



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

DAIRY ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Inquiry on skills and labour in the dairy industry

The UK dairy industry provides a myriad of jobs from farm to fridge across the country. From farming to processing and manufacturing, from research to marketing and much more, there is something in the dairy sector for everyone.

As the UK gets ready to write a new chapter of its history, we must help the dairy industry strengthen its position as an attractive industry, with opportunities for all to build a successful and rewarding career.

Therefore, the Dairy APPG is keen to hear from dairy experts to get a better understanding of how it can support the sector going forward. The APPG held a first session on 29th March with evidence from Cotteswold Dairy, Arla Foods, the NFU and the RABDF.

Keys messages from the session include:

- Promoting the dairy industry as a career-rich sector;
- Maintaining access to skilled and unskilled EU labour;
- Getting farmers into schools and school children onto farms to foster dialogue;
- Government support to promote vocation awards celebrating British values, skills and artisanship;
- Unlocking funding to support the development of SMEs.

Questions for Robert Goodwill MP, Minister for Immigration

What will be the impact of Brexit on migrant labour? Does the Government have post-Brexit immigration policy for EU nationals?

The dairy industry has a significant number of EU nationals in its workforce throughout the supply chain from farm to fridge. This includes farm staff, processing staff, admin staff, marketing, R&D, haulage, etc... What does the future hold for EU nationals currently living and working in the UK post-Brexit?

Will there be any restrictions of movement for EU nationals wishing to move to the UK and work in the dairy industry?

Will the Government encourage or discourage the movement of EU labour towards the UK?
How will Brexit impact on access to seasonal workers in agriculture?

Evidence given by dairy farmers and dairy processors shows there is a significant issue when it comes to recruiting staff, especially unskilled staff. Hiring managers struggle to receive any applications for unskilled jobs from UK citizens and often receive quality applications from EU nationals who are willing to work hard, often with unsociable hours. Should access to EU labour be restricted post-Brexit, what will the Government do to support the industry and help mitigate the loss of staff?

The dairy industry also relies on permanent staff, especially in processing. A Dairy UK labour survey which returned responses from companies responsible for processing 10bn litres of milk showed that:

- Dependence on non UK born labour varies greatly between the companies. At one extreme one small company reported 73% dependence and one major national player 21%;
- Reliance on non UK born labour is consistent throughout the industry regardless of scale;
- On average non UK born accounts for around 11% of the processing workforce.

How will Brexit impact on access to EU nationals in processing?

The industry also raised a number of issues specific to the Island of Ireland where the free movement of people and raw materials are essential to the survival of the dairy sector. What plans does the Government have for Northern Ireland and can they guarantee that the dairy industry will not be affected by restrictions of movement?

What are the challenges/opportunities around education exports (incoming foreign students + outgoing UK students) for the dairy industry in the context of Brexit?

How can the UK Government help support the dairy industry and what should the Government do to help the industry attract, recruit, train and retain quality people?
