

Growing Welsh food and drink manufacturing: Our priorities



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Foreword

The food and drink manufacturing industry plays a vital role in maintaining a thriving food system here in Wales, providing a wide range of affordable and nutritious food for all, while boosting productivity, and driving investment and trade.

We need to ensure Wales has a regulatory environment that supports investment and growth, that businesses have the people and skills they need, and that our industry is supported on its journey to circular economy.

In this document we set out our priorities for the next Welsh Government and Senedd to work with us to support the future success of one of Wales’ largest manufacturing sectors.

Our priorities to support the growth of Wales’ food and drink manufacturing industry:



David Harries OBE
Head of FDF Cymru

FDF Cymru represents food and drink manufacturers in Wales

The industry employs more than 26,000 people in over 570 businesses, contributing £1.7bn to the Welsh economy. We are an economic success story and a vital part of the Welsh national identity.

We ensure our members' views are heard by the Welsh Government and in the Senedd, as well as by relevant policy makers in the UK Government, including the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales.

Food 7 Cymru

FDF Cymru is part of the Food 7 Cymru group which strives to:



Food 7 Cymru

- Improve the competitive position of the Welsh food and drink sector from farm to fork
- Champion productivity and innovation across the supply chain
- Seek to secure the policy, financial and regulatory framework that will provide the maximum opportunity for the sector to thrive

The Food 7 Cymru group shares a passionate ambition for growth built on the nation's food and drink supply chain's internationally renowned reputation for the production of quality food in an environmentally, economically, socially and culturally sustainable manner.

The network links the seven key representative bodies to help promote and develop the food and drink industries in Wales, acting as a clear, informative and innovative voice to government.

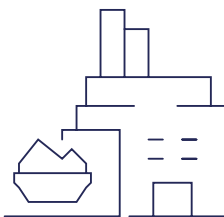


Ferrari's Coffee Roasters

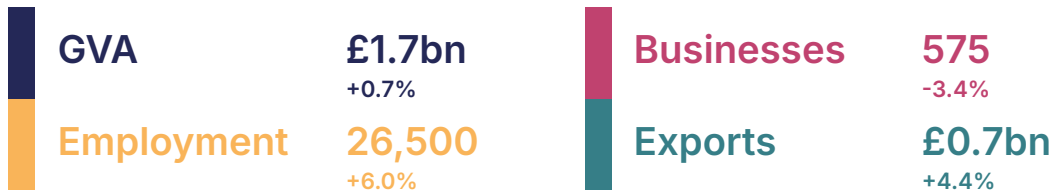
Founding members



Spotlight on Wales' food & drink manufacturing sector



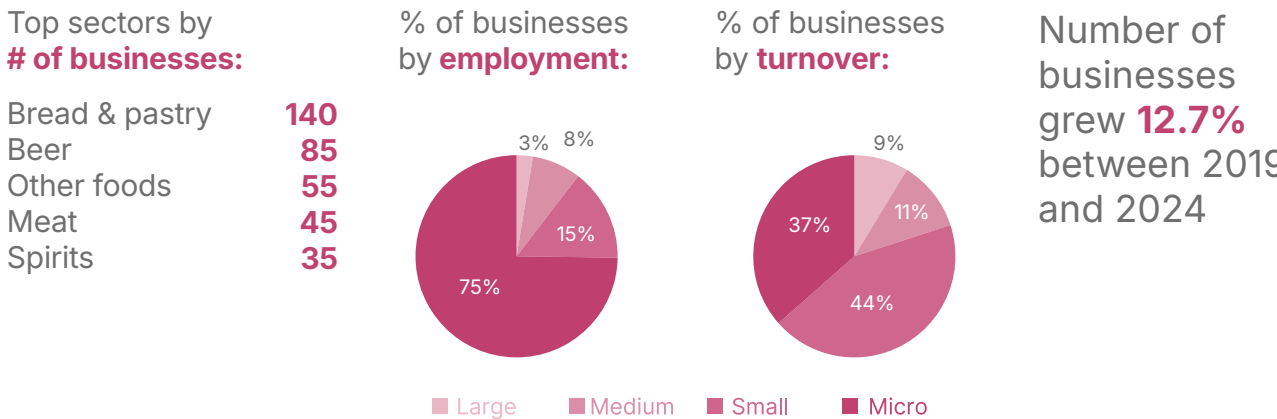
Wales' **1,220** food and drink manufacturers sit at the heart of a supply chain worth **£155bn** to the UK economy, employing **47,000** people.



Exports



Business



Employment



All figures use the latest available data. 2024: Business, Exports. 2023: Employment. 2022: GVA.

PRIORITY ONE:

Supporting a sustainable circular economy



We ask the next Welsh Government and Senedd to support and enable our industry's journey to a circular economy – from de-risking investments, to building experience and confidence in future technologies and skills. This means:

- Continuing to support the development of a Circular Economy through the implementation of the Packaging Reforms, (Extended Producer Responsibility & Deposit Return Scheme), and the Beyond Recycling pathway set out by Welsh Government in 2024. The Welsh Government should continue investing in waste infrastructure to ensure Wales remains a top recycling nation, driving towards to a world-class reprocessing system.
- Working with industry and waste organisations to implement a Deposit Return Scheme aligned with the rest of the UK, for October 2027. Alignment for our industry requires the same materials, the same deposit level and return mechanisms. The system should be incentivising and simple for consumers, to eradicate litter and encourage behaviour change.
- Separately, we welcome the Welsh ambition for reuse and refill. This should be enabled through realistic, funded and scalable trials that can provide the certainty and confidence for businesses to invest further in long term fundamental change across the whole grocery sector.



PRIORITY TWO:

Working together to enable business growth



We ask the next Welsh Government and Senedd to commit to creating a supportive regulatory environment where businesses can grow and thrive. This means:

- Working closely with the other UK nations on developing regulation related to food and drink in areas such as health, packaging and food safety. It is important to minimise divergence as this can add cost and complexity to businesses and consumers.
- Continuing to support Food and Drink Wales – the Welsh Government’s Food Division initiative responsible for promoting Welsh Food and Drink domestically, across the UK and internationally. The successes of schemes such as the Helix Programme and Aber-Innovation show clear indication of economic support, providing businesses with the facilities and expertise to accelerate innovation.
- Protect the support provided to businesses through Business Wales on exporting. Exports of Welsh food and drink into overseas markets ensures that businesses can diversify and remain resilient, sustainable and boost the growth of Brand Wales.
- Ensuring funding is available for food and drink businesses to support them to invest in projects that will make their processes and facilities more efficient, productive and sustainable.
- Supporting Welsh food and drink manufacturers to continue to make their products healthier through reformulation, including changes to recipes and processes. This will particularly support SMEs in line with Healthy Weight Healthy Wales.



PRIORITY THREE:

Developing the skilled workforce of the future



We ask the next Welsh Government and Senedd and skills delivery bodies to work with us to ensure we have a highly skilled and motivated workforce. This means:

- Working with Westminster and Skills England on the creation of the Growth and Skills Levy, allowing for shorter, modular training that can work across the UK nations to enable food and drink manufacturers to invest Levy funds in training that can address skills needs and improve productivity growth. Apprenticeships and vocational training must be regarded equally to Further and Higher education and be funded to reflect this.
- Protect £3m Food Skills Cymru funding. The fund enables Wales to lead the UK in developing a skilled workforce for Wales's food and drink manufacturing and processing sectors, focusing on areas like leadership, marketing, production, and sustainability.
- Longer-term collaboration with the other UK nations on the creation of a less complex, fit-for-purpose skills system across the UK that will allow food and drink manufacturers to give their employees the training support they need – no matter where they are located.
- Building a stronger skills system that addresses the needs of employers now and for the future and will allow our future workforce to have access to higher quality, more productive and better paying jobs.





How we can help you

Meeting the industry

- Shape policy – bring together the food and drink industry to discuss ideas and opportunities.
- Meet food and drink manufacturers – on a one-to-one basis or as a group – we can advise you on who the food and drink manufacturers are in your local area and put you in touch.
- Bring together the true Farm to Fork chain in Wales with the Food 7 Cymru. The Food 7 Cymru works together as a value chain to collaborate and bring industries together to enable you to network with our industry and key stakeholders.

FDF Cymru / NFU Cymru / Farmers' Union of Wales / UK
Hospitality Wales / Logistics UK / The Association of Convenience
Stores / Welsh Retail Consortium

Supporting your work

- Provide policy briefings, industry insights and statistics – we have a team of experts who produce industry-specific data and economic insights.
- Committee witnesses – we and or our members are always keen to help support the work of our Welsh Senedd committees.
- Work with us on reserved matters and on a four UK nations basis – we work closely with all at Westminster and the Senedd.





Food and Drink Federation (FDF) Cymru is the voice of the food and drink manufacturing industry – one of Wales's largest manufacturing sectors. We contribute £1.7 billion to the country's economy, supporting 26,500 jobs in Wales, and producing products that are loved at home and around the world.

Find out more at

fdf.org.uk

