

Investment In Exports And Skills Will Stimulate Industry Growth Say Food Manufacturers

Friday 6 December, 2013

Responding to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement today, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) welcomed the extra £50bn in export finance and the increased budget for the GREAT campaign as well as a further boost to apprenticeships and science and engineering skills.

Melanie Leech, Director General at Food and Drink Federation said:

Exports

"An improvement in export performance will be key to the food industry realising its vision for growth. The availability of extra funds for export finance and for the promotion of our fantastic products abroad is welcome news. However, we also need to do more to promote the opportunities to smaller companies not yet export active, and raise the awareness of the GREAT campaign amongst industry. Whilst we applaud the Chancellor's ambition to export more to the BRIC countries, we must not forget the first steps that food and drink companies are likely to take will be into markets much closer to home."

Skills

"Food and drink manufacturing faces a substantial skills and talent shortfall which threatens to damage our competitiveness. The Government are to be congratulated for putting employers in control of apprenticeship funding - the use of the HMRC system offers an opportunity to create a simple demand-led system. A clear implementation process will be critical if it is to be accessible to employers of all sizes. As one of the co-creators of the UK's first food engineering degree, we look forward to more details of the extra funding that will be provided to science, technology, and engineering courses."

Innovation

"As FDF prepares to launch its vision and shared priorities for innovation next week we were pleased to see that the Government will produce a Science and Innovation Strategy for the Autumn Statement 2014. We look forward to food and drink playing a lead role in the Government's innovation priorities."

Energy

"Whilst the fuel duty freeze will provide some welcome relief, manufacturers will be disappointed that the Chancellor did not respond to our request for help with business energy costs, which are threatening our competitiveness, squeezing margins, and ability to maintain consumer prices."

- Ends -

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Notes for Editors:

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) is the voice of the food and drink manufacturing industry - the UK's largest manufacturing sector. For more information about FDF and the industry we represent visit: www.fdf.org.uk

The FDF 20/20 vision for growth can be found here; www.fdf.org.uk/2020_growth_vision.aspx

More information on the GREAT campaign can be found here; www.gov.uk/britainisgreat

More information on the UK's first food engineering degree can be found at www.foodengineering.co.uk

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