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The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
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Ms Stella Kyriakides
EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
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8 February 2020

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

Trade in live bivalve molluscs from GB to EU for purification in the EU

Thank you for sighting UK officials on the letter of 3 February from Bernard Van Goethem of the Commission Services to EU Chief Veterinary Officers. The letter addressed imports into the EU from Great Britain of live, bivalve molluscs for depuration from waters classified as 'Class B'. It set out the view that this trade is not permitted.

This trade, which goes both ways, has been in place for many years. This development is therefore of grave concern to the UK and businesses that rely on this trade.

We accept that there is a distinction between molluscs which are already fit for human consumption and those that require purification beforehand. The point is that the animals in question are alive, destined for further treatment. The parallel might be with livestock as they leave the farm gate.

The UK's high status for shellfish health is one of the reasons that EU businesses turn to our farms. We implement and enforce high standards and have excellent traceability systems in place.

We are surprised that the Commission has changed its position, and in our view this is inconsistent with earlier statements provided to us by Commission Services. On 27 September 2019 the Commission Services provided advice to the UK Chief Veterinary Officer that when these animals are exported to the EU for purification, they can be certified with the model Export Health Certificate set out in Part A of Annex IV to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008. The Commission Services advised that there was no need to provide supplementary documentation to assist with traceability to the waters of origin and we advised our industry accordingly, stating that the trade could continue. This is therefore unexpected and difficult news for an industry that relies on trade between the UK and EU.

We also note a parallel concern about advice we have received but do not share about not being able to transport live bivalve molluscs for human consumption in viviers.

We can see no scientific or technical justification for this change and the news was conveyed to us rather casually and after the event. This is not in the collaborative and cooperative spirit in which we wish to work together going forward.

We are seeking urgent resolution of this matter, and we would welcome a meeting to discuss this. We are not averse to providing additional reassurances to demonstrate shellfish health within reason, but this must recognise the existing high standards and history of trade between us.



RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP