties throughout England will have the chance to shape the future of Environmental Land Management (ELM) by taking part in one of six upcoming online webinars.

Following industry feedback on the disruption caused to the farming community by the coronavirus outbreak in the UK, the government paused the national conversation launched by Environment Secretary George Eustice earlier this year at the NFU conference.

Six webinars have now been set up to ensure that farmers and others in isolation continue to have the opportunity to share their views on the proposed design of three "tiers" of entry, which will enable all farmers and land managers to participate in the new scheme at the right level, and help shape the new scheme.

While farmers are encouraged to sign up to and attend a webinar if they can, [a policy discussion document on Citizen Space](#) provides those who can't attend with the opportunity to respond to the new policy ideas. Their views, experiences and advice will help to ensure the new scheme is co-designed with farmers across the country and does not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Farming Minister, Victoria Prentis, said,

I very much look forward to working with farmers and land managers across the country to develop the future scheme and discuss how it will work on the ground.

Many farmers and land managers are already contributing directly to the co-design of ELM by participating in the ongoing tests and trials and they're doing great work to explore how the building blocks of the future scheme are put together.

This conversation is a chance for farmers and land managers to have their say and help shape our future approach to farming alongside caring for the environment. I would encourage all those interested to sign up to an event and have their voice heard.

Those interested in attending any event can [sign up via Eventbrite](#), with a full list of the available dates below:

- Wednesday, 1 July – 12:00-1:30 pm
- Tuesday, 7 July – 6:00-7:30 pm
- Thursday, 16 July – 8:30-10:00 am
- Thursday, 23 July – 12:00-1:30 pm
- Tuesday, 28 July – 8:30-10:00 am
- Thursday, 30 July – 6:00-7:30 pm

Farmers looking to get involved in the webinars should also [follow Defra on Facebook](#), as all followers will be notified of the links to sign up to webinars within the events on our page.

The policy document has remained available for review online since it was launched in February. Individuals and organisations that have already submitted a response will also be given the opportunity to review or reconsider this and resubmit their response to the document within the new timeframe for the conversation.

The deadline to share views on the document setting out policy ideas for the new scheme is 31 July 2020.

[Computer traders banned for selling counterfeit goods](#)

Alan Gould (53) and Kelley Stewart (48) are each banned for 12 years from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

The pair, both from Manchester, were directors of GEN-X IT LTD, a company incorporated in 2002 and sold computer hardware from premises in Dark Lane, Ardwick, Manchester.

Following complaints of trademark infringements, however, in 2007 the

directors signed undertakings on behalf of all parties connected to GEN-X IT that they wouldn't deal with counterfeit products that hadn't been manufactured by Cisco or a licensed manufacturer.

By January 2016, GEN-X IT had entered into insolvency proceedings when it was uncovered that the computer trader had for three years bought and sold an estimated 55,000 counterfeit computer products that infringed on the intellectual property rights of Cisco. This was in breach of the undertakings they had previously signed.

Further investigations confirmed that Cisco had established that between January 2013 and January 2016 GEN-X IT bought the Cisco-branded products from a third party, who in-turn had purchased the counterfeit products from China. But these products were not authorised to be sold in the European Economic Area.

And in 2018 Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart accepted that they had infringed Cisco's trade marks and agreed to pay the vendor a seven-figure settlement penalty.

On 19 May 2020, the Secretary of State accepted disqualification undertakings from Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart after they did not dispute that they had caused or allowed GEN-X IT to trade with a lack of commercial probity. Their bans came into effect on 8 June 2020,

Neil Sheridan, Head of Global Investigations for Cisco's Brand Protection team, said:

We are grateful to the Insolvency Service for their perseverance in this case, the outcome of which should be a warning to anyone trading in counterfeit products of any sort.

We are committed to tackling both individuals and organisations that recklessly trade in counterfeit Cisco products and create significant risk to critical network infrastructure.

Rob Clarke, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Both Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart were fully aware GEN-X IT was importing and selling computer products that infringed on Cisco's intellectual property rights, which was a flagrant breach of an undertaking promising they would stop.

Their conduct fell well short of what is expected of company directors. Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart's substantial disqualifications should serve as a stark warning to those who seek to gain a corporate advantage illegitimately that they could face a lengthy ban from limited liability trading.

Alan Gould is from Manchester and his date of birth is August 1967.

Kelley Stewart is from Manchester and her date of birth is May 1972.

GEN-X IT LTD (Company number: 04480097).

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. [Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a range of restrictions.](#)

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

[Special session on Ukraine at the Annual Security Review Conference: UK statement](#)

Thank you Mr Secretary General. I would like to thank the Albanian Chairmanship for organising this special session on the security situation in Ukraine. I would also like to thank the panel for their valuable insights. I share many of the concerns expressed by our partners, including the EU, that have been highlighted today.

The UK is an ally and friend of Ukraine and we fully support their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence within their internationally recognised borders and their waters. Since 2014, in violation of OSCE principles and commitments, the Russian Federation has sent troops to Crimea, attempted to illegally annex sovereign Ukrainian territory and sought to destabilise Ukraine by instigating and fuelling conflict in Donbas. Sadly, in the six years since the conflict in Donbas began, approximately 13,000 people have lost their lives, including nearly 3,500 civilians. The humanitarian situation affects 3.5 million people who are mostly vulnerable, including elderly civilians and children.

I would like to pay tribute to Ms Lubrani and all the UN staff working to support Ukraine in mitigating the humanitarian effects of the conflict. I commend the excellent work of the ICRC in Ukraine, under the able leadership of Ms Gillette, in trying to alleviate the situation of some of those who are most vulnerable in this conflict. I would also like to pay tribute to the many other humanitarian organisations that have faced unnecessary access restrictions this year due to the Russia-backed armed formations. Russia bears a heavy responsibility for the ongoing loss of life and devastation to civilian lives. They must use their influence, with the armed formations they back, to respect the ceasefire, protect critical infrastructure and to make progress on humanitarian demining.

I wish to thank Ambassador Cevik and his dedicated team of SMM monitors for their factual, impartial reporting of the situation in eastern Ukraine. The SMM operates in challenging circumstances and the UK is deeply concerned by continued restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement, in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations, as well as incidents that threaten the safety of monitors.

The situation has been made worse by the Russia-backed armed formations' use of COVID-19 as a pretext to restrict the Mission's ability to cross the Line of Contact and between non-government controlled Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This has effectively divided the Mission into three parts, in violation of its mandate to operate as a single, cohesive Mission throughout Ukraine. These restrictions on the SMM are unacceptable and we call on Russia to play its crucial role in ensuring that the SMM has full, safe and unhindered access in accordance with their mandate.

We also thank Ambassador Grau and her team for their important work in the Trilateral Contact Group; you continue to have our full support. The UK is a firm supporter of the Minsk agreements and the Normandy Format. We urge all sides to fully implement their obligations under the agreements and work urgently to achieve a full and sustainable ceasefire. This is fundamental to any further progress towards peace in eastern Ukraine.

Unfortunately, Russia has repeatedly failed to meet their obligations that are essential in bringing peace to eastern Ukraine. Since the last Normandy Summit, ceasefire violations have continued along the Line of Contact, including the use of heavy artillery, resulting in further casualties. We consistently see SMM reporting of sophisticated Russian equipment, such as the Zhitel jamming device. SMM Long Range UAVs continue to observe military-type trucks travelling on dirt track roads between the border and the Manych holding site in non-government controlled areas on no fewer than seven occasions. These are just a few examples. Russia could use its considerable influence on the Russia-backed armed formations to ensure they comply with the Minsk agreement commitments. Instead it fuels the conflict by supplying them with weapons and personnel.

The situation in Crimea remains of grave concern. Since its illegal annexation in 2014, which the UK does not and will not accept, Russia has focused on militarising the peninsula, undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine and threatening the security of the wider region. Russia has increased its military personnel on the ground, including through the illegal conscription of at least 21,000 Crimean people. It has deployed a multi-layered air, naval and ballistic missile defence system in the peninsula. The Black Sea Fleet has strengthened its coastal missile brigades with BAL and BASTION systems, capable of destroying targets at sea and on land. The worrying reports of closure of parts of the Black Sea near the Crimea Peninsula, for the purpose of combat training and military exercises, impede navigation and undermine regional security.

Finally, I'd like to thank Ambassador Herasymenko for sharing his insights on the challenges faced not just by his own country, but also by the entire OSCE community, stemming from Russia's ongoing violation of OSCE principles and

commitments in Ukraine. We stand united with Ukraine in calling out unacceptable Russian aggression against sovereign Ukrainian territory and its people. We call on Russia to cease its financial and military support to armed formations in eastern Ukraine, implement the Minsk agreements and end its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. The international community will not be silenced on these issues. The Ukrainian people deserve peace. Thank you Mr Secretary General.