# WRITTEN STATEMENT

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# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Update on Hybu Cig Cymru/Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) Enhanced Export Development Programme** |
| **DATE**  | **8 November 2018** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs** |

Today, I am addressing the Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) annual conference in Builth Wells, where farmers, food processors and retailers from Wales and beyond will be discussing the impact of Brexit on the red meat sector in Wales.

Over a third of Wales’s lamb production, together with a significant amount of beef are exported, in trade worth almost £200m per year for the Welsh economy, with over 90% of those exports destined for the EU. Increasing exports is a key element of our overall ambition to grow turnover in the food and drinks industry by 30% by 2020, however, the potential scenario of the UK leaving the EU with no deal, and the possible introduction of WTO tariffs of over 40% on red meat exports, would be catastrophic to this important sector in Wales.

Members may recall 12 months ago I took early action to support our red meat sector in the face of the uncertain future trading arrangements post-Brexit, when I announced Welsh Government investment of £1.5m over three years for HCC to deliver an Enhanced Export Development Programme to support the red meat industry in Wales.

Since its commencement, the programme has enabled HCC to support the industry to establish a network of representatives in key markets, including France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia and Benelux, delivering key activities including trade support, consumer focussed marketing, point of sale and in-store activities, digital marketing and inward missions. The programme is successfully helping to maintain key markets in Europe, as well as developing market access further afield, and has already been instrumental in securing brand new business in Belgium, Portugal, Singapore and Qatar.

This is undoubtedly a critical juncture for our red meat industry and it has never been more important to raise Wales’ international profile and proactively promote our quality food and drink to the world. I have personally led a number of overseas business delegations to these key markets, most recently at the SIAL trade exhibition in Paris last month, where I have witnessed first-hand the commitment and enthusiasm of our industry, flying the flag for Wales and showcasing our quality food and drink to an international audience.

Brexit will not change our commitment and determination to developing and maintaining these important trading links and our programmes, including the HCC Enhanced Export Development Programme, will continue to support our producers and processors to further develop export markets and market access, to strengthen and future-proof our industry and meet the forthcoming challenges and opportunities in the coming years.