

Exports support for farmers and the food and drink industry

Plans to help the UK's farmers and food and drink businesses boost exports have been announced today to mark Back British Farming Day 2021.

The UK agri-food sector contributes around £20bn in exports each year, yet only 20% of companies sell their goods overseas. The exports initiative announced today will help farmers access the UK's considerable export potential.

It includes:

- appointing more dedicated 'agri-food attaches' to act as representatives on the ground to unlock key markets across the world. This will build on the excellent teams already working in our Embassies around the world;
- establishing a Food and Drink Exports Council to work collaboratively to expand our food and drink exports strategy. We will engage closely with Devolved Administrations and others on the design and implementation of the Export Council;
- strengthening our technical expertise as well as our farmers and producers' understanding of export markets to ensure that food and drink exporters are able to benefit from market opportunities.

The exports initiative will launch later in the year.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Our farmers are the lifeblood of our nation – producing home grown food and acting as stewards of our natural environment.

We want people at home and abroad to be lining up to buy British. The support that we have announced today, to mark Back British Farming Day, will enable our farmers and producers to take advantage of new opportunities and fly the flag for UK produce around the world.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

British farming is at the heart of our trade policy. Today's new measures will build the capability of our excellent international teams and having farming experts in post across the world will help our food and drink producers seize the massive new opportunities in the biggest and fastest-growing markets in the world.

Our food and drink is among the best in the world and an independent trading nation we're seizing new opportunities that

were previously denied to us.

We have already secured better access to lucrative Asian markets, including for UK beef in Hong Kong, Japan and the Philippines.

NFU President Minette Batters said:

The NFU has long called for significant government investment which enables a partnership approach to international trade opportunities for British farmers. This is a positive step in the right direction and I welcome this new commitment to put people on the ground with the technical expertise to open up new markets. I look forward to seeing more detail on this proposal and working with government to boost our agri-food exports abroad.

This package further builds upon our plans to refresh the [International Action Plan for food and drink \(2016 – 2020\)](#) which we are already working with the sector on developing, and strong promotional footprint, including international promotion of the best of British food and drink through the GREAT campaign.

New trade deals are opening doors for British agriculture and food and drink businesses around the world, and the Department for International Trade offers free advice and support to help businesses take advantage of new global opportunities.

Outside of the European Union, Defra continues to work with English farmers on developing landmark plans for a renewed agricultural sector. [The Agricultural Transition](#) will transform the way farmers are supported to reward them properly for the work that they do over a transition period of seven years. This will be centred around incentivising sustainable farming practices alongside profitable food production and rewarding farmers for contributing towards better air and water quality, protecting wildlife and soil health.

In June, the Environment Secretary confirmed the early roll-out of the Sustainable Farming Incentive from spring 2022, the first of three environmental land management schemes to be rolled out. The scheme, which will eventually be open to every farmer in England, will support approaches to farming that deliver for the environment, such as actions to improve soil health, hedgerows and integrated pest management.

Today's proposals reflect recommendations in the independent report by Trade and Agriculture Commission, published earlier this year, which made 22 proposals to advance the interests of British farmers, food producers and consumers through international trade. The Government's full response will be published shortly.