

UK beef hits US shelves tariff-free for the first time - cutting costs for UK businesses

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First tariff-free shipment of UK beef arrives in the US, as government works in partnership with the food and farming industries to save millions in export fees and grow the UK economy.

UK food and farming take centre stage this week after the first tariff-free shipment of British beef arrived in the US, alongside the launch of the UK's first dedicated agri-food trade mission to Washington DC.

The trade mission will build on a milestone of the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal, where both countries agreed to implement a reciprocal 13,000 tonne quota for beef. The quota is a major growth opportunity for British farmers, worth up to £70 million a year if fully utilised.

Thanks to the deal, the first ever tariff-free shipment of UK beef under the quota has now arrived in the US from Northern Ireland's biggest red meat exporter Foyle Food Group, who employ 1,150 people in the UK. Valued at more than £190,000, the agreement will see nearly £50,000 tariff relief to this landmark shipment alone – easing costs for businesses and supporting growth back home.

The UK's food and drink exports were worth over £25 billion globally last year, £2 billion of which went to the US, with considerable potential to grow the UK's global trade.

Environment Secretary Emma Reynolds said:

The UK produces the finest food and drink, and I'm proud to champion our world-leading farmers, producers and exporters on the global stage.

I am leading the first ever dedicated agri-food trade mission to the US to pursue opportunities to grow our trade with the largest consumer market in the world.

The first agri-trade mission will seize on British food's reputation for high quality and standards, taking the very best of the UK's largest manufacturing sector directly to America's buyers, businesses and decision-makers. In a market of more than 300 million people, the visit will turn international prestige into real commercial opportunity for UK farmers and food producers.

The Environment Secretary will be joined by key UK industry figures on her mission, including representatives from the National Farmers' Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Foyle Food Group, the International Meat Trade Association and the Scotch Whisky Association.

She will attend the US Annual Meat Conference to support five of the UK's largest meat exporters and discuss opportunities for growing the US market, flying the flag for UK meat among American buyers.

Reynolds will then host a major Food and Drink Showcase reception at the Ambassador's Residence, bringing together UK exporters and buyers to sample premium beef alongside other world-class

British products such as cheese, seafood, spirits and English sparkling wine.

Delegates from the Scotch Whisky Association will have opportunity to get their products in front of US buyers, championing one of the UK's most iconic spirits in a market with strong consumer demand.

Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle said:

For the first time, UK beef farmers have exclusive access to a market of over 300 million people, and that is a direct result of the deal we struck with the US last year.

This isn't just symbolic — it's delivering real results. British beef is world-class, and American consumers deserve access to it. I look forward to seeing more of our farmers seize this opportunity and grow their businesses on the international stage.

Michael Acheson, Business Development at Foyle Food Group, said:

Foyle Food Group is delighted that the UK has secured a 13,000 metric tonne quota for British beef in the United States through the new UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal.

This agreement provides tariff-free access to the world's largest beef market. For Foyle Food Group, it means we can now offer British beef to a wide range of customers across the United States. Securing this dedicated UK quota for the first time also allows us to build longer-term business relationships and provide a more consistent and reliable supply into the US market.

The trade mission also kickstarts the government's ambition to act on Baroness Batters' Farming Profitability Review, which identified expanding export opportunities as essential to supporting farm businesses to improve profitability and driving economic growth across every part of the United Kingdom.

As the Environment Secretary outlined during her address to the National Farmers Union Conference on Tuesday 25 February, the government is committed to dedicated trade missions to showcase British food and drink overseas.

NFU President Tom Bradshaw said:

As one of the commitments made off the back of the Farm Profitability Review, it's great to see the Secretary of State undertaking this trip in collaboration with industry.

There is a growing demand in the US for a range of UK products, not least British beef but also lamb, dairy and pork. We hope to build on this momentum and champion high quality British produce in new and potential markets.

Emily Norton, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) Chair, said:

International trade and access to a broad portfolio of markets are vitally important for our red meat and dairy industry. The appetite for our world-class red meat and dairy produce was underlined last year with record values of UK exports achieved for both sectors.

Central to this success is the importance of connecting with people to help our exports continue to thrive. AHDB's updated report on prospects for UK agri-food exports in North America has highlighted long-term opportunities for premium red meat and dairy products in the USA and the wider region. We welcome the Secretary of State's visit and look forward to continuing working with government and industry to help deliver further success for British red meat and dairy exports.

Mark Kent, Chief Executive at the Scotch Whisky Association, said:

It is good to be teaming up with the Secretary of State on her trip to Washington DC. We're proud that Scotch whisky is the UK's biggest food and drink export, and the United States is our most important market, worth £933 million in 2025. Scotch whisky has deep, longstanding ties with the American whiskey industry – not just through our closely connected supply chain, but in our shared commitment to a premium product that's loved around the world.

At a time when global trade is evolving and our sector is seeing increased pressure in crucial markets like the US, the Secretary of State's visit is an important opportunity to build on that historic relationship while championing zero tariff trade which benefits whisky industries, and their supply chain from farmers to barrel makers to the hospitality industry, on both sides of the Atlantic.

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