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Lord Callanan
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Dear Lord Fox,

I am writing to offer further explanation on two issues you raised during the Second Reading of the UK Internal Market Bill on 20 October. These are in relation to professional qualifications, and about the possibility that without this Bill, a Welsh lamb producer could end up unable to sell their lamb as easily.

Firstly, in relation to professional qualifications, I would like to expand further my statement around the impact of the provisions in Part 3 of the Bill. The aim of Part 3 is to ensure that future development in the regulation of professions does not result in unnecessary barriers for professionals qualified in the UK.

For some professions, such as teaching, there are already differences in regulation in different parts of the UK, making it necessary for professionals who wish to practise in a different part of the UK to rely on rules allowing professionals from other parts of the UK to be admitted to the profession. Other professions are currently regulated on a UK-wide basis, allowing professionals to practise in all parts of the UK.

Most healthcare professions, including doctors of medicine and nurses, are currently regulated on a UK-wide basis. Since standards of qualification and training required are set by the relevant regulator consistently for the whole of the UK, doctors and nurses are normally able to move and practise throughout the UK.

However, it should be noted that the regulation of healthcare professions, including doctors and nurses, is generally within the devolved competence of Northern Ireland. Without EU law imposing minimum training standards for these professions, Northern Ireland could in future choose to regulate these professions separately and impose different qualification or experience requirements than the rest of the UK, potentially making it more difficult for professionals qualified elsewhere in the UK to practise there.

So, while it is currently possible for doctors and nurses to move across all parts of the UK without needing to requalify, this might no longer be the case in the future, should regulations around professional qualifications be changed.

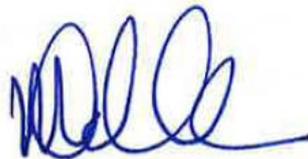
Part 3 of the Bill therefore puts in place an intra-UK system of recognition that will ensure that professionals, including doctors and nurses, maintain the ability to practise across the whole of the UK in the future.

Turning to the question around lamb, at present Welsh lamb producers are able to sell their produce across the UK and it is exactly this freedom to be able to trade across the UK that this new legislation will protect.

Following the transition period, however, there is a risk that future divergence in regulation in different parts of the UK could emerge, which would disrupt these historically successful and important trading relationships. The Market Access Principle that the UK Internal Market introduces will ensure that any future regulatory divergence would not impact negatively upon, or introduce friction into, existing trading practices.

Welsh lamb producers can thus remain confident that the market access they currently enjoy will continue.

I hope this clarifies both your questions and I look forward to further discussions of this Bill during its passage.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lord Callanan