

Kiwi lamb gives Brits bad taste

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A LEADING figure in Britain's National Farmers Union has disputed claims his organisation will not challenge New Zealand's privileged position in the European and United Kingdom sheep meat markets in the wake of Brexit.

At the end of his trip to the UK and Europe Beef + Lamb NZ chairman James Parsons last week said he detected no appetite from British farming leaders to use the UK's departure from the European Union to try to chop back quota rights first negotiated in the 1970s.

Tariff-free access for 228,000 tonnes of sheep meat underpins the EU 28 as NZ's single most valuable market and has all but shut competitors out of the UK where it accounts for 70% of imported sheep meat.

"We thought some of the farming leaders up here might have seen it (Brexit) as an opportunity to game things and look at renegotiating quota access," Parsons said.

When pressed on why UK farming leaders would take a view almost certainly contrary to their own rank-and-file members Parsons said those leaders had



ON OUR TERMS.
New Zealand lamb is okay when domestic supply is low but unrestrained access and increasing amounts of chilled rather than frozen meat concern British farmers, National Farmers Union livestock chairman Charles Sercombe says.
Photo: NFU

accepted they could not ask their own politicians to push for free-trade deals to open up new markets for them in the wake of Brexit while trying to shut out imports from NZ.

"They are very aware that if they take a very protectionist stance and want to put up borders then that could come back to bite them on the backside."

But NFU livestock chairman

locally produced lamb than was originally envisaged.

"I have no problem with NZ product at certain times of the year but will push for seasonality in any future arrangements, a fact James is more than aware of as it causes the most angst among UK sheep farmers."

The pressure from British farmers to cut NZ out of the action would only increase if they lost access to the single market.

"If we are shut out of Europe and are going to have to pay massive tariffs then we are not going to be very keen on NZ coming in tariff-free."

In last week's interview Parsons again reiterated claims by the industry since the Brexit vote in June that World Trade Organisation rules meant the existing quota was legally watertight.

Sercombe said while the claim could be argued over by lawyers it displayed a tin ear to the shifts in international trade relationships building in the wake of the vote.

Rival producers from Australia to Latin America were eyeing NZ's privileged position in the European and the UK sheep meat markets and they would inevitably come under threat as nations entered a phase of horse-

trading as new trade deals were negotiated.

"NZ will have to give a bit because there will be others that will be trying to take what you are doing."

“If we are shut out of Europe and are going to have to pay massive tariffs then we are not going to be very keen on NZ coming in tariff-free.”

Charles Sercombe
National Farmers Union

Asked about market share being snatched from under the nose of NZ exporters Parsons played down the threat.

"There is a possibility of that but at the same time there are a hundred other scenarios that could be way worse than that that we haven't even thought of yet... all of the sheep farming leaders that we have talked to want stability and we have not got any hint at all of opportunism in terms of trying to squeeze NZ out."

NZX Agri events

Friday 04/11/2016 – Saturday 05/11/2016
Marlborough A & P Show
Venue: Blenheim A & P Park, Maxwell Street, Redwoodtown, Blenheim
Website: www.marlboroughshow.co.nz

Wednesday 09/11/2016 – 11/11/2016
Canterbury A & P Show
Venue: ASB Agricultural Park, Christchurch
Contact: 0800 800 970 or info@theshow.co.nz
Website: www.theshow.co.nz

Friday 25/11/2016 – Saturday 26/11/2016
South Otago 150th A&P Show
Venue: Balclutha Showgrounds – Clutha Park, Glasgow Street, Balclutha
Contact: Heather Duffield scapp@unifone.net.nz or 03 418 1693
Website: www.showdayonline.com

Saturday 03/12/16
Whangarei A&P Show – One Epic Show Day
Venue: Barge Showgrounds, Manu Road, Whangarei
Time: 9.30am start
Website: www.whangareishow.co.nz

03/02/2017 – 05/02/2017
Waipara School Centennial
Registration: www.waiparaschoolcentennial.com
Phone: 03 314 7147 or 03 314 6822

Saturday 04/02/2017
Rangitikei Shearing Sports
Venue: Marton Memorial Hall, 397 Wellington Road, Marton
Time: 8.30am – 5pm

Thursday 09/02/2017 – Saturday 11/02/2017
Golden Shears World Shearing & Wool Handling Championships
Venue: Stadium Southland, Surrey Park Sports Centre, Isabella St, Invercargill

Saturday 28/01/2017
Otago Tafari A&P Show
Venue: Gordon Road, Mosgiel
Website: otagotafar.ap@xtra.co.nz

Friday 05/05/2017 – Saturday 06/05/2017
Field Days Marlborough
Venue: Weld Park, State Highway 1, Ward
Time: 10am

Should your important event be listed here?
Phone 0800 85 25 80 or email adcopy@nzx.com

Room for low season NZ exports

Colin Ley

BRITAIN will always have room for New Zealand lamb.

And exporters could expect a relatively easy time provided they focused on meeting the seasonal low points of domestic production and avoided periods of over-supply.

That was a key message to emerge from the SIAL Paris, a big international food fair attracting buyers from more than 200 countries.

The United Kingdom had long been a key outlet for New Zealand companies and would remain so despite Britain's uncertain trading future.

It faced short-term doubts because of the weakness of sterling and longer-term because of Brexit.

SIAL was the first chance for traders to compare notes on the UK's decision to leave the European Union.

The issue dominated the week, especially whether the exit process could be completed by mid-2019.

There were plenty in Britain who believe Brexit would take a lot longer, than forecast, including UK livestock export specialist Jean-Pierre Garnier. He said it took the UK seven years of talking to originally become a member of the EU and it could take even longer to leave.

Preaching a resolute business-as-usual message in his role as head of exports for beef, lamb and pork at the UK's Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Garnier said he believed UK farmers should concentrate on the present, adding British lamb producers should be looking to expand output by about 4% a year, growth he was confident could be absorbed through export increases.



WHO KNOWS: It took seven years of talks to get Britain into the European Community and getting it out of the European Union could take even longer, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board exports head Jean-Pierre Garnier says.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Andrea Leadsom, a leading Brexit campaigner, used SIAL to deliver a similar upbeat message, launching a government-backed action designed to grow British food and drink exports by £3 billion over the next five years.

The plan, which identified nine best potential markets across 18 countries, included the promise of new access opportunities for British lamb and beef in the United States and the same for beef and poultry in Japan and for pork in China.

Back on the question of NZ and its place in the EU market, the most enlightening comment of the week

came from Quality Meat Scotland marketing head Laurent Vernet who said "What we're seeing currently within the EU, including the UK, is a growing degree of nationalism in relation to meat generally but especially as regards lamb."

"While the farming unions in the UK are saying we need home-sourced lamb during the domestic season, therefore, we see exactly the same happening in France and other parts of Europe."

"I'm sure NZ lamb exporters understand that, however, and I'm also sure they'll find a way to operate effectively around these factors in the future."