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PHOTOS ATTACHED (CAPTIONS EMBEDDED)

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### **COVENEY MEETS KEY US RETAILER ON IRISH QUALITY FOOD OPPORTUNITY**

#### ***“Wegmans central to Irish Food Story in the US”***

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine, Simon Coveney, has met with top managers from Wegmans Supermarket Chain, in the US. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, Wegmans is a leading US grocery retailer, operating 83 stores on the East Coast with 45,000 employees and annual sales of US \$7billion.

Wegmans is known for its premium product offering and its focus on customer service. Achieving a listing in Wegmans underscores a supplier’s ability to produce a product that meets the company’s high standards and the tastes of its discerning customers. It is a target account for all quality food and drink suppliers, both from US and overseas.

Wegmans already stocks a range of Irish products including Kerrygold Irish butter and cheese, a range of Irish farmhouse cheeses, Irish fresh and smoked salmon, Irish Oatmeal, as well as Irish whiskeys, cream liqueurs, beers, jams, relishes and other products.

Speaking after today’s meeting, Minister Coveney outlined the scope of the discussion with Wegmans:

*“Today was an important opportunity to develop the narrative behind the Irish food story with key US influencers of consumer values and choices.*

*Wegmans already has a very positive relationship with Irish food business operators and I see this developing further in the future. It is clear from our meeting today that the characteristics of the Irish food and drink production model, from clean environment to high animal welfare standards to passionate family farm producers, is a strong fit with Wegmans’ own sustainability mission and its sourcing criteria.*

The Minister used the opportunity of the meeting with Wegmans to update them on the significant progress in gaining access for Irish beef to the US market:

*“As a retailer with a long and well-established commitment to sustainability and high animal welfare standards, it was important to highlight Ireland’s Origin Green sustainability programme and in particular, the unique features of Irish grass fed beef, which I hope will be available on US supermarket shelves later this year. The list of Irish products on the shelves of Wegmans’ stores attests to the quality and reliability of Irish supply and confidence in Ireland as a source of food and drink products”.*

Concluding, Minister Coveney said that he was confident that Wegmans would continue to be a central part of the Irish food story in the US.

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