

Global food sector unites to transform gender balance with Charter launch

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Industry leaders gathered at the House of Lords to launch the Food Business Charter with the ambition to reach 40 per cent female representation across the global food value chain by 2035, marking a watershed moment for gender balance in the sector.

The Food Business Charter, developed by Meat Business Women in collaboration with founding signatories from 20 leading businesses across food manufacturing, retail and foodservice supply chain, was launched at an exclusive event hosted by Baroness Minette Batters DL.

The landmark initiative reflects a strategic commitment from senior leaders to address gender imbalance and the attraction and retention of talent in the global food industry. The initiative follows a Meat Business Women industry roundtable last year that highlighted the urgent need for action, with women representing just 33.5 per cent of the meat industry workforce, down from 36 per cent in 2020.

Laura Ryan, global chair and founder of Meat Business Women, said: "The Food Business Charter is a defining moment in our industry's journey toward gender equality and a major milestone for our 10th year of Meat Business Women.

"Working with senior leaders who understand the benefits of a gender-balanced workforce, we've created not just a vision, but a practical roadmap for change.

"This Charter, backed by major global and European food manufacturers, retailers, and food service businesses, demonstrates our industry's collective determination to remove barriers and create meaningful opportunities for women at all levels," said Laura.

The Charter will be accompanied by an Action Planning Toolkit, designed in collaboration with Diversity & Inclusion experts, providing organisations with practical strategies to achieve the Charter's ambitions.

"This isn't about setting targets â?? it's about transforming our industry's future to ensure it remains profitable and sustainable,â?" Laura added.

"The Charter provides a framework for organisations to implement practical talent attraction and retention strategies, share best practices, and create lasting change. With the support of our industry partners, we're confident we can achieve sustainable change."