



9 January 2018

As you debate the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement, we urge you to ensure that above all else, the UK avoids leaving the European Union (EU) without a deal, which would be disastrous for the rural economy.

We represent the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and the Tenant Farmers Association (TFA). The CLA is the membership organisation for rural landowners in England and Wales and the TFA is the representative body of tenant farmers seeking to support farmers who do not own the land on which they operate.

Brexit can be an opportunity for farmers, but this is reliant on having a sound trading relationship which suits both the UK and the EU. This relationship must be based on free and frictionless trade, which so many farmers and rural businesses depend on. Over 60% of food and drink exports from the UK went to EU markets in 2017 and a trading relationship under a no deal Brexit would at best, impose significant tariffs on exports, and at worst leaves us unable to trade at all with the EU, at least in the short term. This is a recipe for disaster for all farmers and ultimately will cause long-term damage to the rural communities and countryside of our nation.

As we leave the EU, the UK has the ability for the first time in decades to make independent decisions in a range of areas, including agricultural policy. This is a chance to produce better policies and outcomes that serve the interests of UK farmers, rural businesses, the wider economy and society. However, a no deal Brexit puts at risk this opportunity by placing significant barriers to trade and labour supply overnight, alongside the significant long-term uncertainty that would be created.

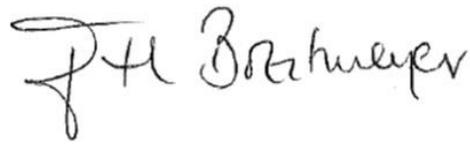
We remain committed to helping the rural economy make the most of the opportunities presented by Brexit but leaving without a deal at the end of March is not in the interests of farmers and rural businesses. It is likely to lead to the opposite outcome of a prosperous and vibrant rural economy that many of those who campaigned for leave argued we would see as the UK left the EU.

As you debate and vote in the coming days, please ensure that above all else the UK's departure from the EU is one that continues to ensure free and frictionless trade and avoids the damaging impacts of a no deal Brexit.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

George Dunn, Chief Executive TFA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Breitmeyer". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of each word being larger and more prominent.

Tim Breitmeyer, CLA President