

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM  
First Minister  
Welsh Government  
Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

15 March 2018

Dear First Minister

### **Meeting on 16 February 2018**

Thank you once again for attending the meeting of the Committee held in Newtown on 16 February on the subject of the food and drink industry in Wales.

During the meeting, you committed to providing the Committee with further information on several issues and Members have also agreed that I should write in relation to some of the topics discussed.

### **Welsh Government support for businesses participating in trade missions**

Prior to the meeting, Committee Members held a roundtable discussion with representatives of local food and drink businesses. Several of the attendees shared positive experiences of participating in overseas trade missions and the support they had received from the Welsh Government. It was noted, however, that the costs of attending such missions can present a significant barrier to small businesses. It was suggested that this is a particular issue for first-time attendees who may possess limited knowledge or experience on which to judge the value of making the investments of money and time required.

Members raised with you a proposal that the Welsh Government could further subsidise a producer's first attendance on a trade mission – for example by making it free of charge – in order to open these opportunities to small



businesses who may otherwise not be able to commit to the level of investment required. An alternative proposal could be to cover the costs of participating in briefings ahead of a trade mission, which may also support businesses to make better informed decisions about whether to participate.

During the meeting, you indicated that you did not anticipate that there would be any legal or regulatory barriers to providing this type of support and that you would give the proposal further consideration before writing to us.

### **Promotion of the food and drink industry**

The promotion of the Welsh food and drink industry was a major theme of our Committee meeting and the earlier discussion with local businesses.

We discussed a number of different ways in which individual products, and the Welsh food and drink industry as a whole, could be promoted. A specific proposal concerned developing a theme of ‘Welsh food and drink’ to promote Wales and Welsh tourism, similar to the way in which 2017 has been designated the ‘Year of Legends’. We would be grateful to receive your further thoughts on this proposal.

We also discussed the role of food and drink awards in celebrating and marketing the quality of Welsh produce. You indicated that you do not consider it necessary to revive Wales-specific food and drink awards on the basis that the UK-wide Great Taste awards work effectively for Wales. In January, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs stated that she *would* be happy to consider whether Wales should have its own food awards again in the future.<sup>1</sup> We would appreciate clarification of the Welsh Government’s position on this issue.

### **Supply of Welsh produce to large retailers**

The Committee discussed with you the challenge of ensuring Welsh food producers can be supported to supply their products to large retailers. You referred to increases in the quantity of regional products available in

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<sup>1</sup> [Record of Proceedings](#), 23 January 2018



supermarkets over recent years. However it was acknowledged that securing opportunities to supply on a wider basis, for example to stores across the UK, and obtaining the necessary support to scale up their production can be a significant challenge.

You indicated that the Welsh Government engages in dialogue with supermarkets and that you would write to the Committee having given this issue further consideration.

### **Implications of Brexit for the food and drink industry**

A significant element of our discussion focused on Brexit and the impact that leaving the European Single Market could have on food and drink producers. The Committee welcomed the updates you were able to provide in relation to issues such as the need to develop UK Frameworks and the potential implications arising from both tariff and non-tariff barriers for producers of goods for export, such as lamb and shellfish.

We also welcome your statement that future funding for agriculture and land management should not be subject to the Barnett Formula following Brexit which reflects a recommendation made by the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee in their report on the Future of Land Management in Wales published in 2017. We would be grateful for further information about any discussions that the Welsh Government has had with the UK Government and other devolved administrations on this matter.

We would be grateful to receive further information on these issues in due course.

Yours sincerely



**Ann Jones AM**  
**Deputy Presiding Officer**  
**Chair, Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister**

