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'Business as usual' at Anuga despite Brexit chaos

The main message communicated at Anuga Food Fair this week from UK suppliers to their customers outside the UK was business as usual despite on-going Brexit chaos.

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland's (LMC) Chairman, Gerard McGivern and Chief Executive, Ian Stevenson travelled to Cologne, Germany at the weekend to attend the annual event which attracted over 7,500 exhibitors and over 170,000 visitors from across the world.

Commenting on his return, Ian said: "Red meat businesses from across the UK and Ireland were very well represented in the main meat hall including five of the beef and lamb processing businesses operating in Northern Ireland.

"It was palpable from the number of visitors to their stands that the exhibitors were very busy welcoming their existing customers, exploring new opportunities and discussing the current state of play with markets and Brexit. The professionalism of the red meat industry never fails to amaze and visitors were very warmly welcomed with excellent hospitality which included sampling of high quality beef and lamb products prepared on the stands.

"LMC attended a number of receptions and events hosted by UK levy bodies including the British Meat Industry dinner at the Wolkenburg in Cologne. A consistent message from all these events was that the UK has excellent quality beef, lamb and pork products which are highly sought after in domestic and export markets and that UK businesses want to continue to supply and service these markets. Significant progress has been made in charting a path for UK beef exports to China and USA and UK businesses are keen to hit the ground running when these markets open up."

Attending Anuga Food Fair for the first time, LMC Chairman said he was impressed by Northern Ireland's ability to compete on a world stage.

Gerard said: "Northern Ireland red meat businesses do an excellent job in marketing their business profiles and products to customers amidst an incredible range of competition from the global meat industry.

“The next few months and years are going to be challenging for our beef and lamb industry. Based on what I observed at Anuga, there is great scope for support bodies such as Invest NI and levy organisations to work closer together with each other and with industry on important pre-competitive issues.

“It’s essential that strategically important issues such as meat consumption, market access, sustainability and climate change, industry image, communication about health and nutritional benefits of red meat and ensuring that our industry gets the recognition and support tools it needs from government to enable its survival and future development, are all addressed with a collective vigour.”

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