

# Food for Thought

A COVID-19 update from the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board



10 April 2020

"The Food and Drink Wales Industry Board exists to champion food and drink in Wales and the current unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19 has shown that role to be more vital than ever. The aim of this update from the Board is to provide regular and concise information to the industry and crucially, to signpost to the information that is needed, right now.



We're working hard to help find practical solutions and to fight for Welsh Food and Drink at every level. Our excellent relationship with Welsh Government is of the utmost importance but we're also working tirelessly to ensure Wales' voice is heard in Westminster on reserved issues and also by the key trade associations.

We recognise that times are extremely difficult for many, many businesses in the sector at the moment. The Board encourages you to keep in touch so we can share those vital industry insights with Government and continue to fight for your business and our food and drink sector."

**Andy Richardson, Chair of the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board**

## Key actions from the week \*some but not all actions

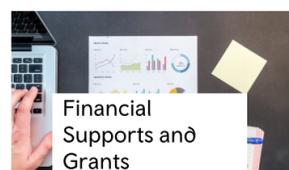
- Throughout the week, we have hosted daily conference calls with our Board members and senior Welsh Government colleagues to highlight and discuss key areas of the industry impacted by Covid-19.
- We have been actively listening to the voices of the industry and sharing the concerns and experiences expressed by businesses during coronavirus with Ministers and policy makers in Welsh Government and non-devolved issues with Westminster.
- We have received phone calls from food and drink businesses across Wales sharing their worries around the coronavirus pandemic and the impact the virus has already had on businesses. We have been working hard to link businesses to the best guidance and support during these times.
- Working with cluster leads, we have been engaged in cluster conversations and meetings on sector-specific issues within the food and drink industry. We have been liaising with Welsh Government officials and policy makers on the best route forward to solve these sector-specific issues.
- Following the introduction of the two-metre rule protecting workers in Wales from the coronavirus on 7 April, we have been listening to businesses across the industry on their main concerns with this new law. We have been actively feeding this information to our colleagues at Welsh Government.
- We have been working with the Food Innovation Wales team on a survey to be shared with food and drink businesses in Wales to better understand the needs of the industry and determine the best resolutions to problems many businesses are currently facing.
- During this time, we understand many food and drink businesses have an urgent need to source additional labour while others may be struggling to retain their workforce due to food service or export market decline. To support this, we have created a Facebook Group – [Wales food and drink workforce collaboration](#) – to encourage businesses to collaborate and share resources.
- We have been sharing Welsh Government resources, mental health toolkits and other important information on our [Twitter](#) account. Most recently, we have created a [LinkedIn](#) page where similar information has been shared. Be sure to follow both to keep updated.

## Top news stories of the week

- [North Wales grocers, butchers, bakers and other food firms doing home deliveries](#)
- [Mental Health at Work: Coronavirus and isolation - Supporting yourself and your colleagues](#)
- [What is happening to UK supermarket sales during the coronavirus crisis?](#)
- [The food and drink suppliers hiring new staff to cope with coronavirus](#)

## COVID-19 support

Click through for additional information on resources available



## Voices from the industry

With Huw Thomas of Puffin Produce



Since the 1970s, Puffin Produce has proudly served Wales with the best Welsh potatoes and seasonal vegetables grown, picked and packed in Pembrokeshire. We supply 80% of potatoes on Welsh supermarket shelves making us the largest supplier of fresh produce in Wales.

As a major supplier to the supermarkets in Wales, we are aware of the concerns and pressures resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the food industry. To keep the Welsh nation fed and to keep our staff safe, we have changed the way we work and divided our employees into fifteen distinct teams whilst also implementing a two-metre distanced between colleagues. We have a responsibility to keep supermarkets supplied with the products the Welsh population needs, but we also have a moral duty to look after the health and emotional wellbeing of our employees.

It is also our priority to make as little disruption to the food supply chain as possible. In doing so, we have cross-trained a number of our employees to ensure greater resilience across the company. We are aware of the ramifications that can and will result from this pandemic, but we are confident the measures we have put in place will benefit all of Wales from our employees to the supermarkets and our local economy.

At Puffin Produce, we understand Welsh Government ensures all food and drink businesses are supported throughout these difficult times and we hope working together with the government our economy will recover and grow as quickly as possible following the crisis.

Stay connected for updates



[Join our Facebook Group to collaborate workforce](#)

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