

News story: Export win for UK food producers as lamb market reopens in Saudi Arabia

British sheep farmers and meat producers will now have the opportunity to take advantage of the increasing demand for our high quality, delicious food and drink in Saudi Arabia – where total UK exports were worth over £152 million last year. Top exports in 2017 included sweet biscuits (£13m), chocolate (£10.9m), butter (£6m) and cheese (£5.1m).

The eagerly awaited deal has been secured by the government, working with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP) lifts a 20 year long ban on exporting British lamb after the BSE crisis.

The deal follows the Prime Minister's announcement last month that the Chinese government has agreed to progress lifting the BSE ban on UK beef exports to China, and is another boost to the UK's flourishing food and drink exports – which reached a record level of £22 billion in 2017.

Food minister George Eustice said:

This is a significant development for our British lamb farmers and meat producers, with the potential to boost jobs and bring millions of pounds into an industry which guarantees quality from farm to fork.

As the global appetite for the UK's delicious food and drink products grows, we are supporting more of our farmers, fishermen and producers to take advantage of the world of opportunity that export markets have to offer.

AHDB International Market Development Director Phil Hadley said:

This is great news for the sheep industry and for lamb processors and producers in the UK who are keen to look at new, non-EU markets.

The announcement is the result of ongoing and detailed work between all parties and is a testament to the high regard and quality of UK lamb.

The news comes as British businesses promote their products at Gulfood, the world's largest annual food and beverage trade show currently being held in Dubai.

A team of the Government's leading trade experts continue to provide guidance to UK businesses as they enter into overseas markets for the first time or consider expanding their current global customer base – ensuring they are poised to take advantage of the increasing opportunities Brexit presents.

This is complemented by the government's Food is GREAT campaign, which highlights the success of current exporters and showcases the UK's top quality food and drink. And in January industry representatives and government officials held the first meeting of the newly created Food and Drink Sector Council, who will work together to increase productivity and help exports grow further.