



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Nobel House 17 Smith Square London SW1P 3JR	Rt Hon David Davis MP Secretary of State for Exiting the EU 9 Downing Street Whitehall London SW1A 2AG	Rt Hon Liam Fox MP Secretary of State for International Trade King Charles Street Whitehall London SW1A 2AH
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5 July 2018

Dear Michael, David and Liam,

We have written to you on a number of occasions over the past year spelling out the vital importance to Scottish holders in maintaining our Protected Food Names and other Geographical Indications following Brexit.

The lack of clarity being shown by the UK Government, coupled with the frequency in which the media is reporting apparent future trade deals being discussed where GIs are either an afterthought or not deemed to be important is creating some real concerns from many stakeholders across Scotland. Indeed, the recent evidence provided by Mr Gove at the Rural Economy Committee of the Scottish Parliament and reference to “forms of protection” rather than confirming a GI system has only added to this lack of clarity on the issue. The comment during the evidence session that the rest of the EU hold many, many more GIs than the UK, while factually true, masks the value of our products holding GI status such as Scottish Farmed Salmon, Scotch Beef and Scotch Whisky. We write to the three of you because it is not clear where, within or between your departments, the problem truly lies. We look to you to put your differences aside and act for the benefit of Scotland’s businesses.

The time is right for us to see some concrete assurances from the UK Government that not only do you consider GIs and protection of our world-renowned produce of great importance and will seek to continue the protection offered by holding the status, but that the UK Government will give them their rightful place at the forefront of future trade negotiations. Over recent months my officials have queried the fact that the GI provisions were still flagged as “on-going discussions” in the draft Withdrawal Agreement and have been assured that this should not be interpreted as disagreement – simply that agreement had not yet been reached yet. That position has never been satisfactory for us or our stakeholders and requires to be addressed urgently. More recently, we hear suggestions that the difficulty over these provisions is that, in requiring continued recognition in the UK for existing EU GIs, they stray beyond what is necessary for withdrawal from the EU into what might be more appropriate for a future economic partnership. However, that argument does not seem to have been applied to the other intellectual property related provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement.



We need you to either agree to the provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement, and resolve this unnecessary dispute, or be very much clearer about what your objections to the provisions are really based on.

Your Government has said on many occasions that the future trade policy of the UK must reflect the needs of all parts of the UK and that it will take an inclusive approach to the development of policy and future trade agreements. For Scotland, the inclusion of GIs in trade deals is not only a need, but a pre-requisite; after all we are home to some of the highest value GIs in Europe.

Indeed, a UK Government consultation paper last October '*Preparing for our future UK trade policy*' specifically said that devolved administrations, legislatures and others "*must have the opportunity to engage with and contribute to our trade policy*", but there has been little or no sign since that your government are serious in this. I'm aware that officials from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland met their UK Government counterparts in London on 15 March to consider practical ways to improve the situation but as yet there has been no progress with this.

As you are more than aware, we have been critical of the failure by the UK Government to put forward any UK GIs for inclusion in the CETA deal with Canada and a lack of consultation around other deals such as Mercosur and Mexico. We are sure you will easily understand the Scottish Government's, and many of our stakeholders', concern in the current climate that the UK Government simply does not recognise the importance of GI status for business. Coupled with the absence of any reference whatsoever to food and drink from your recent statement on trade collaboration with Hong Kong, it gives the impression that your Government cares little for this sector.

We therefore urge you and your Government to set the record straight and commit to not only guaranteeing continued protection for current holders of GI status, but also providing the assurance being desperately sought by stakeholders that protection for our iconic products will be integral to future trade deals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Fergus Ewing'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Fergus' and the last name 'Ewing' clearly distinguishable.

FERGUS EWING