

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Agriculture Bill.

This Bill will allow ambitious new land management schemes to be introduced in England, based on the principle of public money for public goods. This means that farmers and land managers who protect our environment, improve animal welfare and produce high quality food in a more sustainable way can be rewarded. The Bill will help farmers to stay competitive, with measures to increase productivity and to invest in new technology. I am pleased that transparency in the supply chain will also be improved to help food producers strengthen their position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return from the marketplace.

British consumers want high welfare produce, and if our trading partners want to break into the UK market, they should expect to meet those standards. The manifesto I stood on was clear that in all trade negotiations, our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards will not be compromised. The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any deals live up to the values of our farmers and consumers.

I am pleased that all food coming into this country will be required to meet existing import requirements. I know that at the end of the transition period the Withdrawal Act will convert all EU standards into domestic law. This includes a ban on using artificial growth hormones in both domestic and imported products and nothing apart from potable water may be used to clean chicken carcasses. Any changes to these standards would have to come before parliament.

The Government has committed to a serious and rapid examination of what could be done through labelling in the UK market to promote high standards and high welfare goods. Any scheme could not be devised until we have completed the transition period and would need to recognise World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**