

# PRESS RELEASE

## **GEFA agricultural exporters welcome BMLEH's committed foreign trade policy**

Promoting agriculture - securing food - strengthening the homeland

In view of the high foreign trade deficit in the agricultural and food sector for 2024, the industry welcomes the first, ambitious initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Trade (BMLEH) to open up sales markets. "The change of direction announced in the coalition agreement in favour of export support for the sector to increase the competitiveness and resilience of agricultural exporters has already been followed by clear action in the first 140 days of government," says Jan-Bernd Stärk, spokesperson for GEFA e.V., Head of Beef & Export Third Country Sales, Westfleisch SCE mbH, on the occasion of GEFA's 10th Parliamentary Evening on 25 September 2025.

In 2024, the industry's foreign trade deficit amounted to approx. 15.9 million tonnes (+3.5%), worth approx. 22.9 billion euros (+13.1%), both of which are record figures in a negative sense. The uncertainties in current foreign business due to volatile markets and increasing solutions to WHO-compliant trade practices are causing problems for exporters. Added to this are low margins for companies on the German market, increasing pressure to consolidate, high energy costs and bureaucratic obstacles. This makes the BMLEH's clear change of direction to promote the export industry all the more important.

**BMLEH sets the right priorities for export support**

Following the conclusion of further trade agreements, the simplification and acceleration of export processes and the strategic orientation and strengthening of foreign trade promotion announced in the coalition agreement, the first important steps have been implemented. These include the trip by State Secretary Prof. Dr Dr Schick with a business delegation to China at the beginning of September, the reorientation of EL advisors abroad to support companies and the reversal of funding cuts by the previous government. "We welcome these steps and offer the BMLEH our support as we move forward. We can only be successful if we recommit to promoting agriculture in Germany. Our sector wants to increase its contribution to food security in Germany and around the world. It wants to use its taxes to contribute to a sound and sustainable federal budget and secure employment in structurally poor regions. To achieve this, we must keep agricultural production in Germany and strengthen it again," Stärk continued.

The Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, Mrs Silvia Breher, and Hermann Färber, Member of the German Bundestag and Chairman of the Bundestag Committee on Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, made clear commitments to further political support in their welcoming addresses.

**Market development costs a lot of time, money and energy**

Only with a committed export policy can the conditions for accessing important third-country markets be improved. In this respect, the industry is now calling for further steps to be taken to strengthen the staffing of market access procedures at the BMLEH and its affiliated institutes in order to speed up what have often been lengthy procedures. In addition to the welcome activities of the EU Commission, the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements is also important for the industry.

The members of GEFA e.V. pledge their professional support for the reorientation of export promotion policy and for market opening issues, as well as the personnel/financial support of the BMLEH for particularly important market openings and for the planning and support of delegation trips.

GEFA is the comprehensive communication platform between politics and business. It sees itself as a central point of contact for all economic operators interested in food, beverages, agricultural raw materials or products from the intermediate goods sector such as seeds, breeding animals and agricultural technology from Germany. GEFA's tasks include, among other things, organising worldwide contacts for the companies involved.

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