



Government says yes to supermarket watchdog; Traidcraft calls for swift action

Traidcraft welcomes the UK Government's announcement to accept the Competition Commission's recommendation for an ombudsman to enforce the strengthened code of practice for supermarkets.

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Having actively campaigned for greater regulation of supermarkets' buying power, Traidcraft will once again contribute to the forthcoming formal consultation, which is set to begin in February. This consultation by the Government will consider the nature and role of the ombudsman.

Fiona Gooch, Traidcraft's senior policy director, said, "The Government's recognition that the power wielded by large grocery retailers puts pressure on small producers is a welcome development. And it means that there may finally be an end to small farmers in the developing world facing excessive risks caused by our own grocery sector.

"We look forward to a swift consultation and a clear and unequivocal outcome to ensure the watchdog can begin to stem unfair practices and help the grocery sector return to being a fair market."

The news will be welcomed by consumers as a survey by Traidcraft showed that eight in ten shoppers wanted a watchdog to monitor and penalise supermarkets which treat suppliers unfairly.

Industry accusations that the cost of the watchdog would lead to rising food prices were disputed in an independent report by economist Professor Roger Clarke who found that retailers would each pay just 0.005% of their turnover to fund the ombudsman and the benefits to shoppers would outweigh these costs.

This announcement comes as 50 purchasing professionals met today (13 January) to debate Traidcraft and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing's new publication 'Win Win: Achieving sustainable procurement with the developing world', reinforcing the importance of responsible purchasing.