

Press release: UK's artisan chocolates an international favourite this Easter

Britain's independent chocolatiers are making the most of the growing global demand for their tasty treats this Easter.

Last year over £680 million of chocolate from the UK was snapped up by foreign consumers, who are showing an increasing taste for quality products. Exports have risen significantly from £370 million in 2010 – an 84% rise.

The number of independent chocolatiers in the UK has also grown in recent years, with more artisanal and specialised products being launched to meet consumer demand – both here and abroad. The manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery is now worth £1.1 billion to the UK economy.

The government is supporting many small businesses to taking advantage of this by helping them explore export opportunities in the 149 worldwide markets that currently import UK chocolate.

Food and Farming Minister George Eustice said:

There has been a huge growth in the number of independent chocolatiers in the UK and they are very adept at creating delicious products that are shaping consumer tastes around the world. There are great opportunities to increase our food and drink exports and increasing market access around the world is a major focus for government.

One business taking advantage of the increasing global demand for Britain's high quality, artisan chocolates is Amelia Rope Chocolate, which started as a kitchen business in 2007 creating truffles and chocolate-dipped crystallised flora and now sells products in Hong Kong and Asia. The company's hand-foiled salted butter caramel Easter eggs will be served to business class customers on the Eurostar over the coming weekend.

Founder Amelia Rope has a passion for creating chocolate using sustainable ingredients and using recyclable material in her packaging – this year her Easter eggs are being sold in biodegradable bags rather than large amounts of cardboard and plastic.

Founder Amelia Rope said:

Exporting is vital for me and my brand. It can be hard work but I am quite resourceful. I'm excited about now expanding into the US and the Middle East.

The Grown Up Chocolate Company, founded in 2010 and now with 37 employees, also benefits from exporting its indulgent versions of childhood favourites overseas.

Last year the company had an annual turnover of just over £2million and they are hoping to expand to a larger site.

James Ecclestone, of the Grown Up Chocolate Company, said:

Exports are a key part of what we do and represent over a quarter of our business.

Our products are sold as far away as Australia, and we are keen for more people around the world to enjoy our artisanal, indulgent chocolates.

The Government, and its team of trade experts, continues to encourage and support UK business as they consider launching into overseas markets or expanding their current global customer base.

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.

The Department for International Trade is currently working with business on the development of a new Export Strategy, which will explore the barriers to exporting and identify the best ways in which government can help drive and support UK companies to increase exporting activity and unlock high potential opportunities overseas.

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, said:

It is great to see British businesses exporting increasing amounts of chocolate around the world as they seek to meet the ever-growing demand for our produce.

Export support is a key way that the Government can help businesses succeed and grow, which is why I am currently developing a new Export Strategy to break down the barriers companies face when doing business on the international stage.

Top 5 ways the government supports businesses to export: