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ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE
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The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP,
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Whitehall Place,
LONDON, SW1A 2HH.

November 1986

CDP
20/11

Dear Michael:

FRENCH ACTIONS DISRUPTING UK LAMB TRADE

Thank you for your letter of 18 November.

I feel sure you are right in supposing that a strong practical retaliation would concentrate the minds of the French Government, and far more promptly than any other measure. My letter had to make clear to you, however, the dangerous consequences to our own interests that I foresaw ensuing from the course you told me you had in mind.

The trouble is that in this country's legal system someone aggrieved by Governmental action has a remedy very readily available to him. The same may not be true in France. Nevertheless, the Strasbourg case I mentioned is encouraging. I am therefore glad you see merit in my suggestion that you stand financially behind a UK lamb exporter suing in a French court, and that you are having this idea worked up by officials. It could be run in tandem with recourse to the Commission and the European Court of Justice, a procedure which I agree would be more protracted. An announcement of both initiatives would show our industry that you are fighting for them. You would need, however, to be assured that supporting an action in the French courts is a practical proposition and, for example, that our support would not disqualify a UK lamb exporter from obtaining a remedy under French law.

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I am of course very willing to advise at once from the Law Officers' standpoint on any other course that may attract you.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely,
T. G. W. R.

FRANCE Relations PTU

