

Royal Welsh Show 2023

Minister for Rural Affairs

**Project Helix and FIW Breakfast**

<b>Day and Date:</b>	Tuesday 25 July
<b>Time:</b>	Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information
<b>Location:</b>	Food Business Lounge, RWAS Food Hall
<b>Audience:</b>	Food Businesses who have used FIW services
<b>WG Official:</b>	Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information – Deputy Director, Food Division tel Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information
<b>Contact:</b>	Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information

**What is expected of the Minister?**

The Minister has agreed to attend the launch of the annual report of Project Helix and give a short speech to recognise project progress to date in achieving positive outcomes for the Welsh food and drink industry.

The Minister will use the speech to launch the Strategic Innovation Scheme and promote the wider business support provided to the Food & Drink Industry by the Welsh Government.

**Who will greet the Minister on arrival?**

Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information, Deputy Director, Food Division will greet the Minister at the entrance to the Food Hall.

Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information	Delegates arrive/networking/breakfast refreshments (all Welsh produce) to be served
Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information	Minister arrives
Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information	Welcome – opening Food Centre Managers speeches ( Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information

	<p>(Food Technology Centre); Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information (Food Centre Wales and Information redacted FOIA s40(2) – personal information (Zero2Five Food Industry Centre)</p> <p><b>Minister Lesley Griffiths speech</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Lectern and PA system will be available</li> <li>·Simultaneous translation &amp; photography arranged by Four Cymru</li> </ul>
Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information	<p>Photo opportunity with Minister Lesley Griffiths and the Food Centre Directors</p> <p>Networking</p>
Information redacted FOIA s38 – Health and Safety information	<p><b>Minister to leave</b></p> <p>Event finishes</p>

### **Speaking Notes**

Bore da, good morning, everyone and thanks to Food Innovation Wales for inviting me this morning. This year's event is being held against the backdrop of the continuing economic pressures facing businesses including a changed global trading environment, inflationary pressures, and high energy costs. The rising cost of living is a constant challenge to us all and will result in a challenging environment for businesses for some time.

The Food and Drink industry is one of the key sectors of the Welsh Government Foundational Economy. The support offered by Food Innovation Wales is so critical to support businesses through these unprecedented times, where global uncertainty and supply chain disruptions are a daily occurrence.

I am pleased to note that the new Welsh Government Innovation Strategy, ***Wales Innovates***, sets out a key role for the food & drink industry to deliver sustainable food production and a thriving agri-tech, food, and rural economy.

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Food Innovation Wales continues to support the success of the industry in Wales. Since its launch in 2016, Project HELIX has had a hugely positive effect on Wales's food and drink industry by helping companies to adopt a more innovative, efficient, and strategic approach.

The results of this work can be seen in its **£355 million impact to the Welsh economy**. In addition, it has supported the creation of 683 new jobs and safeguarded over 3,600 others. The work of Food Innovation Wales has seen the launch of 2,100 new products developed through its assistance and support.

Today I am delighted to announce further funding from Welsh Government for **Project HELIX as part of wider Strategic Innovation Scheme** so that the food centres can continue to support the Food and Drink industry to produce safe and innovative products, strengthen local economies, tackle diet and nutrition challenges, build more resilient supply chains, and are also integral to our Health and Sustainable Futures plan here in Wales.

This morning I am launching the Strategic Innovation Scheme to provide a comprehensive range of business support services to food and drink businesses across Wales.

This support will underpin the Welsh Government's Vision for the Food and Drink Industry and strengthen the delivery of the Community Food Strategy and recognises the designation of Food as a key part of the Foundational Economy in Wales and its importance in all our lives.

**The Strategic Innovation Scheme will cover five areas of activities:**

**The first** of these obviously is our **Project Helix** commitments.

**The second** area of activity is **Enterprise for Success** which will provide support for new and developing businesses to access markets and establish themselves within the food and drink production landscape in Wales.

**Thirdly** the Strategic Innovation Scheme will seek to address the chronic skills shortages that continue to face the industry through **Skills for Success**. This activity will provide specialist training support for businesses, as well as work with schools and other campaigns to promote careers and job vacancies in the Food and Drink industry.

I have already mentioned the challenges facing Food and Drink businesses, which is why the **fourth area** of activity is so important, this being **Scale-up for Success**. This will provide specialist financial and business support to encourage businesses as they grow from small to medium and medium to large businesses, and work towards long-term viability. It will support businesses to plan for economically sustainable growth, and navigate the uncertain times that we find ourselves in.

The Food and Drink industry in Wales has a reputation for working together and fostering collaboration. **The fifth and final** activity that makes up the Strategic Innovation Scheme, includes **Clusters for**

**Success. This Knowledge Exchange Network is the largest in Wales and the UK and** will seek to further the collaborations between companies and provide opportunities for best practice to be shared amongst businesses across Wales through a structure and facilitated networking exchange that takes place at a business and community level all across Wales.

All the activities that I have highlighted within the Strategic Innovation Scheme will be encouraged to work together to maximise the benefits for **ALL** Food and Drink businesses operating in Wales.

### **BlasCymru /Taste Wales 2023**

I would like to highlight the support that Food Innovation Wales will be providing to my flagship event BlasCymru/ TasteWales, which will take place 25-26 October at the International Convention Centre Wales (ICCW) in Newport near Cardiff.

In recognition of the ongoing economic challenges the industry is facing, **our theme this year is Powerful Together: From**

**Challenge to Success.** The role of resilience, innovation and optimism in the Welsh food and drink industry will be highlighted at the event.

This will be reflected throughout the event, in seminars and in dedicated exhibition zones. This international exhibition will have three integrated zones with Innovation taking centre stage and Food Innovation Wales is leading on this delivery.

### **Conclusion**

I firmly believe that the Food and Drink industry in Wales will continue to make a significant contribution to the Welsh economy, and that the support offered by Food Innovation Wales and Project Helix will be vital in that success.

**850 words**



## **Briefing**

- Food Innovation Wales (FIW), supported by Welsh Government, brings together three food centres of excellence dedicated to encouraging the development of the food sector and providing technical and operational support on all aspects of food manufacturing.
- I am delighted 703 enterprises have been assisted, 3647 jobs sustained, and 683 jobs have been created. The overall financial impact to the food and drink industry since the start of the project is over £355 million. The impact is impressive and the announcement today will allow this momentum to be built upon and enhanced.