

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at Royal Welsh Show

- Llanelwedd, Wales

20th July 2015

- Check Against Delivery –

- Ladies and gentlemen, **Bore da** to you all!
- It is a pleasure to be with you this morning, and it is an honour to participate in the official opening of the Royal Welsh Show. This event is world-renowned, and it is plain to see why. My congratulations to the Royal Welsh Association for putting on such a wonderful annual gathering.
- I believe that large-scale events such as this one are essential, for a number of reasons:

- because they showcase the pride and hard work of farmers and their families;
 - because they highlight the value and importance of the agri-food sector to an urban as well as a rural audience;
 - because they allow the different strands of the agri-food community and indeed people from across the rural spectrum to come together, discuss the challenges and opportunities they face, and find new and better ways to work together;
 - and, last, but not least, because they are thoroughly enjoyable days out for all the family!
- Just last month I had the pleasure of attending the Royal Highland Show in Scotland, and in September I will visit the National Ploughing Championships in my native Ireland.
 - The scale and success of these events, just like the Royal Welsh Show, highlights to me **the high esteem we reserve for our agri-food and rural communities in these islands, and long may it continue!**

- These are not just celebrations – they are reminders that we cannot and must not take for granted the principle of safe, sustainable and high-quality food and drink production.
- As EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, this is a message I repeat wherever I go. Food security is more important than ever, and must be kept high in the public consciousness.
- I commend you for the important part you play in this collective ambition. Indeed, 2015 is an important year when it comes to talking about food. I recently spoke at Expo Milan, the huge global event taking place in Italy under the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life".
- All these events are contributing to a growing conversation about food at local, national and European level. People care more than ever about what they eat and drink, and how that food and drink was produced. **And they want to ensure a safe and sustainable supply for their families.**
- Ladies and gentlemen, since taking office in this job, I have travelled widely throughout Europe, meeting farmers, co-ops, agri-businesses and agricultural organisations.

- These are the men and women who manage our soil; who grow the vegetables and fruit, and rear the animals we rely on for our food and drink and who keep our rural areas beautiful.
- I want to hear their views, **and I want to hear your views**, so that I can do my part to make the European Common Agricultural Policy support your vital work as efficiently and smoothly as possible.
- And the CAP has already come a long way.
- Recent reforms have made it a more market-oriented policy, meaning that farmers and agri-businesses can make informed decisions about what they want to produce, according to their strengths and where they will find a good price.
- The CAP also seeks to make farming an attractive and profitable career choice, particularly for younger people. As you know, it is vitally important that we incentivise a new generation to enter the sector and fully develop its entrepreneurial potential.
- Our key strength in the European Union is that we make food and drink products of the highest quality, to high standards of safety, with an ever-increasing emphasis on environmental protection.

- **Our brands are known and loved throughout the world, not least our world-renowned origin products such as Welsh beef and lamb, West Wales coracle caught salmon, and Welsh wine.**
- I want these products to achieve even greater sales on a wider variety of markets. **And the potential is there for them to do so.**
- Global demand will continue to rise in the coming decades, as 150 million people worldwide enter the middle class every year. With increased means, these families will want increased food quality. And no region is better placed to meet this demand than Europe.
- **Look at the amount of quality Welsh products on display right here in Llanellwedd today... I want to see these on tables in Beijing, and Dubai, and Cape Town and Rio.**
- By pursuing new markets on the one hand, and guaranteeing the protection of high value EU products around the world on the other, we can make this a reality.
- The EU has important agriculture interests in many of the trade deals currently under negotiation, including in crucial Asian markets such as Vietnam and Japan.

- I will remain vigilant in protecting European standards, **because our origin products like Welsh beef and lamb are our very own rural intellectual property, which rewards quality in and for rural areas, and must be protected.**
- We are also promoting our products harder than ever. The Commission took strong action by more than tripling the Agri-food Promotion Budget from €60m to €200m over the next four years. **We believe this will decisively assist producers and associations in Wales and throughout the EU to find new markets for their products.**
- I want Welsh farmers and agri-businesses to face the future with confidence and ambition, and I believe the reformed CAP will give them the tools to do so.
- Farming must become more productive and efficient if we are to rise to these challenges. But we cannot forget the environmental dimension, either. We must move towards what I like to call "sustainable intensification".

- And the vehicle for delivering this sustainable intensification is improved research and innovation. If farmers and agri-business build deeper relationships with investors, researchers, tech experts and policymakers, we can see real progress in the coming years.
- **And the CAP and other EU policies will support these goals. We are putting our money where our mouth is.**
- I look forward to meeting many of you in person today to discuss these opportunities further, and I encourage you to keep using important events such as this one to tell the good news story of farming in the 21st Century.
- Thank you, DIOCH for your attention, and it is a sincere pleasure to hereby declare the 2015 Royal Welsh Show officially OPEN.