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**LMC CEO welcomes signing of UK-China Beef Protocol**

The UK beef industry received positive news yesterday, Monday, when the UK-China Beef Protocol was signed by Farming Minister, Robert Goodwill and Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming.

The agreement, which was signed as part of the tenth Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) between the UK and China, will secure market access for UK beef exporters by the end of this year.

Welcoming the news, Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson said: “The signing of the Protocol is the culmination of several years of site inspections and engagement between the UK and Chinese government officials. It also follows a successful inspection of beef sector controls across the UK which concluded last week.

“Gaining this direct access to the Chinese market is extremely positive and will allow our beef export business to actively pursue new opportunities in this rapidly growing market for our high quality, safe and certified beef industry.

“Beef import into China continues to grow strongly with a six fold increase in imports recorded over the last 10 years and imports in 2019 are forecast to be approximately three million tonnes carcass weight equivalent as domestic consumption growth is met by import growth. Although Chinese beef imports are largely composed of frozen beef, cattle offals have become a very significant segment of the import mix.

“The Northern Ireland red meat industry has been growing its export volumes of beef to the Asian region and Hong Kong has served as an important outlet for carcass balance in recent years.”

Continuing to praise the efforts of those involved in bringing about the signing of this Protocol, Ian added: “LMC has been participating in the work of the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP) for over 10 years. Achieving direct market access to China for UK beef exporters has been one of the key priorities for government and industry members of the

partnership and this exciting development is testament to the commitment and hard work of everyone involved in the process.”

**ENDS**