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30 May 2025

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 10 April to the Secretary of State about the work that the UK agri-food and drink attachés undertake, including in support of the Welsh agri-food sector. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

Protecting and expanding agri-food market access is central to increasing resilience and boosting growth. Food and drink manufacturing supports prosperity across the UK – it is the UK's largest manufacturing sector by value and is unique in being present across the whole of the UK. We recognise the tremendous value of working closely with Welsh businesses, from established brands to the innovative small and medium-sized enterprises that Wales is known for, to continue to expand agri-food market access.

Defra currently has sixteen agri-food attachés around the world whose role is to support UK agri-food exports by opening up new market access. This includes protecting existing market access - for example in the event of disease outbreak - breaking down export barriers, increasing trade resilience and driving export growth in priority markets. We work closely with industry to identify the highest value opportunities to inform our market access incentives in Wales and across the UK.

Defra liaises closely with Welsh government teams, both directly and through forums such as the Trade Measures Board to understand priorities and provide progress updates. The attachés also work very closely with Welsh government counterparts in embassies to broaden market access and promote Welsh food and drink.

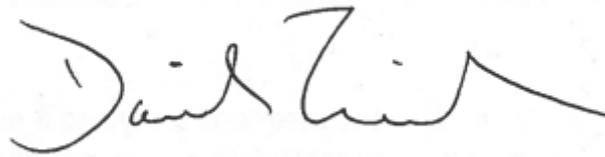
Recent examples include hosting food and drink showcase events in Morocco and New Delhi to celebrate St David's Day that Defra attachés helped to organise. These set piece promotional events compliment day to day joint working to increase access, resolve barriers and build visibility and demand for iconic Welsh products. Department for Business and Trade colleagues also play a key role in showcasing products at trade shows and supporting business to business connections. We will continue to look for opportunities to showcase Welsh food and drink and build further on the strong joint working between our global networks.

I am grateful that the agri-food attachés were able to meet Welsh government representatives as well as stakeholders as part of the Industry Engagement Week last November. The attachés also visited several farms and Welsh brands to raise awareness of the network in Wales. This built on a roundtable where Welsh businesses had the opportunity to connect with the attachés and ask questions about accessing markets. Welsh businesses fed back that the attachés were an invaluable resource to compliment the Welsh government's export accelerator programme and in market specialists. The export team in Defra has also visited the Royal Welsh Show to connect with officials and businesses directly to showcase the role we can play in delivering on export ambitions.

Last year the attachés working with Defra officials in the UK resolved an export barrier nearly every week, including securing access to the US market for UK beetroot growers and resuming pork exports to China for major UK producers, which industry estimates are worth £80 million. This work is continuing, including securing market access to export live seafood products to Vietnam, a priority market for Welsh producers.

Strengthening our export capability provides a powerful catalyst for growth and prosperity and enables us to showcase the quality and diversity of UK food and drink across the world. I look forward to continuing this long-standing partnership.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Zeichner', with a long, sweeping underline.

**DANIEL ZEICHNER MP**