

[News story: Environment Secretary meets Northern Irish industry leaders on the future of UK agriculture](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove met representatives from Northern Ireland's food and farming sectors today to discuss the future of their industries outside the EU.

Following a meeting with industry leaders including the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association, Northern Ireland Environment Link and Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association amongst others in Stormont, the Environment Secretary visited a local farm hosted by members of the Ulster Farmers Union.

The visit was an opportunity to discuss the key opportunities and challenges facing the sector ahead of EU exit, and for regional industry leaders to share their ambitions and expectations for future farming policy as we prepare to leave the European Union.

Speaking after the meetings, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Food and drink is the leading sector in the Northern Ireland economy, employing tens-of-thousands people and generating around £5 billion from food sales alone.

As we prepare to leave the EU, we have the chance to design a new approach to food and farming that works for the whole of the UK, not least for Northern Ireland.

Today's meeting with agricultural leaders was a chance to hear first-hand from them as we move towards life outside the EU. We will continue to work closely with industry to ensure we grasp the opportunities that leaving the EU presents.

The roundtables held today are part of a series of ongoing engagements across all parts of the UK ahead of EU exit.

ENDS

[News story: Prime Minister Reappoints](#)

National Heritage Memorial Fund / Heritage Lottery Fund (NHMF / HLF) Trustee

Jim Dixon has been reappointed by the Prime Minister as a Trustee of NHMF/HLF for a term of three years, ending on 30 September 2020

Jim Dixon is a biologist who has worked in landscapes, public bodies, business and voluntary organisations in a career spanning 35 years. He has a portfolio of non-executive, advisory and media roles. His non-executive roles are with NHMF/HLF, the Water Industry, the Rural Payments Agency and the private sector and he advises organisations on rural strategy, tourism, corporate sustainability and leadership. He writes for a variety of publications, including a monthly Nature Notebook feature for The Times. Jim is also Chairman of a small specialist Travel company and trades in antiquarian books and antiques. Previous to this he was Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park until December 2014, including four years during which he led the UK partnership of 15 national parks and led their work on housing and planning, conservation, education, transport and communications. Previous roles have included leading strategy for the newly-formed Defra and leading agriculture and rural policy work for English Nature and the RSPB. Jim studied Biology at Cardiff University.

The role is remunerated at £6,560 per annum. This reappointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. It is a requirement of the Code that political activity by those appointed is declared. Jim has declared no such political activity.

Speech: PM's address to British Troops at Tapa Military Base in Estonia

I'm delighted to be here today and to have this opportunity to pay tribute to all of you for the work you are doing in this vital NATO mission to protect the security of the Alliance's Eastern flank.

Russia's continued aggression represents a growing danger to our friends here in Estonia – as well as in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. And our response must be clear and unequivocal.

That is why this mission that you are carrying out is so important. By stepping up NATO's deterrence and defence posture, you are showing that we

are equipped to respond to any threat we face. You are showing that we are ready to do so. And you are showing – through our actions as well as our words – that our collective commitment to NATO's Article 5 remains as strong as ever. And that an attack on any one of our NATO allies, would be treated an attack on us all.

So I am proud that over 800 British servicemen and women are here leading a multinational effort, together with their French and Danish partners, and working alongside their Estonian hosts – and that this British deployment is one of the largest we have made to Eastern Europe in recent times.

For when a nation like Russia deliberately violates the rules based international order that we have worked so hard to create, we must come together with our allies to defend that international system – and the liberal values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law by which we stand.

I am clear that Britain will always stand with our allies in defence of these values.

From the fight against Daesh in Iraq and Syria to our commitment to meet the target of spending 2 per cent of our GDP on defence, we have been at the forefront of the NATO alliance and that is exactly where we will remain.

And while we are leaving the European Union, as I have said many times, we are not leaving Europe. So the United Kingdom is unconditionally committed to maintaining Europe's security. And we will continue to offer aid and assistance to EU member states that are the victims of armed aggression, terrorism and natural or manmade disasters.

Our resolve to draw on the full weight of our military, intelligence, diplomatic and development resources, to lead international action, with our partners, on the issues that affect the security and prosperity of our peoples is unchanged.

And our determination to defend the stability, security and prosperity of our European neighbours and friends remains steadfast.

But these commitments are only possible because of the work that you are doing.

It is your work across differences in language, culture and technology that has brought together an international combat-ready battlegroup able to defend the Baltic region by responding to the full range of threats that might exist.

It is your part in the current series of major multinational NATO exercises that is helping to provide deterrence and demonstrate our military capability to counter those who would threaten us.

It is your deployment – in the British case, the fielding of a combined arms battlegroup – that is reassuring our European partners of the scale and scope of our commitment to their security.

And beyond your military contribution, the work you are doing in communities across Estonia is deepening the friendship between our countries and our peoples – and showing you to be some of the finest ambassadors we have.

As with all our brilliant servicemen and women – and I know I speak for President Macron, Prime Minister Ratas and Prime Minister Rasmussen too when I say this: our countries have nothing but the deepest admiration for everything you have achieved and the exceptional courage and professionalism that you have demonstrated in achieving it.

Away from your families for months at a time, the sacrifices you make, the expertise that you bring and that sense of service that you embody is what gives meaning to the commitments we make and the values that we stand for.

So as many of you move on shortly to new deployments, I hope you will do so with an incredible sense of pride.

And to the British servicemen and women in particular, let me say a heartfelt thank you, on behalf of our whole country, for all that you have done here in Estonia, for the security of this region, for the commitments of this Alliance and for the defence of the values and the way of life that we all hold dear.

News story: Contract termination notice

In line with announcements in March 2017, the NDA has now served notice of termination to Cavendish Fluor Partnership (CFP) for the management and decommissioning of the UK's 12 Magnox reactor and research sites.

The termination notice is effective from 1 September 2017, allowing for a 24 month notice period, ending on 31 August 2019.

NDA and CFP have reached agreement on the work to be performed on the sites during the contract's remaining two years, as well as the arrangements and agreed state in which CFP will leave the sites at the end of the contract.

The NDA continues to believe that this is the best course of action for the taxpayer, removing the legal risk and ensuring the continued safe, secure operations of the sites.

Press release: Welsh Secretary in clarion call for Welsh companies to capitalise on Middle Eastern trade opportunities

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will travel to the Middle East today for a series of meetings with Qatari investors to discuss the many commercial opportunities that Wales as part of a strong global Britain has to offer.

Mr Cairns will meet with the CEO of Qatar Airways HE Akbar Al Baker, who confirmed earlier this month that Cardiff to Doha service on the airline will take to the skies on 1 May 2018. He will then be hosted by an audience of senior members of the Qatari Businessmen Association before meeting with Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company to offer post EU exit assurances for their continued investment strategy in the UK.

To round off his busy schedule, Mr Cairns will be the British Ambassador's Guest of Honour at a Red Arrows display in Qatar as part of a Middle East tour designed to promote the United Kingdom's long-standing relations across the Gulf.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The UK Government is strongly committed to fostering greater commercial engagement, partnerships and opportunities with Qatar. The UK Government has worked closely with Qatar Airways to secure this ground-breaking air route to the Middle East from Wales. I'm determined to take commercial relationships between Wales and Qatar to the next level.

That is why I am visiting this important trading partner today. From government trade missions, to the opportunities the new daily Cardiff to Doha service presents, I want Wales to be on the front foot to exploit every opportunity we have to increase Middle Eastern investment on Welsh shores.

Qatar is already the UK's third largest export market in the Middle East and also accounts for £35 billion of existing investment in the UK. Bilateral trade is valued at more than £5 billion per year and the relationship between the two countries continues to go from strength to strength.

Mr Cairns' visit is part of a series of international missions taken by senior government ministers to showcase the UK's commitment to forming even stronger global economic, investment and security ties as we prepare to leave the EU.

The Secretary of State for Wales visited Japan last month where he met with leading international companies with a presence in Wales to give them the certainty they need to expand and grow.

He also joined the Prime Minister at the biggest ever Qatar-UK Investment Forum to be held in Britain in Birmingham earlier this year where he highlighted Wales' unique offer to potential inward investors from the Middle East.

Mr Cairns added:

At a time when the UK is negotiating a new, deep and special partnership with the European Union, it is continuing to look outwards globally.

We want to link ourselves more closely to the fastest growing and influential parts of the global economy – Gulf States are clearly on that list. Qatar is leading the way as one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the most competitive country in the Middle East & North Africa.

The only sure route to success is to show continued commitment to a country that has huge and increasing potential; values its friendly and historic links with the UK; and maintains a strong desire to see that relationship develop further and profitably.

The Secretary of State for Wales has written to 26,000 Welsh businesses that have been identified as potential exporters and included a copy of a dedicated exporting guide.

The Wales Export Guide sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully exporting.

All the information companies in Wales need can be found [here](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Prime Minister has made building on existing links between the UK and the Gulf a priority. On her visit to the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) in Bahrain in December last year the Prime Minister expressed her commitment to a true partnership between the UK and Qatar encompassing security and defence as well as trade.
- In 2015 total UK exports to Qatar totalled £2.6 billion, with Qatar exports to UK at £2.7 billion.
- The Qatar 2030 National Vision creates significant potential for the future as Qatar's social and economic development plan for the coming years. It seeks to build a bridge between the present and the future and aims to propel Qatar forward by diversifying its economy away from oil and gas, and focusing on social, environmental and human development.