The government should take “every step” to retain a single market for food, the NFU has urged, following a meeting on future farming policy.

At the UK Farming Roundtable, chaired by NFU president Minette Batters, a range of agricultural trade bodies agreed a list of principles that they believe should guide policy development and implementation once the UK leaves the EU.

The statement calls on the four UK governments to “establish and maintain regular, formal and cooperative arrangements to manage policy, legislation and delivery of regulation across the UK”.

A priority should be to “take every step to retain and protect a single market access for food, agricultural commodities, live animals and plant and plant products throughout the UK,” the roundtable concluded.

It was agreed that a UK policy framework for farming should:

- Take every step to retain and protect a single market access for food, agricultural commodities, live animals and plant products throughout the UK.
- Respect and maintain the current devolution settlement of policy and regulation to the constituent parts of the UK.
- Ensure that potential differences in the application of agricultural policy do not adversely impact on trade within the UK.
- Establish and maintain regular, formal and cooperative arrangements to manage policy, legislation and delivery of regulation across the UK economic area. A guiding principle should be that no single country determines or curtails UK policy in the rest of the UK.
- Ensure that no part of the UK acts in a way that threatens to curtail access for other parts of the UK to third country markets, or questions the UK’s adherence to its international agreements.
- Retain the same level of public investment in agriculture in the long term.

The NFU said it welcomed the government’s commitment to maintaining farming subsidies at their current level until 2020.

The signatories to the statement were NFU, NFU Cymru, NFU Scotland, CLA, British Poultry Council, LEAF, National Sheep Association, Scottish Land and Estates, Soil Association, Tenant Farmers Association, Ulster Farmers Union, National Pig Association, British Egg Industry Council, RABDF and National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs.