



## Department for International Trade

Baroness Fairhead

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Dear Lady McIntosh,

I am writing to you in light of the discussion we had during Committee Stage of the Trade Bill regarding the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The UK has world leading standards of food safety and quality, backed by a rigorous legislative framework.

All EU food safety law is being transferred into UK law, in EU Exit SIs made under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018, to ensure a functioning statute book in time for EU exit on 29th March. Leaving the EU does not change our top priority which is to ensure that UK food remains safe. The Food Standard Agency (FSA) is already working hard to ensure that our world-class expertise in managing food incidents is maintained when the UK leaves the European Union.

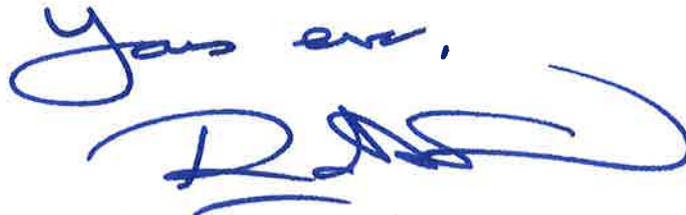
The Withdrawal Agreement allows the UK to participate in some EU bodies and agencies during an implementation period, the UK will continue to have access to relevant systems and databases as we do now, including RASFF.

As you are aware, the RASFF enables the management of food and feed safety risks, providing early alerts of health or food contamination issues across the EU. This is what currently enables the UK to respond quickly to serious risks to public health relating to food and animal feed. The FSA is already working hard to ensure we maintain this level of consumer protection when the UK leaves the European Union.

If an implementation period is not agreed, the UK aims to negotiate full access to the RASFF network. We believe it would be mutually beneficial for the EU and UK to continue this vital data-sharing on food safety. The UK is an active member of the RASFF network, regularly providing essential updates to member states. The UK is also a close neighbour and significant exporter to the EU food market. It is important for the EU, as well as for the UK, that this trading relationship can continue without compromising confidence in imported food.

I want to reassure you that the government's clear intention is to maintain the UK's reputation for high quality produce. However, to ensure that in any event we can maintain and improve upon the high standards of food safety and consumer protection in the UK, the FSA is strengthening and developing the incident management processes that it employs, developing a new Receipt and Management system which is on track to be ready by 29<sup>th</sup> March.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.



**Baroness Fairhead**

Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion

Department for International Trade