# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Update on recent visit to New Zealand** |
| **DATE** | **19 April 2018** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for the Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs** |

Last week I visited New Zealand, aiming to build relationships and share knowledge. Like Wales, New Zealand is an outward-facing, globally trading nation, arguably punching significantly above its weight in terms of its position in the global market place. As the UK leaves the EU, Wales has a lot to learn from countries like New Zealand, especially in areas such as food and drink. Although as a Government we continue to argue for full and unfettered access to the Single Market and to be part of a customs union with the EU, we are committed to internationalism and fully accept there are significant trading opportunities to be explored outside of Europe.

In New Zealand I met with dairy, lamb and beef businesses, farmers and the relevant key industry organisations and as a result I am more convinced than ever a transition phase is essential as Welsh Government and stakeholders work closely together to consider the future of our land in a world outside of the Common Agricultural Policy.

I am grateful to the UK High Commission team who worked closely with us to put together such a comprehensive programme. The programme also included a number of Ministerial and Senior officials meetings that covered topics around climate change, renewable energy generation, fuel poverty, forestry, TB eradication, trade and environmental sustainability. We have developed relationships that allow us to exchange ideas and lessons learned. I was proud to be able to offer up experiences in area, like recycling where we are truly global leaders.

I was also honoured to see the Welsh flag flown outside of the New Zealand Parliament on the day Parliament welcomed me. I am hopeful this trip is the start of the journey to build trust and partnership, allowing us to look at areas of mutual benefit.

Concerns about the nature of any Free Trade Agreement with New Zealand remain and I highlighted these concerns with Vangelis Vitalis, Deputy Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I was pleased he acknowledged they are sensitive to our concerns and willing to work with the Devolved Administrations on these issues.