

Minister celebrates 'special connection' between Welsh agriculture and tourism

The Tourism and Agriculture Working Together event at the Welsh Government Pavilion will be hosted by Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas to acknowledge strong and enduring partnership between farming and tourism and to celebrate the role that farmers, food producers and land managers play in making Wales such a welcoming and top quality holiday and visitor destination. It's a partnership which the Minister was clear would need to be maintained and strengthened if both industries were to remain prosperous.

Speaking ahead of the event, Lord Elis-Thomas said:

"Today's event is an opportunity for me to first and foremost thank our farmers, food producers and land managers for their role in making Wales the destination it is, whilst hopefully opening a few doors to further future collaborations and opportunities.

"Over 10 million people again chose to holiday in Wales last year – over three times the population of Wales.

"Many come to Wales because of the famous 'croeso', which relies on a delicately balanced ecosystem. Individuals, communities and organisations working effectively together to keep our walkways accessible, our beaches clean and our water clear. Suppliers, producers and promoters recognising and championing the benefit of quality, local produce. From star gazing to zip lining, Welsh lamb to local beer and everything in between, it's the quality of the experience that makes people continue to choose Wales in such large numbers, and the agricultural industry is right at the heart of that.

"Whilst Brexit no doubt brings with it uncertainty, challenges and change, particularly within the agricultural sector in Wales, what's beyond question is that the intrinsic link between agriculture and tourism must and will remain."

"Our focus and ambition for a tourism industry for the future here in Wales is all about quality – quality of product, quality of produce and quality of experience.

"There is strong evidence from across Wales that raising the bar on quality breeds further success, and Visit Wales has already shown its willingness to support projects that fulfil the expectations of the most discerning visitors. It is important that our industry is

also market focused and we develop new products that provide experiences and accommodation that satisfy future consumer demands.

“This support is not only financial but also around a collaborative way of marketing Wales, such as through our themed years, and finding innovative ways both to reach new audiences and ensure they have the best possible time here. The Wales Way, for example, will encourage people to discover parts of rural Wales they might otherwise not have considered.

“This is just one example of the hard work going on to make sure Wales is the most forward looking, internationalist, confident country it can be. By ensuring quality is at heart of everything we do I’m confident we will be in the best possible position to overcome the challenges of Brexit, helping us seize future opportunities. A continued and strengthened partnership between tourism and agriculture will be key to achieving this and I look forward to developing this together.”