

## News story: Environment Secretary meets Northern Irish industry leaders on the future of UK agriculture

Environment Secretary Michael Gove met representatives from Northern Ireland's food and farming sectors today to discuss the future of their industries outside the EU.

Following a meeting with industry leaders including the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association, Northern Ireland Environment Link and Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association amongst others in Stormont, the Environment Secretary visited a local farm hosted by members of the Ulster Farmers Union.

The visit was an opportunity to discuss the key opportunities and challenges facing the sector ahead of EU exit, and for regional industry leaders to share their ambitions and expectations for future farming policy as we prepare to leave the European Union.

Speaking after the meetings, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Food and drink is the leading sector in the Northern Ireland economy, employing tens-of-thousands people and generating around £5 billion from food sales alone.

As we prepare to leave the EU, we have the chance to design a new approach to food and farming that works for the whole of the UK, not least for Northern Ireland.

Today's meeting with agricultural leaders was a chance to hear first-hand from them as we move towards life outside the EU. We will continue to work closely with industry to ensure we grasp the opportunities that leaving the EU presents.

The roundtables held today are part of a series of ongoing engagements across all parts of the UK ahead of EU exit.

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