

Ranil Jayawardena - [Farming Today](#)

*Things to note: Both Canada and Mexico are the top ten for agricultural exports*

When you look at the [um] trading figures with Canada and Mexico, Canada is one the largest world economies and Mexico is a very growing economy and is forecast to become the 7th largest by 2050. So these are significant markets we want to secure opportunities from.

Well I think [um] the opportunities for British farmers in Canada and Mexico are significant and [um] I am confident that the quality produce [um] of British farmers and other food producers across this country will be snapped up.

Well we know already that eh Australian meat eh only counts for a tiny fraction of imports eh into eh the UK. Less than 1% of Australian beef exports were sent to the British market accounting for 1% of all of our British eh consumption of eh beef. So that's a trickle, not flood. Actually the vast majority of Aussie meat goes to Asia where the prices are significantly higher and that's where we want to make sure there are new opportunities for British Farmers.

*Are you happy to undercut British farmers simply because it's not a great amount of meat at the moment?*

Well that's not true, we will not put Britain's high food standards at risk in any of our FTAs.

*But surely if you say you're going to give free access to Australian farmers that work with different environment and animal welfare standards, after say a 15 year period, how does that not undercut British standards.*

Well as I say, it's not true, we will not put British high food standards at risk in our FTAs. Maintaining high food standards is an absolute red line in our trade negotiations. And funnily enough, Australia has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and so the produce that does come to Britain will be high quality, low volume as I said and prime estate for restaurants rather than on supermarket shelves.

*Well the Trade and Agriculture commission report recommended some core values that would be safeguarded in trade deals. Would that be a way of ensuring this and what would you include in that?*

Well we have set out, we are going to include our own protection for the agricultural industry, we are not going to undercut British farmers, we are not going to compromise our high food standards and of course we're going to comment on live negotiations which these are right now. But the Trade and Agriculture commission will have the opportunity to scrutinize any agreement as and when it is available to them.

*Where is the TAC at the moment, what state is that in?*

There will be a new TAC set up in the very near future which will be of course able to scrutinise trade deals like Australia.

*It's difficult to scrutinise a deal if it doesn't actually exist. We're all talking about this trade deal with Australia but there isn't a TAC to look at it.*

There will be a TAC to look at it.

*When?*

Soon!

*Surely it needs to be very soon doesn't it?*

There will be a TAC to scrutinise this deal

*Before or after you've signed the deal?*

Well it's important of course to be clear what signing means, [um] there is an agreement in principle [um] that we are working to of course in the first instance that [um] allows us to say yes we have a deal that we believe we are happy with. There needs to be a legal scrub that takes into account everyone's clear definitions eh so that both sides are absolutely certain what is being agreed to and at that point there is then a signature. So that is the process that has to go through first.

*And then everybody gets to look at it*

Indeed it is important that the legals are taken into account first.

*But at that point it's a done deal.*

Well [um] of course the British government is gonna be maintaining our powers always sign deals that we believe are in our British national interest that's why we've signed trade deals with 67 countries already and we are negotiating 3 more with Australia, New Zealand and the United States.