



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

DAIRY ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Inquiry on skills and labour in the dairy industry

APPG members	Simon Hoare MP, Baroness Byford, Tom Elliott MP
In attendance	Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Immigration
Secretariat	Caroline Leroux, Tim Brigstocke

Key messages from Session 2

- 1 Milk is often undervalued by consumers when it is an outstanding product of consistently high quality and should be promoted as such.
- 2 The Government is very much aware that the food and farming sector relies strongly on migrant labour for both skilled and unskilled jobs and wants to reassure the dairy industry that there will be no cliff edge post-Brexit.
- 3 After the referendum, there were some concerns that EU workers would stop coming to the UK due to uncertainty. However, figures from October to December 2016 show that this is not the case, especially for Romanian and Bulgarian workers. The strength of the UK economy and the availability of jobs make the country more appealing than other national economies which do not create as many jobs.
- 4 It is important to note that seasonal agricultural workers do not contribute to the net immigration targets. These targets only cover workers staying for 12+ months in the UK. Similarly, students leaving after graduation do not contribute to the net immigration targets.
- 5 The Government will launch a wide-ranging consultation in the summer and will ask all sectors to submit evidence on the role, the impact and the importance of migrant workers in each sector.
- 6 There are several issues that can influence the uptake of food and farming jobs, including access to housing, transportation and the work itself. A recurrent theme is the significant gap in dedication and motivation between local workers and foreign workers. It is often easier to hire foreign workers willing to do hard work with unsociable hours than local workers.
- 7 Linked to this issue is the question of reform of the welfare system.
- 8 At the moment, there is no control on EU migration. There are rules in place for non-EU migration. Post-Brexit, the Government will look at controls on migration from the EU to the UK.

Secretariat

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- 9 Some food and farming companies rely heavily on foreign workers, (e.g. Northern Ireland food processing sites). The Government wants EU workers currently living and working in the UK that they are still welcome and that freedom of movement is guaranteed for the next two years. However, it is important to take into account UK nationals leaving in the EU and therefore, the rights of both UK and EU nationals will be an important feature of the Brexit negotiations.
- 10 The APPG encouraged the Government to look at cross-department initiatives such as working closely with the Department of Education to raise awareness of food and farming jobs as careers of choice and increase the appeal of the careers with UK nationals.
- 11 The Minister noted the importance of the apprenticeship levy which incentivises training for companies of 250+ employees.
- 12 The Government is also keen to protect the Common Travel Area on the Island of Ireland.