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DID YOU KNOW?

Britain's automotive industry is one of its healthiest manufacturing sectors—with a record-high turnover of £69.5 billion for 2014. However, while the automotive industry has grown by 65.1 per cent since 2000, Britain's other manufacturing sectors have not seen as much marked development since the recession. Read the articles below to learn how the other manufacturing sectors have fared.

3rd Quarter 2015

Food Enterprise Zones Expected to Create 10,000 Food Manufacturing Jobs

To further strengthen the United Kingdom's powerhouse food and farming industry—which is its largest manufacturing sector and employs 1 in 8 people—the government will create 17 new Food Enterprise Zones (FEZs). Construction on these zones, which will help foster a network of food hubs across England, will begin in the first quarter of 2016. The government predicts the FEZs will create more than 10,000 new jobs in the food and farming industry.

FEZs will provide their communities with support to expand their food and farming businesses while also preserving the integrity of the surrounding countryside. The FEZs also hope to attract new food and drink manufacturing businesses, which will help champion distinctly British food, reinvigorate rural economies and help food manufacturing businesses export products abroad.

Currently, the United Kingdom exports £19 billion worth of food and drink products to 214 countries every year.

The government predicts FEZ communities will experience an increase in tourism and investments in their industries, as well as renewed interest in the food sciences. Supporters hope that food and farming will one day be considered as prestigious as the medical and technology sectors.



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Project Eden Expands Its Purview

To compensate for the current deficiency of skills in the UK food and drink manufacturing industry, and to prevent the problem from growing, Project Eden, an educational skills-training programme originally developed for the dairy industry, has expanded its purview to include all food industry sectors. The programme, supported by the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink, will offer a long-term solution by providing current employees with well-rounded educations so that they can not only work more effectively, but can be leaders in their sectors.

Employees will receive training on how to use modern, state-of-the-art machinery and on techniques and training on broader industry concepts, such as product development standards. With support from Project Eden, the food industry is expected to narrow the skills gap and expand its productivity.

Manufacturing Industry is Struggling, but not Defeated

In 2011, Chancellor George Osborne celebrated the beginning of a 'march of makers', meant to help revitalise the manufacturing industry. However, since then, the industry has been on a slow decline, reaching its lowest point in more than two years. Its output is currently resting at 4.6 per cent lower than its peak in 2008, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

In its current state, the manufacturing industry is considered to be struggling. It has had to grapple with many drags on productivity, chiefly the following two interconnected factors:

- The financial crisis that is plaguing the Eurozone
- The Pound being at its strongest since 2008

Due to the fact that UK exports are more expensive and countries are not buying as much, growth in the manufacturing industry has temporarily stalled.

However, there have been some positive developments. The UK Purchasing Managers' Index rose from 51.8 in April to 52 in May. Since the score is above 50, the industry can technically still be considered to be expanding rather than contracting. This slight expansion is bolstered by the fact that the industry is currently in its 26th consecutive month of employment growth, according to the Financial Times.

Perhaps the most positive statistics linked to the manufacturing industry are those associated with industrial production. Total production output was initially predicted to only grow, at most, 1.6 per cent over the previous year, but instead it has grown by 2.1 per cent, according to the ONS. Unfortunately, the growth expressed by industrial production is mainly due to improved UK oil and gas output rather than manufacturing output, and has thus proven to be more of an outlier than an industry standard.

While the manufacturing industry may have temporarily stalled its decline into a period of contraction, it is still not operating from a strong position, nor is it growing as efficiently as the market would prefer. Yet, it is predicted to experience an upswing as a result of the steadily improving housing market, which would boost the demand for the production of household goods and furnishings. While this slight forecasted uptick is not enough to make up the near decade-long deficit, it is still a positive sign.

Recent Fines and Prosecutions

Insufficient maintenance training causes agency worker to be maimed

A national recycling firm was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £21,625.70 and a £120 victim surcharge after an agency worker lost his arm. The worker was conducting maintenance on a conveyor belt when his glove became caught and the machine severed his arm above the wrist. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company had failed to provide sufficient training for its workers.

Worker fatally crushed due to inadequate safe system of work

An international aluminium fabricator was fined £140,000 and ordered to pay £32,251.31 after a worker was fatally crushed by a forklift. The 33-year-old worker was operating the forklift when it tipped over, causing fatal injuries to his chest and abdomen. In its investigation, the HSE found that the accident could have been prevented had the company properly assessed its risks.

Pet food manufacturer guilty of exposing employees to chlorine gas

A South Yorkshire pet food manufacturer was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay costs of £19,550 after exposing its employees to hydrogen sulphide fumes and chlorine gas during equipment cleaning on two separate occasions. In its investigation, the HSE found that both instances could have been avoided had the manufacturer provided its employees with the proper training for safe cleaning and maintenance of the machinery.