

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol at y Cyfarfod Llawn Information Further to Plenary

Cyhoeddir ymatebion yn yr iaith y'u darparwyd, gyda chyfieithiad Saesneg o ymatebion yn y Gymraeg.

Responses are published in the language in which they are provided, with a translation into English of responses provided in Welsh.

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol at y Datganiad a Chyhoeddiad Busnes a gyhoeddwyd gan Alun Davies, y Dirprwy Weinidog Amaethyddiaeth, Bwyd, Pysgodfeydd a Rhaglenni Ewropeaidd, ar 26 Mawrth 2012

Information further to the Business Statement and Announcement issued by Alun Davies, the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes, on 26 March 2012

At/To Darren Millar

FOOD LABELLING

In response to your business question to the Minister for Finance & Leader of the House Jane Hutt AM, on 6 March 2012, I am writing to you to outline some of the work that the Welsh Government is undertaking, with regards to country of origin labelling of foods, and our work with supermarkets and restaurants on related matters of marque and branding.

The Welsh Government's Food & Market Development Division (FMDD) works with industry partners to identify and capitalise on opportunities to add value to Welsh produce and to seize market opportunities. Through policy negotiations and targeted programmes, FMDD officials provide a range of labelling and branding support to assist food & drink companies. These include –

Working with supermarkets

The Going for Growth trade development programme, assists companies who wish to increase their supply to major retailers and smaller independents, such as Spar or even the local farmers market. Clear concise branding is key to consumer confidence and this is covered in detail. In addition, my officials have held a series of meetings with all the major supermarkets to maintain and develop the sourcing and sales of True Taste winners and other Welsh brands.

Wales the True Taste Food and Drink Awards

True Taste Awards winners receive a mark for promotional use to assist businesses in capitalising on opportunities and sales. Winners also benefit from the wider branding and associated support package. The awards allow FMDD under state aid notifications to promote and market Welsh food and drink in Wales, the UK, Europe and beyond.

EU regulation on food information brings together general food labelling and nutrition requirements into one European-wide piece of legislation. These also deal with how we label food to show country of origin, allergen, caffeine information, and more. The Food Standards Agency is the UK's lead body on these regulations. My officials are fully engaged on negotiations on these regulations which directly apply in Wales. The European Council of Ministers formally agreed the EU Regulation for provision of food information to consumers last year. Work is now underway on how to implement the regulations. The main points are:

- Country of origin—the regulations introduce mandatory origin information for most fresh and frozen meat. Also, the origin of main ingredients will have to be given if different from where the final product is made.
- Nutrition labelling will be required for most foods. Simplified information may be provided voluntary on front of pack.
- Labelling clarity—a minimum font size has been set for all mandatory information on labels.

The objective is to help food businesses, including manufactures, producers, retailers and caterers, to comply with the law and avoid misleading labelling. This also assists enforcement authorities (Food Standards Agency and Trading Standards) in identifying misleading labelling, as well helping consumers. The EU has also agreed to give consideration to making it necessary for labels on meat products such as sausages and meat pies, as well as a range of other products such as cheese to show the country of origin. The EU has agreed to consider these additional areas within three years.

Protected Food Names (PFN)

The European system for the Protection of Food Names (PFN) scheme highlights regional or traditional foods whose authenticity and origin can be guaranteed. Under this system a named food or drink registered at European level will be given legal protection against imitation throughout the EU based on its designations, such as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indicator (PGI), Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG). These schemes are all industry led.

Welsh Beef and **Welsh Lamb** were granted PGI status in November 2002 and July 2003 respectively. The main requirements of the PGI specifications are that lambs and cattle must be: Born and reared in Wales, fully traceable, and slaughtered and processed in HCC approved abattoirs/processors. The PGI status has proved to be an effective marketing tool, as the initiative is well known in Europe, a key market for Welsh food and drink.

Future Plans

I would also draw your attention to the fact that with support from our Food & Farming Panel, I am conducting a full review of the future branding of Welsh food and drink as part of our preparation for the next Rural Development Plan.