

[Press release: Michael Gove: Food and farming transforms UK into innovation nation](#)

The Environment Secretary Michael Gove will today hail the UK's forward-thinking food sector for driving innovation and productivity as we prepare to leave the EU.

Ahead of a visit to the Bournville chocolate factory today (Friday 27 October), which recently used a £75 million investment to launch four new production lines and employ thousands more staff, the Environment Secretary praised food producers across the country for creating thousands of new products every year – from craft beers, to chocolate, to healthy snacks.

At the Birmingham based factory, the Environment Secretary will see first-hand how even our most recognisable products are continuing to find new ways to push the boundaries – from new technologies to prolong shelf life to 'free-from' ranges that tap into consumer demand. The newest line at Bournville can now produce one million bars of Dairy Milk per day.

During a tour of Bournville's newest production lines which can make a million bars of Dairy Milk every day, the Environment Secretary will see the company's new innovation kitchen, where the next generation of Bournville products are dreamt up.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

As we leave the EU, we have a great opportunity to make sure our food and farming industry is leading the way in modern, creative thinking.

An innovative industry is a resilient one, and by investing in new technologies and ideas we can make sure we continue to thrive on the global trading stage and build on our renowned reputation as a great food nation.

Last year Defra launched the first ever [Food Innovation Network](#) to connect food producers across the country with world-class facilities such as test-kitchens and laboratories to help them create new products and production methods.

The government has also invested £160 million through the [Agri-Tech Strategy](#) to improve the flow of ideas and solutions from the laboratory to the farm, as well as £90m to support the creation of four Centres of Agricultural Innovation. These centres will help turn agricultural innovation into

commercial opportunities, stimulating inward investment and helping revolutionise future farming practices.

Each year the food chain brings more than £110 billion to the UK economy, with exports hitting a record £20 billion for the first time last year. More than £620 million worth of chocolate was exported around the world, with shipments going as far afield as Australia and the US.