



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**LONDON SW1A 0AA**

The Rt. Hon. George Eustice MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square  
LONDON  
SW1P 3JR

Our Ref: CL1385

13<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Secretary of State

**Re: Coronavirus Impact on Farmers**

Farmers across West Dorset and the whole United Kingdom are seriously struggling in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. I have numerous farmers fearing insolvency in the coming weeks and I must urge you to take decisive action now. Our farmers in the United Kingdom provide 60% of the nation's food and without immediate action there will be little of a farming sector left when we emerge from this crisis.

Following a waterlogged winter that has badly effected our farmers in all sectors, the agricultural industry was already on its knees even before the impact of coronavirus. Following on from my previous correspondence with the Department, I am now greatly concerned that without decisive action, we will see the breakdown of the food supply chain. All our farmers and producers are now experiencing significant price and demand volatility, due to the lockdown causing irregular retail patterns and the collapse of the foodservice market.

The dairy industry is particularly badly impacted at this moment. Milk processors are now unable to pay farmers, with payments being either cut or delayed. On multiple occasions, tankers simply haven't arrived to collect, forcing our farmers to dispose of thousands of litres of high-quality milk. I urge you to discuss with the Competition and Markets Authority how milk producers may be allowed work together to find solutions to this issue.

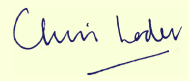
Meanwhile, British livestock farmers are being undercut by European meat imports found in major supermarkets. I hope you will do as much as possible to prioritise and market British meat produce over foreign imports at this critical time.

Whilst the Government has been extremely generous in its support for retail and hospitality businesses, I'm afraid this support has not filtered through the supply chain to farmers. I'm afraid farms are simply not adequately catered for in the current package of Government business

*Member of Parliament for West Dorset*

support. Much more must be done to bolster British agriculture during these turbulent times and to guarantee that this vital industry can continue to provide for the nation in the months and years to come.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Loder". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

**Chris Loder MP**

Member of Parliament for West Dorset