

Food Ethics Council, UK

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Two-thirds of UK public agree that the UK should only import meat and dairy IF they meet equivalent UK standards

The UK public overwhelmingly agree they only want meat and dairy imports into the UK if they are high quality.

A survey released today shows that two-thirds (66%) of the UK public want future meat and dairy imports to be at least as high quality as those produced in the UK. In contrast, a mere 3% of respondents said that the UK should import meat and dairy regardless of its quality.

The Yonder (formerly Populus) poll, commissioned by Eating Better, the Food Ethics Council and Hubbub, interviewed a representative sample of 2,095 people in the UK. Respondents were asked about a range of questions relating to eating meat and dairy, livestock production and trade.

Questions are increasingly being asked of the UK government and Devolved Administrations about what food the UK should or should not import in the future, from where and under what conditions. The UK government has recently made concessions around the role of the Trade and Agriculture Commission, which is being placed on a full statutory footing and given a more active role in scrutinising trade deals.

Over three-quarters (77%) of those surveyed in September 2020 agreed that the government should assess future trade deals for their impact on human health and the environment. Questions remain as to whether concessions made by the UK government will include scrutiny on human health and environment concerns, which the vast majority of the UK public want to see.

In short, proposals by the UK government do not go far enough. With the Agriculture Bill in the later stages of Parliamentary ping-pong and with trade negotiations intensifying, now is the time for Parliamentarians to push for equivalence on agri-food standards.

Decisions taken in Westminster will define the future path for UK food and farming. We at the Food Ethics Council therefore want MPs to vote to keep the Lords Amendment 16B in the Agriculture Bill to include a “Duty to seek equivalence on agri-food standards in relation to future trade”.

Dan Crossley, Executive Director of the Food Ethics Council said:

“Parliamentarians should listen to the UK public. Our survey shows that an overwhelming majority want the government to ensure food imports are of high quality. We urge MPs to keep Amendment 16B in the Agriculture Bill and to enshrine good food standards in legislation. This is a golden opportunity to make changes to our legislation that will set the path for UK food and farming for decades to come.”

Simon Billing, Executive Director of Eating Better said:

“There is a seismic shift in public attitudes. People really care about where their meat comes from and under what conditions it’s produced. In the face of climate and ecological emergencies, leaving the EU should be the opportunity for the UK to raise its game, and at the very least not see our farmers undermined by imports of lower standards.”

(continued overleaf)

Key findings:

- Two-thirds (66%) of respondents believe the UK should import meat and dairy only if its quality is at least as high as that produced in the UK, while over one-quarter (26%) believe the UK should not import any meat and dairy
- Only 3% of respondents felt that the UK should import meat and dairy, no matter its quality
- Over three-quarters (77%) of those surveyed agreed that the Government should assess future trade deals for their impact on human health and the environment

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Notes to editors

The results of this part of the Yonder (formerly Populus) survey conducted on 21st-22nd September 2020 are available [here](#). The full Yonder survey results will be made available during the week commencing 9th November 2020.

Yonder conducted an online sample of 2,095 UK adults 18+ between 21st and 22nd September 2020. Data is weighted to be representative of the population of the UK. Targets for quotas and weights are taken from the National Readership Survey, a random probability F2F survey conducted annually with 34,000 adults. Yonder is a founder member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For further information see <http://www.britishpollingcouncil.org/>.

The Food Ethics Council (<http://www.foodethicscouncil.org>) is a UK-based charity whose mission is to accelerate the shift towards fair food systems that respect people, animals and the planet. It brings experts from across the food sector together and provides ethical tools & safe space for honest, meaningful dialogue. It challenges the status quo in food and farming and accepted ways of thinking. The Food Ethics Council also promotes 'in the round' ethical approaches and considered solutions that tackle root causes. Twitter [@FoodEthicsNews](#)

Eating Better (<https://www.eating-better.org>) is an alliance of over 60 civil society organisations. It accelerates action for less and better meat and dairy for health, environment, animal welfare and social justice. It inspires and equips people, business and government, so that we can all eat better. It wants to change the way meat and dairy is produced and consumed by driving progress, inspiring action and equipping people, and tracking change.

Hubbub (<https://www.hubbub.org.uk/>) is an award-winning charity that inspires ways of living that are good for the environment - disrupting the status quo to raise awareness, nudge behaviours and shape systems. Its aim is to revolutionise communications with the public about environmental issues - using everyday language and good design to make environmental actions desirable and tapping into things people are passionate about such as food, fashion, homes and neighbourhoods.

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