

## Business

# UK farmers face double uncertainty with Brexit and subsidy overhaul

## Brexit deal perceived as a damage-limiting exercise

**CHRISTS HOSPITAL, UK:** David Exwood's glossy, chestnut-brown Sussex cattle are brought in during the winter months and, apart from the bellowing that comes from their barns, his 1,000 hectare farm is quiet. But while the inaction on his farm, near Horsham, southeast England, is typical of many in the colder months, it belies tensions across British agriculture as the sector braces for the New Year.

"Brexit is just all about damage limitation, really," Exwood said just days away from Britain's departure from the European Union single market and customs union on December 31. "It's damaging our reputation as a country, our economy. Now I've just got to try and prevent it damaging my business."

Since Britons voted to leave the EU in 2016, farmers have had to contend with four years of uncertainty. Would tariffs be placed on goods exported to the bloc? What changes might be made to farming subsidies previously decided by Brussels through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Britain's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs answered some of those questions as Britain's trade deal with the EU was being finalized. The UK's £5 billion (\$6.8 billion, €5.6 billion) in animal exports to the continent would continue after Brussels said it had met the necessary animal health standards.

### Certainty and unknowns

Exwood, whose farm holds 600 cattle and 800

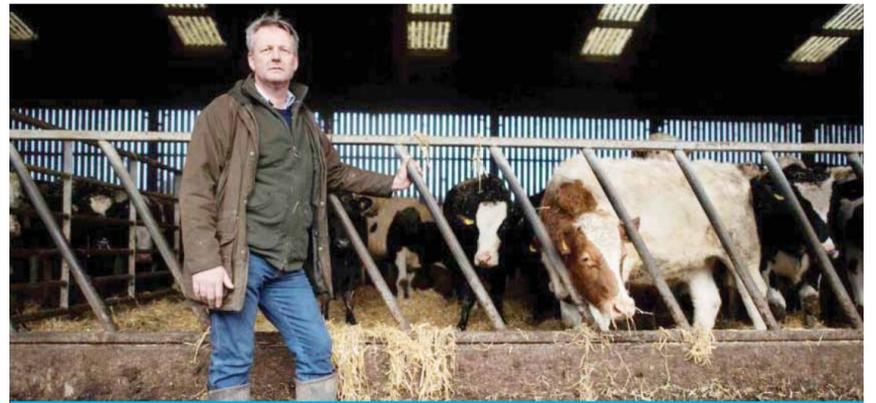
hectares of arable crops, has been better insulated against the prospect of a no-deal Brexit and the tariffs on livestock exports that would follow. His beef is sold in the UK. British sheep farmers, who sell almost a third of their meat to the EU, had warned the market would evaporate overnight if 50 per cent tariffs were imposed in the event of a "no-deal".

Despite greater certainty, there are still many unknowns. Britain has been granted "national listed status", allowing the continued export of meat, fish and dairy. That means exporters will require a health certificate signed by a recognised vet to continue trade after December 31. "We've prepared as much as we can," Exwood said.

"We know about the paperwork, we know about the extra cost, we know about the delays at the ports, but it's the things we don't know about that will probably do the most damage."

Closer to home, UK farmers are grappling with changes to subsidies which have been laid out in the Environment Land Management Scheme. The government has called the change the most fundamental shift in UK farming policy for 50 years.

Under the scheme, CAP subsidies for areas of land farmed or numbers of livestock will be phased out by 2024 and removed completely in 2028 — in favor of more environmentally friendly payments. Farmers will be rewarded for restoring natural wildlife habitats to their farms, improving animal welfare and



Farmer David Exwood, whose beef is sold in the UK, has been better insulated following a Brexit deal. — AFP

cutting pesticides, among other conservation efforts.

Richard Benwell, a former government advisor on environmental policy and chief executive of the Wildlife and Countryside Link coalition, said the decision to use the money from subsidies for land management was "entirely the right one".

The new policy was aimed at "rewarding the farm-

ers who do the most for nature", he said. Across England, changes to farms like lower stocking of cows and sheep, and more trees and hedgerows grown alongside crops are expected post-Brexit. "The overall impression will be one where, instead of intensifying production in farmed areas, we integrate nature better in the farmed environment." — AFP

## LuLu Hypermarket launches Choco Week 2020

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the leading regional retailer, has launched its enticing 'Choco Week' promotion to celebrate the upcoming holidays of Christmas and New Year. The Choco Week 2020 festival that launched on 23 December at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in the country, showcases chocolates in an array of delectable forms. The promotion is supported by the Kuwait representatives of global food and confectionary brands, Nestle and Mars. All programs were conducted with participants following coronavirus protocols and regulations.

Marking the launch event at the Al-Qurain outlet on 23 December, and at the Al-Rai outlet on 24 December, was the cutting of a 10-meter long cake that was witnessed and shared by an excited gathering of shoppers at both venues.

Top officials from LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait, along with management at Nestle Kuwait, jointly inaugurated the cake-cutting ceremony at the Al-Qurain outlet, while officials from LuLu and representatives of Gulf Trading and Refrigeration Co, the sponsors of Mars in Kuwait, were on hand at the ceremony in Al-Rai branch.

Bringing the festival spirit to the launch event was a visit from Santa Claus to distribute gifts and chocolates to the young visitors at its outlets. Another highlight of the ceremony, again in keeping with the Xmas theme, was a Santa Claus fancy dress competition for kids organized on 24 December at the Al-Rai outlet.

Kids in various red-suited, pot-bellied, bearded versions of Santa drew loud applause from onlookers. Winners and participants in the fancy dress competition were awarded main and consolation prizes by LuLu management. With a customer-centric focus and a commitment to



enhance the shopping experience for patrons, LuLu Hypermarket holds various promotions to celebrate popular festivals throughout the year. The Choco Week promotion, which celebrates the upcoming

holiday season of Xmas and New Year will bring promotions for 2020 to a befitting close, with promises of even more exciting promotions and value propositions in the year ahead.

## Channel logjam eases for truckers blocked in Britain

**CALAIS, France:** More than a thousand lorries arrived at the French port of Calais on Friday as authorities scrambled to ease a bottleneck in Britain, where thousands of drivers have been stuck for days after France imposed tougher coronavirus rules.

The port remained open despite the Christmas holiday so that ferries as well as the trains bringing trucks through the Channel Tunnel could operate—but only for trips from Britain to France.

"Yesterday, we had 1,000 lorries cross over from Dover. As of 6:00 pm (1700 GMT) we had 1,400 lorries from Britain," Benoit Rochet, head of the Calais port operator, said. "At this rate, the situation should be completely taken care of by tomorrow," he said.

Getlink, the Eurotunnel operator, said more than 1,000 trucks had transited the tunnel in both directions by 5:00 pm, two thirds of which had travelled from England to France. Most of the drivers headed straight for the highway, according to an AFP journalist at the scene.

Truckers were stranded in southeast England after France halted all travel from Britain on Sunday for 48 hours in a bid to prevent a new strain of coronavirus, which experts fear to be more contagious, from reaching its shores. The move created a



Trucks depart for England via the Channel Tunnel at the port of Calais on Friday. —AFP

massive logjam with up to 10,000 trucks parked along highways as well as on the runway of the Manston airfield, according to EU transport commissioner Adina Vaelean, who criticized the French government's decision.

Drivers fumed at having to spend Christmas in their cabs away from their families with only minimal toilet facilities because they were unable to get the Covid-19 tests that must be negative to be allowed into France. More than 10,000 tests had been carried out by Friday afternoon, of which 24 were positive, according to the British authorities.

Twenty-five French firefighters were again dispatched to Dover on Friday to

help carry out tests, following a first team sent over Thursday. France's Transport Minister Jean-Baptiste Djebbari tweeted that more than 1,000 Christmas Eve meals had also been sent to stranded drivers, distributed with the help of French Red Cross volunteers.

Britain's defense ministry said Friday that an additional 800 personnel had been deployed on top of 300 already on site to step up coronavirus tests for drivers and "help clear the backlog of vehicles." "There is a need for increased testing as more vehicles continue to arrive every hour," the ministry said on Twitter, adding that the teams would also deliver food and water to drivers waiting to return home. —AFP

## ABK announces winners of the 'Talabat' draw

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the names of the 18 winners for the month of December who won their 'spend

back' on Talabat, when paying with their ABK credit or prepaid cards. The draw took place on the 10th December 2020, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The second and final draw will take place on the 7th January, 2021. All credit and prepaid cardholders are eligible to participate provided they have a minimum spend of KD 50 per month.

The lucky winners are:

Nasser Bader Almuhabeb	Ali Abdulrahman AlHuwail
Ahmad Ali Bahman	Moath Yousef AlSanea
Khaled Ghaith AlGhaith	Abdulaziz Abdulrasool AlArbash
Fatemah Jamal AlQazweeni	AlAnoud Khaled AlDaress
Ahmad Musaed AlAmeeri	Fahad Abdulaziz AlAbdulrazzaq
Talal Mubarak Salem	Ahmad Hamed BoAbbas
Raya Yahya AlJanabi	Ahmad Mahmoud Abdelaleem
Ali Abdullah AlMuzaini	Sherif Mohammad AlBehairy
Ahmad Abdullah AlShatti	Abdulkareem Jamal AlMulla

## What we know on post-Brexit trade pact

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union and Britain on Thursday agreed a post-Brexit trade deal after almost ten months of tortuous negotiations to govern ties when the UK exits the single market.

Here is what we know so far about the 2,000-page accord—still yet to be published—that covers areas from fishing to future competition after December 31.

### Tariffs

The deal means there will be no tariffs or quotas on goods produced in the UK and EU moving between the two sides. British exports still have to comply with EU health and safety standards and there are strict rules governing products made with parts originating outside the EU or UK.

London has hailed the lack of tariffs as a major positive of the deal—but it simply helps maintain part of the benefits Britain already enjoyed as a member of the bloc.

### Fishing

Future access for EU fisherman to Britain's rich water was one of the thorniest—and politically combustible—issues, and the last piece of the puzzle to fall into place before the deal could be announced. Britain had insisted it wanted to take back full control of its waters while EU coastal states sought to guarantee their fleets could keep fishing in UK waters.

In the end the two sides reached a hard fought compromise that will see EU boats gradually relinquish 25 per cent of their current quotas during a five-and-a-half year transition period. After that there will be annual negotiations on the amount of fish EU vessels can take from British waters—and if Brussels isn't happy it can impose economic measures against the UK.

### Level playing field

Another major stumbling block was the so-called "level playing field" regulations that the EU insisted on to prevent British firms having an advantage over European rivals if London lowers standards in future, or subsidizes industries. The UK had fought hard to avoid having a system put in place that could see Brussels able to force it to follow its rules on such issues as environmental or labor regulations and state aid. But the UK government admitted the deal allowed for either side to impose "countermeasures if they believe they are being damaged" subject to arbitration.

### Customs

Britain will leave the EU's customs union along with the single market at the end of the year, meaning that businesses face new red tape for imports and exports across the Channel. The UK said the agreement allows for the recognition of "trusted trader" schemes that could cut bureaucracy on both sides, but it is yet to be seen how widely this can be applied.

### Security

The EU says the agreement "establishes a new framework for law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal and civil law matters". London said the deal will see the two continue to share DNA, fingerprint and passenger details and see them cooperate through the EU's Europol. Brussels says "security cooperation can be suspended in case of violations by the UK of its commitment for continued adherence to the European Convention of Human Rights".

### 'Big changes'

Despite the agreement, both sides warn that "big changes" are coming from January 1 for people and businesses around Europe. Citizens of the UK and EU will no longer enjoy free movement to live and work between the two. "The free movement of persons, goods, services and capital between the UK and the EU will end," Brussels said. —AFP