

[Press release: Japan opens market to British lamb and beef](#)

UK exporters are set to benefit from a multimillion pound boost as Japan today opened its market to imports of UK lamb and beef.

The agreement, signed during Prime Minister Abe's visit to the UK, is estimated to be worth a total of nearly £130 million over the first five years of access – approximately £75 million for beef and £52 million for lamb.

Japan, a major importer of beef with a growing demand for high quality lamb, lifted its two-decade long ban on imports of these products with immediate effect.

The deal follows a year of global successes for UK exporters, which included China lifting its ban on UK beef, Taiwan opening its market to pork and India preparing to import UK sheep meat.

The market opening for lamb will also be good news for farmers in Wales, where the meat accounts for a third of total food and drink exports – worth £110 million.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Welsh lamb has a great reputation across the globe and is a symbol for quality.

Today's announcement brings even greater opportunities for Welsh farmers to market their produce around the world, demonstrating the UK Government's commitment to forging important global partnerships to support our vital industries in Wales.

Food Minister George Eustice said:

The opening of the Japanese market is an excellent result for beef and lamb producers across the UK and demonstrates confidence in our high standards of food and drink.

As we enter a new era as a global exporter, unlocking this market marks a major step for future trading relationships and signals our commitment to supporting our food and drink industry to export more British food.

The lifting of the ban follows a series of visits and negotiations between UK and Japanese officials, which culminated in an inspection of UK beef and lamb

production systems in 2018, successfully hosted by Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, DAERA, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the UK Export Certification Partnership.

Japan is renowned for its stringent food safety and import controls regime and opening this market is expected to send a positive signals to other countries, particularly in Asia, regarding the safety of UK exports.

Wyn Evans, NFU Cymru Livestock Board Chairman said:

I am delighted that a potential new premium market is opening up for our world leading PGI Welsh Beef and Lamb. Securing new and maintaining current export markets are crucial to our ambition within NFU Cymru, so that we can continue to grow the £6.9 billion Welsh food and drink sector and secure the long term viability of the Welsh red meat industry. We look forward to working with supply chain partners to ensure that Japanese consumers have the chance to enjoy the finest beef and lamb in the world, produced in Wales.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

Today's announcement is fantastic news for our farmers and producers and it follows years of hard work by government, AHDB and key industry stakeholders.

Access to this lucrative new market is a testament to the high quality produce and world-renowned standards we have here in the UK. We are confident this new deal to export beef and lamb to Japan, alongside our existing pork trade, will create some exciting opportunities for our beef and sheep producers.

Farmers and food producers can begin exporting as soon as the administrative listing process is completed.