

Boost for red meat export plans announced

With the impending departure of the UK from the European Union and the uncertainty over the terms of access to key markets post-2019, the Welsh red meat industry faces significant challenges. Most of the challenges lie in prioritising the maintenance of existing export markets and the development of new ones.

The Cabinet Secretary, who flew out to Cologne to attend the trade exhibition to support our delegation of Welsh food and drink producers, said the funding for HCC is a direct response to these “significant” challenges.

Before leaving she said,

“It has never been more important to raise Wales’ international profile and promote our quality food and drink to the world.

“HCC indicate that only 5% of lamb produced in Wales is consumed in Wales, with up to 40% being exported outside the UK. It is estimated that over 90% of these exports are traded within the European Union single market, and worth over €200m per year.

“The Welsh red meat industry is heavily reliant on global export markets to achieve premium prices. Strong overseas demand uplifts farm gate prices and helps to balance supply and demand thus securing greater returns for the supply chain. This demonstrates the significance of export markets for the Welsh red meat industry.

“This £1.5m funding is a direct response to the significant challenge the industry faces with the uncertainty of future trading arrangements post-Brexit.

“We clearly need to continue to strengthen and future-proof our industry and it is vital that HCC continue to support the industry to maintain key markets in Europe, as well as look further afield.

“I am confident that this investment and the support to be delivered by HCC will help the industry to meet the challenges and opportunities over the next few years.

“International trade events like Anuga are great for our incredible Welsh companies looking to expand their business and provide invaluable exposure to exciting new markets. They are also helping us to achieve our shared vision of sustainably growing overall sales in the industry by 30% to £7bn by 2020.

“Over the past year alone, our food and drink exports have increased by 20%. This is increasing at a faster rate compared to

the UK as a whole, which grew 9.5% over the same period.”