



DEPARTMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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DEFRA GIVES £2 MILLION BOOST TO QUALITY REGIONAL FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

Food and Farming Minister, Lord Bach announced today a £2million boost to support the quality regional food and drink sector.

Defra is providing a further £1million per year for two years from 2006/7 to Food from Britain, the non-departmental body responsible for promoting regional food and drink in England and overseas. This is on top of the £3million Defra has already provided over the last three years to support the sector through the Regional Food Strategy."

This additional funding will allow Food from Britain to continue to support the regional food and drink sector through a range of activities, focussing on trade developments, consumer awareness and improving business competitiveness.

The decision follows an independent economic review of the Government's Regional Food Strategy published by consultants ADAS which shows that Government support for the sector has been effective and that those firms that have benefited from the strategy have performed better than non-beneficiaries.

Speaking today at an event organised by the Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group on 'Reconnecting the Public with Farming, Food and the Countryside', Lord Bach said:

"I am delighted to announce today that Defra is providing a further £2million spread over two years to Food from Britain, to continue our support of the quality regional food sector in England. This is on top of the £3million Defra has already provided over the last three years to support our regional food producers."

"The success of the Regional Food Strategy so far is a reflection of the hard work of all those involved and especially Food from Britain,

the Regional Development Agencies and the regional food groups."

The ADAS evaluation report includes some recommendations for improvements to the strategy and Defra will be reviewing with stakeholders how best to take these forward. Defra is also taking this opportunity to consolidate delivery and promotion of the EU Protected Food Name Scheme with Food from Britain. The aim will be to maximise the effectiveness of the strategy and its delivery so that producers and consumers continue to receive the full benefits of this important element of the Governments Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy.