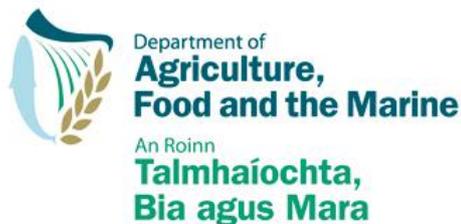


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12th July 2017

Creed chairs tenth Beef Roundtable, confident performance for Beef Sector in 2017

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. today chaired the tenth meeting of the Beef Roundtable. The meeting discussed the response of the sector to the different issues it has faced since the last meeting of the Roundtable.

Acknowledging the resilience shown by the sector in 2017, Minister Creed emphasised the contribution made across the beef sector which has allowed it to react to the challenges it has faced, most notably since the result of the Brexit referendum in the UK last year. Minister Creed said: *“It is encouraging to see how the sector has responded positively in the first six months of 2017 to the challenges it has faced. In particular I note the strong performance of live exports which are 43% ahead of last year and the growing third country trade which has seen markets in Asia especially, showing strong increases in the value of exports in the first quarter.”*

In addition to updating the Roundtable on the work of the Government and the Department in response to Brexit, Minister Creed also provided updates on his most recent trade missions and his continuing work in opening international markets to Irish food and drink: *“I am cognisant of the importance of having as many markets as possible open to Irish food and drink. Since I became Minister I have and am continuously working to expand market access for all agri food exports. We are beginning to see the fruits of this increased focus.”*

Referring specifically to the trade mission undertaken last month to the USA and Mexico, Minister Creed referred to the recent granting of approval by the USDA to the Bord Bia Process Verified Programme and its importance to overall strategy for the marketing of Irish beef in the USA: *"I was delighted to see the approval by Bord Bia of the Process Verified Programme for labelling Irish beef as grass fed and reared outdoors. I believe that this is a major milestone in our attempts to firmly establish Irish beef in the US market and one which will hopefully provide further momentum to the sale of Irish beef in the US."*

The Minister also provided the Roundtable with an update on progress in different international trade deals affecting Ireland and Irish beef reminding the Roundtable that notwithstanding the primacy of Brexit, other international trade deals are of significant importance to Irish beef: *"Whilst Brexit is very much a key priority for my office at the moment, I can assure you that activities in ongoing international trade agreements are being closely monitored."*

The Minister, in acknowledging of the importance of the CAP to the beef sector, stressed his support for the retention of a strong and well funded CAP budget but also noted the challenge the overall CAP budget is facing in the future.

The Roundtable received a presentation from Mark Zeig of Bord Bia on the market outlook for 2017, an update on markets access from Maria Dunne of the Meat and Milk Policy Division of the Department and a presentation on Brexit from John Downey of the Brexit and International Trade Division of the Department.

Following on from the last Roundtable a number of stakeholder presentations were also received from the ICMSA, the ICSA and the ICOS. Minister Creed expressed his views on the benefit these stakeholder presentations bring to the Roundtable: *"Stakeholder presentations are an important element of the Roundtable and ensure proactive participation by all stakeholders. This has brought a new dynamic to the Roundtable over the last 12 months and will contribute to the continued success of the Roundtable."*

Concluding the Minister said *"It is a little over 12 months since the result of the UK Brexit referendum which created an enormous level of uncertainty not just for Ireland as a whole but most especially Irish agriculture and our beef sector. However the response of the sector since then has been one of adaption and resilience. It is this response that the sector has shown to the challenges presented to it that can give us confidence in our ability to continue to respond effectively and further develop the beef sector in the next number of years. The Roundtable*

continues to be a very significant element in the development of our beef sector and allow it to realise the objectives laid down for it in Food Wise 2025.”

ENDS