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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(12.5.2026)

Throughout the negotiations on the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which were ultimately concluded on 24 March 2026, the Commission has held a firm line to ensure that our most sensitive interests, notably those in the area of agriculture, were taken into account.

The final outcome is balanced, with limited and carefully conditioned opening of the EU's market in combination with new export opportunities by eliminating tariffs on EU exports to Australia and the protection of EU geographical indications. For beef, the market opening accounts for only a fraction of EU consumption and is phased in gradually. More precisely, this translates into a quota of 30 600 tonnes, representing around 0.5% of EU consumption, over 10 years. Importantly, the Commission secured a bilateral safeguard clause covering all products, including those under tariff rate quotas. This additional layer of safety will ensure swift and effective protection in the unlikely event of an unforeseen and harmful surge in imports or an undue decrease in producers' prices.

The comprehensive study on the cumulative impact of trade agreements on EU agriculture, including the trade agreements with Mercosur and Australia¹, showed that FTAs have overall a positive impact on the EU agri-food sector and it validates the EU approach to protect the most sensitive sectors from possible disruptions with carefully calibrated tariff rate quotas.

When it comes to imports of agricultural products to the EU, the strict EU standards to protect human, animal and plant health, including phytosanitary standards, veterinary checks, the ban on the use of growth hormones, will continue to apply.

¹ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135540>.