



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Food and Drink Wales Industry Board: update from the Chair (September 2021)

The latest on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and the impact on the Welsh food and drink industry.

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Dear all

The last 18 months has been the most challenging in a generation. The resilience and resolve of Welsh Food & Drink Businesses has been severely tested, and it is a real testament to all in our industry that we find ourselves looking to move forward as we approach autumn.

Whilst it would be wrong to ignore the many challenges that we continue to face including haulage, import regulation uncertainty, more bureaucratic exporting, staffing shortages and of course the continuum of Covid, it's so important that we now begin to build for our future.

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I have absolutely no doubt that Welsh Food & Drink is growing but to continue our trajectory means we must focus on what our customers' need both in home, UK and Global Markets. This will no doubt need to focus on innovation, provenance, and sustainability.

I believe Welsh Food & Drink has real potential in the global export market. As the details of Free Trade Agreements begin to be revealed, I believe strongly that we should focus on what these Free Trade Agreements mean to Welsh Food and Drink businesses including where our competitive advantage lies. Our success will be decided by how we leverage this competitive advantage and not in our ability to react to opportunities which don't play to our strengths in Wales.

I cannot wait to celebrate our Welsh Food & Drink at BlasCymru (Taste Wales) in October. It's our showcase to the World and a real opportunity to kick start the next stage of our growth so I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the event be that physically or in the virtual World!

As ever, collaboration is key and I would encourage food and drink businesses of all sizes and in all parts of Wales to engage with the Board and share your experiences. We should continue to share our knowledge and insight, look for solutions and navigate these uncertain times together.

**Andy Richardson, Chair of the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board**

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