

Global buyers get a taste of Wales in an effort to reach new markets post-Brexit

As part of the Welsh Government's commitment to raise Wales' global profile as a first-class place to do business, it is hosting the largest ever showcase of Wales' food and drink industry. The event, being held in the Celtic Manor, brings together producers, buyers and food industry professionals.

The two-day TasteWales event is hosting over 50 buyers from countries across the globe, including the Far East, Middle East, North America and Europe, over 100 UK buyers and in excess of 100 Welsh producers.

The event has Meet the Buyer opportunities, where influential domestic and international buyers can meet with Welsh food and drink producers to explore the potential of working together and identify new trade channels.

It also boasts an Innovation Skills and Business Zone where attendees will have the opportunity to see new developments and learn more about the support available for businesses in the sector.

Food and drink is already one of Wales' largest sectors, employing over 223,000 people and worth over £17bn to the Welsh economy annually.

Exports for the sector have grown by 95% in the past decade and continue to grow, up 13% in the first six months of 2016 compared to the same time in 2015.

Speaking ahead of TasteWales, the Economy Secretary, Ken Skates said:

"We are extremely proud of our high-quality food and drink and recognise the enormous value it brings to our economy. Food and drink is a priority sector for the Welsh Government and this is why we have set an ambitious target to grow the sector by 30% by 2020.

"Food and drink exports have grown considerably and I am keen to see this continue. There are challenging times ahead as we navigate towards a future outside of the EU, particularly given almost 90% of our food and drink exports go to the EU. We continue to call for full and unfettered access to the single market, a request which has been replicated in discussions with representatives of the industry.

"However, in light of the UK's decision to leave the EU, it is now more important than ever we promote the very best the food and drink industry has to offer and continue to make an impact in global markets. Today's event is part of our response to overcoming

future challenges and provides an exciting opportunity for Welsh producers to strike new deals with some impressive and influential buyers.”