

# Thompson talks farming at PMQs

Owen Thompson the MP for Midlothian told the Prime Minister today that the trade deal the UK has agreed with Australia will put Scottish farming, animal welfare standards and Scotland's growing food industry at risk.

He says that the no-tariff deal will mean the UK market is flooded with lower standard meat imports from Australia which are mass produced. This will he claims be devastating for the Scottish farmers who meet higher production standards than is legally required in Australia.

At Prime Minister's Questions, Mr Thompson said many serious concerns have been raised by organisations such as the National Farmers Union Scotland and animal welfare charity the RSPCA.

Mr Thompson said that the government's own estimates suggest that the Australia deal will only boost GDP by 0.02 per cent, compared to a 4 per cent loss from Brexit.



Owen Thompson MP PHOTO ©UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor

In response Mr Johnson simply denied any trade opportunities with Europe had been lost as a result of Brexit.

Mr Thompson said: “The trade deal the UK Government struck with Australia is a betrayal of Scotland’s farmers and everyone who was assured that animal welfare standards would be maintained after Brexit. It enables cheap, low welfare meat to flood the UK market – meaning yet again Scotland suffers at the hands of poor Tory decisions.

“This smacks of sheer desperation from a Prime Minister who cares more for a timely photo opportunity than taking the time to get a decent deal for our farmers. By the UK Government’s own estimates it would take 200 deals like this to even come close to what we have lost by ending EU membership.

“Stakeholder after stakeholder has warned of the impact of signing up to this tariff free deal. Instead of representing their views, the Prime Minister simply brushed them aside and denied there was a problem.

“It is an absolute disgrace that the Prime Minister can act with such utter disregard for the impact of his actions on people’s jobs and lives. We know he has scant regard for the truth, but to claim we haven’t lost opportunities to trade with Europe though Brexit is simply astonishing. The facts don’t lie. In the first quarter of 2021, trade in goods with EU countries decreased by 23% compared with 2018, while with non-EU countries it fell by just 0.8%. This can’t be blamed on Covid19.

“The Prime Minister has been prepared to put Scottish jobs in peril for a shoddy deal, while losing our farmers massive trading opportunities with our nearest neighbours in Europe. It’s time he and his government answered for their actions.”



Boris Johnson MP Prime Minister, PHOTO ©UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor