

Press release: PM's meeting with the President of Colombia: 17 June 2019

Prime Minister Theresa May had a bilateral meeting with the President of Colombia, Iván Duque.

Press release: Northern healthcare firms target new opportunities in Africa

Businesses including Yorkshire's Sunflower Medical and Medasil were amongst 16 firms from the north that travelled to trade fair Africa Health 2019 in South Africa as part of a mission organised by DIT and Medilink UK, the UK's largest association of Life Sciences and Medical Technology companies.

This comes as a new analysis of HMRC data by DIT found that exports of UK medical equipment reached a record high of £1.8 billion in 2018, up by 6% on 2017.

The mission, which saw the delivery of a British pavilion at the exhibition, provided an unrivalled opportunity for the businesses to meet potential new buyers and learn more about overcoming barriers and breaking into new markets in Africa. The businesses were accompanied by life sciences sector specialists from DIT in the north of England.

Bradford's Sunflower Medical, which manufactures contemporary functional furniture for medical use, has experienced growing demand from several African markets over recent years, and has already supplied its medical furniture into Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Morocco and Nigeria.

Sunflower Medical's Export Sales Manager Paul Hampton believes there are still significant opportunities for expansion with new healthcare projects across the continent.

He said:

We're very conscious of the rapidly growing opportunities in African markets, which is why we made the decision to return to Africa Health this year. It's great that DIT and Medilink host these missions, as being on the ground at these events is invaluable to companies like ours".

This year's trip proved incredibly fruitful, with an encouraging quantity and quality of sales leads generated. Just over half of sales leads over the three days came from the South African market, with interest also coming from companies looking to represent Sunflower Medical in Kenya, Ghana and Malawi.

Leeds based Medasil, which has been making devices for a range of medical applications since 1974, was also in attendance on the mission.

Medasil's Christine Casey commented:

While Medasil doesn't currently export to African markets, we're keen to venture into new areas of opportunity, which is why we registered for the DIT mission to Africa Health.

We were hugely encouraged by what we saw, and we gained some valuable insights into the opportunities the continent holds. Our exhibit was received very positively and we have returned to the UK with genuine excitement about the opportunities for expansion into the African continent".

Strengthening the UK's partnership with African nations is a key element of the UK Government's vision for Global Britain.

Last year the Department for International Trade appointed its first HM Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE, who is working closely with HM Ambassadors, High Commissioners and the wider diplomatic network to promote UK trade and prosperity in the region.

Commenting on the recent mission, HM Trade Commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith OBE said:

I'm delighted to see Northern Powerhouse businesses exploring the fast-growing opportunities that African markets have to offer.

I've seen for myself how the UK's expertise in the healthcare sector is the envy of many countries around the world. Coupled with our manufacturing heritage and leading innovation, I have every confidence that British businesses operating in this space will experience strong demand for their products and services over the years ahead.

Press release: Northern healthcare firms target new opportunities in Africa

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Press release: £230M boost for British beef as China agrees market access

British beef could be served on Chinese dinner plates by the end of the year, following an agreement reached today between China and the UK.

The move could be worth an estimated £230 million for British producers in the first five years alone, and comes more than 20 years after the Chinese government imposed a ban on UK imports of beef in 1996.

The UK-China Beef Protocol was signed today by Farming Minister Robert Goodwill and the Chinese Ambassador to the UK Liu Xiaoming as part of the tenth Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) between the UK and China, securing market access for UK beef exporters by the end of 2019.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Today's step is welcome progress for our world-leading British beef producers, who will soon be able to export their products to one of the world's largest economies, supporting local jobs and bringing

millions of pounds to the UK economy each year.

This comes as a result of years of hard work across Government, including at the Department for International Trade, and marks the next step in realising our global trading ambitions with unbeatable British food.

As we leave the European Union, we will continue to break down market access barriers to make it easier for UK businesses to trade across the world.

Farming Minister Robert Goodwill said:

This is a major coup for our world-class food and farming industry, and a landmark move which could be worth £230 million for British business in the next five years alone.

Today's milestone reflects our ambition to maximise new trading opportunities across the world and become a truly Global Britain as we leave the EU.

The announcement comes after China recently approved five British pork plants to export products to China, which will build on a market which is already worth £70 million per year. We look forward to further approval of qualified UK pork plants by the end of the 2019.

China is currently the UK's eighth largest export market for food and drink, with more than £610 million worth of products bought by Chinese consumers last year.

The UK-China Beef Protocol is the culmination of several years of site inspections and engagement between UK and Chinese government officials. [China's ban was lifted in June](#) last year when market access engagement for UK beef exports began.

The announcement follows a successful inspection hosted last week by Defra, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the Food Standards Agency, DAERA in Northern Ireland, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP), in conjunction with beef farmers and food business operators. This effort was facilitated by policy and trade teams at the Department for International Trade, both in assisting talks with Chinese officials, and supporting Chinese delegations visiting the UK.

AHDB's International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

Today's announcement is fantastic news for our meat processors, who are set to benefit massively from the opportunities this new agreement presents.

It comes after many years spent working tirelessly to reopen access for our beef exports and it's a real testament to the work of government and other industry bodies to make this happen. We look forward to seeing the first shipments leave the UK bound for China in the near future.

The UK-China Beef Protocol reflects the strength of Britain's relationship with China, and a mutual commitment to trade.

The UK's food exports continue to soar, with food and drink exports worth more than £22 billion last year. Our food and drink businesses are now selling their products to 217 markets.

The Government continues to encourage and support businesses through its ['Food is Great'](#) campaign as they consider launching into overseas markets or expanding their current global customer base.