

Food for Thought

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



7 Mai 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 signpost businesses to the information that is needed right now in a concise format.



Having exceeded the industry's growth target, as laid out in the Welsh Government's action plan for 2014-2020, to grow from £5bn to £7bn, it is crucial we protect this success throughout this pandemic, and begin to consider the challenges and opportunities which have been presented to us as a result of this unprecedented experience.

There will be many aspects of the industry to consider in the future including the role of finance and technology, which markets we target and capitalising on any beneficial new ways of working that have resulted from this crisis.

But for now, we recognise that times are extremely difficult for many, many businesses in the sector. I encourage you to connect with the Board and share your concerns and insights so that we can provide the best solutions for your business and the sector at large. It is our mission, in partnership with Welsh Government, to work closely with food and drink businesses to ensure we continue to have a sustainable, resilient and profitable industry.

We would also like to thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope this newsletter provides the information, resources and support you are looking for during this time."

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

Key actions from the week *some but not all actions

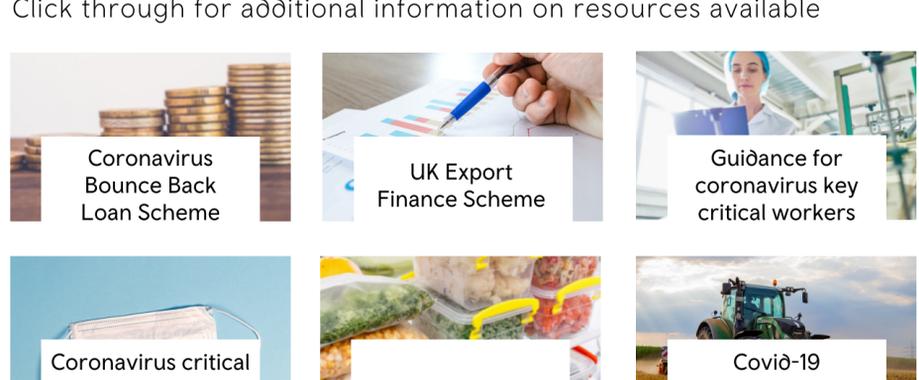
- The Board is preparing a document of key evidence outlining challenges and opportunities to present to Welsh Government with the purpose of ensuring the food and drink industry is a top priority in discussions surrounding Welsh recovery planning.
- Throughout the week, we have hosted daily conference calls with our Board members and senior Welsh Government colleagues to highlight and discuss key areas of the industry impacted by Covid-19. We've invited key experts into these meetings to provide additional insight to these issues.
- We worked with [Food Innovation Wales](#) who have published [22 checklists](#) and guidance notes to help businesses prepare for an easing of lockdown restrictions and return to production.
- We have provided advice and guidance to government surrounding the provision and content of food boxes to vulnerable groups, including work around substitutions for those with additional dietary requirements and needs.
- We have worked with government to confirm that food and drink workers will be included in the critical workers category and be included in the early roll outs of mass testing for Covid-19 in Wales.
- The Board met with HCC/Meat Promotion Wales for more insight into the issues affecting the beef, lamb and pig meat industry.
- We have raised the issue of micro businesses falling outside of government support schemes and have flagged the concern of businesses to take on government loan finance, both in Wales and Westminster.
- The Board is working in partnership with Lantra Wales to support its [Skills Matching Service](#) for agricultural and land-based businesses alongside our [Facebook Workforce Group](#).
- On a daily basis we liaise with the Food and Drink Federation and other partner organisations to share insight and determine the best solutions for the food and drink sector on a national scale.
- We've continued to share links to information, support and toolkits via [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) as well as supporting with social media toolkits.

Top news stories of the week

- [Lesley Griffiths addresses Covid concerns around supplies of food and PPE](#)
- [Welsh chef celebrates Great British Beef Week with 'pimp your steak' challenge](#)
- [Gordon Brown to assist Welsh recovery after pandemic](#)
- [You can now send a Welsh Food and Drink Package to family and friends](#)

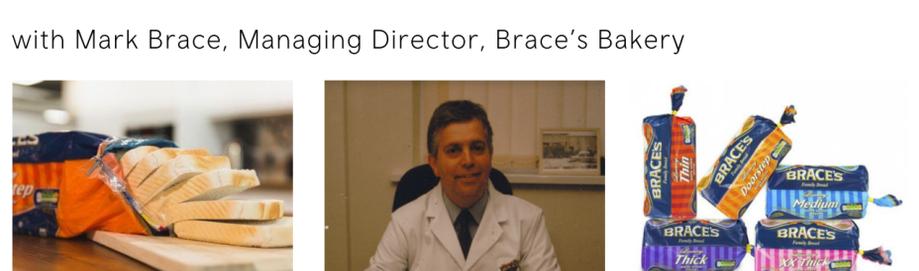
Covid-19 support

Click through for additional information on resources available



Voices from the industry

with Mark Brace, Managing Director, Brace's Bakery



Brace's Bakery is a fourth-generation family business located in the heart of South Wales, making and supplying bread since 1902. We are the largest branded bread supplier in South Wales and parts of South West England. Alongside manufacturing our own branded products, we also produce supermarket own label bread products regionally and nationally, and also supply the food service sector nationally and internationally.

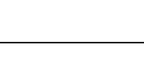
Since the outbreak of Covid19, the food service and export market has justifiably ceased. Export orders for bakery products has been replaced by increased demands by food retailers in our region which has led to over one million units sold per week to date. We have also supported local providers of food boxes for vulnerable groups, and donated products to several hospitals. These have been supplied by our two bakeries in South Wales at Pen-Y-Fan and Croespenmaen, Crumlin.

We have had to change many parts of our operation in light of the pandemic. Acting on advice from government and our trade association, The Federation of Bakers, we have implemented procedures within the business to ensure the safety of over 250 Brace's employees. These include social distancing, provision of protective equipment, strict cleaning procedures throughout our operations and changing working practices such as staggering shift patterns. Additional measures were taken by the business to secure supplies of raw materials and changes were made to the product mix by reducing the number of lines available to maximise output capacity combined of over 12,000 loaves an hour. We are now slowly beginning to reintroduce an extended range of products.

Our major priority is maintaining our business operations and meeting market demand while taking all precautions to maintain safe practices for all our loyal Brace's colleagues, who were paid a bonus for all of their commitment over the last month. Throughout this time we have had no more than a maximum of 10 percent who have had to self-isolate.

We would like to thank the Welsh Government and UK Government for supporting our industry and changes in rules and regulations to allow our business and the industry to continue to support these unprecedented demands and those who are in need.

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Get in touch with us via email: Chair.FDWIB@gov.wales