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Make Red Tractor the flagship for British food, then shout about it

The Government should capitalise on growing demand for safe, traceable food in international markets by using Red Tractor Assurance as a key selling point.

That's according to the organisation's chief executive Jim Moseley who has told the EFRA Select Committee's Brand Britain inquiry the assurance scheme should be the flagship for British food at home and abroad.

With more than 46,000 members, Red Tractor already delivers what many international markets are increasingly demanding; assurances over the traceability and safety of food.

But he added that government must invest heavily in promoting UK food to capitalise on the opportunity being presented.

He said: "Government investment in promoting and marketing British food abroad is not on the same scale of countries such as the USA and Ireland.

"Both countries deliver coordinated marketing activities funded by government to develop export and international markets.

"It will take investment and resources but research shows that the opportunity is there and we believe now is the time to take it."

Red Tractor and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board has evidence demonstrating international consumer attitudes towards British food.

A recent AHDB Horizon report exploring attitudes in nine global markets found that 76% of Chinese consumers trust British food to be safe and 61% were prepared to pay a premium for it.

By contrast only 37% of French consumers view British food as safe and only 21% are willing to pay a premium.

But promotion of British food is limited and awareness is quite low.

Just 44% of overseas consumers said they had previously purchased a British food product, demonstrating a potential gap in branding at consumer level and the associated lack of recognition.

Dr Phil Hadley, international director at AHDB, said: “Our recent consumer research has highlighted opportunities to develop brand recognition for our products in key overseas markets.

“To do so will require large investment to ensure we capitalise on the growing importance of non-EU markets for our products.

“AHDB has a dedicated team working to develop international trade with marketing and promotional expertise, funded by our farmers, growers and processors.”

Mr Moseley added: “Red Tractor provides the standards which underpin the fundamental food safety, quality and traceability requirements of overseas customers.

“Significant work is required to communicate the quality credentials of British food to both commercial buyers and international consumers if we are to capitalise on this opportunity.”

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