

Dairy Farmers across the South West set for major boost from new trade deals

Farmers across the South West are set to benefit from future Free Trade Agreements with the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, which will open up new opportunities to sell local produce overseas.

The International Trade Minister, Ranil Jayawardena visited a number of farms across the South West today including Quicke's Farm and The Black Farmer, to see first-hand the agricultural exporting potential of the region and discuss future opportunities for growth.

Government analysis shows that a future trade deal with the US could deliver a £284 million boost to the South West economy, including for the South West's specialist dairy producers and agricultural industry. The deal will help to create new jobs and boost wages nationwide by £800 million a year in the long run.

The US is already the South West's largest export market, accounting for almost one fifth of all South West's goods exports. A UK-US trade deal could eliminate tariffs of up to 25% on South West dairy products and cheese sold in the US.

One business already taking advantage of the US market is Quicke's farm. The Exeter-based farm specialises in the production of award-winning cheeses and currently exports 25% of their cheese to the US.

International Trade Minister, Ranil Jayawardena said:

A future free trade agreement with the US will help lower barriers and bring benefits to thousands of farmers and small businesses across the South West by reducing costs and cutting red tape on agricultural exports.

I am delighted to be visiting farms across the South West today to highlight the opportunities such a deal would provide for our farmers and hear first-hand the export success already being enjoyed.

We want to work hand in hand with farmers across the UK to make sure they have the tools and support they need to take advantage of new global markets like the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Managing Director of Quicke's, Mary Quicke said:

Exporting is very important to Quicke's with 40% of our cheeses going abroad. A Free Trade Agreement is essential for us to thrive.

We strongly support all the efforts UK Government is making to set up Free Trade Agreements.

During his trip to the South West, Mr Jayawardena also visited Popham's Dairy Farm and The Black Farmer to discuss the benefits of future trade deals for the agricultural sector and new opportunities for farmers across the region. Last week he also visited Duchy Home farms to see the benefits of organic and sustainable farming systems and discuss the increased global demand for organic products.

The UK's negotiating objectives make clear that any future agreement must protect and uphold our high standards on food safety and animal welfare.

The Department for International Trade recently established the Independent Trade and Agriculture Commission to protect and advance interests of consumers and industry. The Commission includes agriculture representatives from every nation of the UK.