

News story: £700 million South West food exports are vital to economic success

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss used a visit to several food manufacturers in Cornwall this week (12 and 13 July 2018) to unveil new figures that showed food and agricultural exports in the first quarter of 2018 were up for the fourth year in a row.

From January to March 2018, £175 million worth of food and agricultural goods were exported from the region around the globe, up £10 million on last year.

In 2017, nearly £700 million worth of Cornish food and agricultural goods were exported around the world, and the Chief Secretary hopes that this figure will be bettered this year:

Food manufacturers in this region have made a flying start to 2018 and it's hugely encouraging to learn, once again, that food exports are up for the first quarter of this year.

Exporting boosts the earnings of a business, and the wages of local workers, it also enhances the reputation of Britain and Cornwall around the world.

I want to see more people abroad enjoying a taste of Cornwall, like the magnificent clotted cream I've seen made during my visit.

It is so important that local traders in this part of the world have the opportunity to increase their trade and create jobs and I'm here to learn how we can help them do this.

While visiting Cornwall, the Chief Secretary was hosted by groups of businesses and also visited several food manufacturing factories.

The government is delivering for the South West, and the region now has the second-lowest unemployment rate of all UK regions. And this year alone employment has increased by 37,000, with a record high 2.8 million people now in work.

Since 2010 the government has worked hard to make sure businesses in all regions of the UK can start-up and scale-up. By cutting corporation tax we have helped encourage this, with 1.2 million more businesses starting up since 2010.

[News story: Measles outbreaks across England](#)

Updated: Added latest figures.

Latest update

Between 1 January 2018 and 6 July 2018 there have been 757 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England. Cases were reported in most areas with London (268), the South-East (161), South-West (118), West Midlands (85) and Yorkshire and Humberside (73) reporting the most cases (based on provisional figures).

Previous updates

1 June 2018

Between 1 January 2018 and 31 May 2018 there have been 587 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England. Cases were reported in most areas with London (213), the South-East (128), West Midlands (81), South-West (62), and Yorkshire and Humberside (53) reporting the most cases (based on provisional figures).

11 May 2018

Between 1 January 2018 and 9 May 2018 there have been 440 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England, with London (164), the South-East (86), West Midlands (78), South-West (42) and West Yorkshire (37) reporting the most cases.

The increase in measles circulation is mainly associated with travel to and from Europe where there are large ongoing measles outbreaks.

Young people and adults aged 15 and over who missed out on MMR vaccine when they were younger and some under-vaccinated communities have been particularly affected.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can sometimes lead to serious complications and can be fatal in very rare cases.

Anyone who has not received 2 doses of MMR vaccine is at risk, but young people in environments with close mixing such as festivals are more at risk, as well as unvaccinated people travelling to Romania and Italy, where there are currently large outbreaks. Anyone planning to travel to Europe should check [NaTHNaC travel health advice](#).

PHE local health protection teams are working closely with the NHS and local authorities to raise awareness with health professionals and local

communities.

The MMR vaccine is available to all adults and children who are not up to date with their two doses.

Anyone who is not sure if they are fully vaccinated should check with their GP practice who can advise them.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

The measles outbreaks we are currently seeing in England are linked to ongoing large outbreaks in Europe. The majority of cases we are seeing are in teenagers and young adults who missed out on their MMR vaccine when they were children.

Anyone who missed out on their MMR vaccine in the past or are unsure if they had 2 doses should contact their GP practice to catch-up.

This serves as an important reminder for parents to take up the offer of MMR vaccination for their children at 1 year of age and as a pre-school booster at 3 years and 4 months of age.

We'd also encourage people to ensure they are up to date with their MMR vaccine before travelling to countries with ongoing measles outbreaks.

The UK recently achieved WHO measles elimination status and so the overall risk of measles to the UK population is low, however, we will continue to see cases in unimmunised individuals and limited onward spread can occur in communities with low MMR coverage and in age groups with very close mixing.

Press release: Water companies need to do more to protect the environment, report shows

Although there has been a gradual improving trend in environmental performance over recent years, the industry is not doing enough to reduce serious pollution incidents and comply with permits. Last year saw a rise in the most serious pollution incidents, with 'Category 1' incidents at 11. Previous reductions in serious (Category 1 and 2) incidents have also plateaued continuing at around one incident per week.

[The Water and Sewerage Companies' Environmental Performance Report](#) rates how well the big nine water and sewage companies (operating mainly or wholly in England) managed their impact on the environment in 2017. This is done across a wide range of measures – including pollution, managing sewage and complying with permits – and also compares individual company performance.

For the third year running, United Utilities and Wessex Water were the top performing water companies, and now Severn Trent Water has joined them. These companies received the top 4 star rating.

While the majority of companies delivered a 'good' or 'leading' performance, there are some poorer performers – the report reveals an urgent need by South West Water and Northumbrian Water to improve their performance which has seen them rated lowest this year. South West Water are the worst performer on pollution incidents and Northumbrian Water on permit compliance.

This comes in the face of record fines for the sector – in total more than £21million were issued as a result of 16 successful prosecutions by the Environment Agency. This has been driven by changes in Sentencing Guidelines. Earlier in the year, Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, called for fines for the most serious pollution incidents to be proportionate to the turnover of water companies.

Despite some good performances, the report demands far greater progress in 2018 and subsequent years. The Environment Agency has recently set out a more ambitious programme of environmental improvements which water companies will have to make between 2020 and 2025 – totalling £5billion of investment.

Toby Willison, Executive Director of Operations for the Environment Agency, said:

The leading companies in this report show that reducing their environmental impact can be done, so we look to companies to share good practice and improve quickly. But one serious pollution incident is one too many. We will always work closely with companies who want to do the right thing but we will take action against those who don't.

Over the last 30 years there has been a significant improvement in water quality and this has happened not only thanks to the industry's massive investment but also the Environment Agency's strong regulatory role

The environment will benefit from a further £5billion of investment from the water sector by 2025. We expect to see a clear and continued focus on environmental performance in the next round of water company business plans to be submitted in the autumn.

The report concludes with a reminder about the pressures on water quality and supply – with a growing population and climate pressures on the water environment, and increased public and legal expectation, water companies need

to further rise to the challenge and improve promptly. The Environment Agency will work with and regulate the companies to help achieve a better environment.

Speech: Women, Peace and the Security in the Sahel

Well, thank you very much indeed Minister for being with us again today. It's fantastic to have you here and thank you for all the work Sweden has done on this important dossier. Particularly, for keeping it at the forefront of our minds in the Security Council and the way you have tried to ensure that these issues are properly integrated and that the Security Council and the UN more generally gets out of the silos that we're all familiar with. A huge thank you obviously to Ms. Diop and to the Deputy-Secretary-General for leading this mission. I think it's an incredibly important event. Like other speakers, I think it would be an excellent thing if it were to be regular. As my Dutch colleague said, there are lots of areas of the world that would benefit from your insights and your engagement. You can't be everywhere but I think you've made an incredibly good start on this occasion.

I was particularly interested in the assessment of the level of women's participation in decision making and in peace and development processes and I was struck by the same comment about "prefer not to be raped" as my Dutch colleague but I think even more than that was the interest shown by the people you talk to in producing more female candidates. And I think if we had only one thing we could concentrate on, to build that pipeline for the future and to start changing behaviours through governments, I think will be definitely worth thinking further about.

I'd like to say at the outset, Madam President, that we in the UK fully share your goal of having full delivery of [Resolution] 1325 by 2020. So you can count on Britain to work with you here and in Geneva at the United Nations to realize that. I think as other speakers have hinted, the question of women's economic empowerment and their enjoyment of human rights and their role within their families and communities is something that needs to be nurtured and curated. And this is not just a moral issue. This is an economic issue. It's a prosperity issue. Those countries will thrive who properly make use of and develop all the talents of their people. And I think the Kazakh Ambassador set it out very well when he talked about the link between security and development. So we do everyone a favour by intensifying this link between women's participation in economic life and the foundation of peace and security.

And from our perspective, we would like to see even more effort be dedicated to integrating a gender perspective in strategies including those about

countering violent extremism and we would like to see more women's involvement in policy planning – so right at the ground floor and I think that was one of the conclusions of the Informal Expert Group on Women Peace and Security in June.

We heard a lot yesterday in the Children in Armed Conflict debate about the stigma of women returnees being disproportionately targeted when they go back to their communities and I think that's just worth putting on the table again today. It would be very good to hear from the countries themselves what can be done to address that particular issue.

Specifically on the Sahel, the United Kingdom is increasing our regional presence in the Sahel. We opened a mission in Chad in March this year. Chad and Niger sadly sit at the bottom, as I understand it, of the gender equality index and that's why we in the UK want to do more to help those colleagues develop women's empowerment. And I think the efforts that the Security Council, the U.N. system, the African Union and the G5 themselves have undertaken so far to ensure that we can fine-tune adequate measures to empower women is a very good step forward.

From our perspective, we concentrate a lot on providing reproductive health services to displaced populations and refugees and we are prioritising access to voluntary family planning for future support. We spend a lot of our programme funds on climate and environment resilience in eastern Chad and the BRACED program commits to 50 percent women beneficiaries and includes the component on gender-based violence. So I think all those things are contributing, I hope, to what we're talking about today.

We also have a partnership with France arising out of the Anglo-French summit in January to work on gender within the Alliance Sahel; supporting greater mainstreaming on gender across the work of that alliance and if there are other colleagues in the United Nations who would like to know more about that, or even contribute with us, we've been very happy to work with other colleagues on that.

You, Madam President, particularly mentioned education and girls education and again we spoke about that yesterday under the heading of Children in Armed Conflict. I'd just like to highlight that in the Sahel millions of children and youth are out of school, thanks to the presence of terrorist groups, the militias; the conflict between farmers and herders; the difficult economic situation experienced by many families; and of course girls are particularly affected. Sometimes it's because of very basic things like schools lacking hygiene facilities to accommodate the particular needs of girls. The Sahel region, as we heard, has one of the highest rates of child, early and forced marriage in the world. So, the barriers to girls enjoying a proper education are very severe. The United Kingdom therefore has been concentrating on what we call the Girls Education Challenge and it is already working to support 1.5 million girls achieve a quality education. We are one of the largest donors to 'Education Cannot Wait' which Chad is one of the four initial investment countries. So, I just wanted to give a snapshot, Madam President, of some of the things we've been doing but to say how much we share your view that this is an absolutely critical part of being able to

embed peace, security and stability in an important region. Thank you.

Press release: Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor Kurz of Austria: 9 July 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister welcomed Chancellor Kurz of Austria for dinner at Downing Street this evening.

Their warm and constructive conversation touched on the Chancellor's priorities for Austria's presidency of the EU, Brexit negotiations, migration and the NATO summit.

The Prime Minister gave an update on the UK's Brexit negotiating position and advised that the UK would be publishing a white paper on the UK's future relationship with the EU on Thursday. She urged the EU to give this serious consideration.

Chancellor Kurz noted that a good UK-EU relationship was in the interests of both sides.

On wider issues, the leaders also agreed it was important to work together to tackle illegal migration to Europe. Chancellor Kurz advised that this would be a focus of the informal EU Council which he would host in Salzburg in September. The two leaders also touched on NATO ahead of the Summit in Brussels on Wednesday and on the importance of building ties between the UK and Austria in the digital field.

They closed the dinner by looking ahead to the Western Balkans Summit that the Prime Minister will host with EU and Western Balkan leaders tomorrow. They agreed that the stability and prosperity of the region was a shared priority for the UK and Austria.