

AHDB news release

For immediate release

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SIGNIFICANT STEP IN OPENING BEEF MARKET TO CHINA

British beef producers are a step closer to exporting their high-quality meat to China, following a vote of confidence from inspectors.

Last month, for the first time, Defra and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) hosted a delegation of Chinese officials at a beef farm and abattoir in Surrey to show at first hand our high levels of animal welfare and disease control measures.

The visit, which included a meeting with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), was part of an ambitious plan to open exports of British beef to China – opening this lucrative market for British farmers and giving a massive boost to the industry.

The products in demand in China include quality cuts and, with a growing middle-income population, China's consumption of beef has increased and it imported a total of £1.5 Billion worth last year – double the amount imported in 2014.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom visited China earlier this week where she met businesses and government ministers to discuss increased trade opportunities for UK food and drink.

Andrea Leadsom said: "The Chinese have always attached great importance to food safety and quality and we are flying the flag for our industry, renowned for its exceptional standards of welfare, quality and safety.

"I have just returned from China where appetite for our food and drink is huge and there are fantastic opportunities for our farmers and producers – with exports reaching £200 million for the first half of this year already.

"This visit from the Chinese delegation was a significant step towards opening the door for our world-class beef into this hugely lucrative market."

Chief vet Nigel Gibbens, who chaired the closing meeting, welcomed the positive discussions held with the delegation.

AHDB Beef & Lamb head of global supply chain development Phil Hadley said: "This was a small but important step on the road to exports to China.

"It was a very good and worthwhile visit and the next steps have been agreed. We are at the beginning of a long road and it is going to take some time to negotiate the full opening of the market."

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AHDB is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain. Its purpose is to equip levy payers with independent, evidence-based information and tools to grow, become more competitive and sustainable. Established in 2008 and classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body, it supports the following industries: meat and livestock (cattle, sheep and pigs) in England; horticulture, milk and potatoes in Great Britain; and cereals and oilseeds in the UK. AHDB's

remit covers 75 per cent of total UK agricultural output. Further information on AHDB can be found at www.ahdb.org.uk

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