

2025
Toolkit

Get in the know. Celebrating the positives of red meat.

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW.



Introduction

Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) has created this toolkit to spotlight the benefits of Scotland's red meat and empower stakeholders to build its reputation confidently. This toolkit focuses on on three pillars—health, sustainability, and socio-economic benefits—to showcase red meat's role in healthy diets and resilient landscapes and to debunk common myths. Packed with research and shareable assets, it provides resources for positive conversations about Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork.

Through our “**When You Know, You Know**” campaign, we aim to inspire consumers to look beyond the logo, appreciating the quality assurance and care behind the Scotch labels. As we enter a season where consumers prioritise health and balanced diets, QMS is here to support informed, sustainable choices.



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Infographics

Discover the benefits of red meat through our handy infographics!

Why share?

- To **educate** consumers about the positive aspects of red meat.
- To **promote** informed discussions on healthy eating.
- To **support** local farmers and the red meat industry.

↓ Download our infographics now and share them on your channels to spread the word.

Together, let's promote the benefits of red meat.

Over **80%** of Scottish land is grass or rough – not suitable for crops but ideal for or livestock grazing.



Vitamins B6, B12, and zinc from beef, lamb, and pork support a robust immune system.



Iron deficiency in women:

Iron deficiency is a significant concern, affecting around 1 in 10 women and girls in Scotland, with 4 in 10 having low iron stores.

Red meat contains three nutrients which are important for children's growth and development. Protein and phosphorus are needed for normal growth and development of children's bones while iron helps with the normal learning and cognitive development in children.



Muscle support:

The protein and potassium found in red meat help maintain muscle mass and normal function.

Agriculture contributes approximately

12%

of the UK's net territorial greenhouse gas emissions.



A natural source of vitamin B12, red meat helps reduce tiredness and fatigue.

In the UK the total agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have decreased by

↓12%

between 1990 and 2021

“ High quality red meat really comes in handy being a rugby player and helps with performance and recovery ”

PADDY HARRISON
EDINBURGH RUGBY



Fuelling a healthy mind and body

Iron plays a role in reducing tiredness and fatigue and supports normal learning and cognitive development in children.

Sources Written Statements: Verified by registered Nutritionist, Dr Carrie Ruxton
80% land – Scottish Government's Scottish Agriculture Economic report (2016)
GHG stats – Scottish Government's Agri Climate Report

Health benefits of meat

Get in the know

Red meat is a nutritional powerhouse that's naturally low in salt, packed with protein, and full of essential nutrients, making it perfect for a balanced diet. Here's how it can help boost your health:

Iron power Essential for healthy red blood cells, iron in red meat is easily absorbed and works even better when paired with vitamin C from fruits and veggies.

Energy & vitality Red meat's rich source of B12 fights fatigue, boosts energy production, and supports a healthy immune system.

Strong muscles High in protein and potassium, red meat helps maintain muscle mass and function. Protein also supports bone development in children.

Sharp mind Zinc and iron in red meat, especially beef, aid cognitive function, supporting mood and mental wellbeing.

Immune boost: Beef, lamb, and pork provide vitamins B6, B12, and zinc for a strong immune system, while vitamin D supports bone health and immunity.

Red meat fuels both your body and your mind! As Olympic swimmer Adam Peaty stated:



"I need meat to perform."

Source The Guardian

Meating our children's growth needs

- Protein is needed for normal growth and development of children's bones. Beef, lamb and pork are high in protein and contain all the amino acids (protein building blocks) needed for our bodies.
- Red meat contains **three nutrients** which are important for children's growth and development. Protein and phosphorus are needed for normal growth and development of children's bones while iron helps with the normal learning and cognitive development in children.
- A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, complemented by lean red meat, offers a perfect balance of nutrients.



Benefits of red meat



Protein helps the maintenance of normal bones and growth in muscle mass.



Potassium contributes to normal muscle and nerve function and helps support normal blood function.



Red meat is low in salt (sodium). Reducing consumption of sodium supports normal blood pressure.



Our bodies absorb iron and zinc from meat more readily than they can from plants.



B vitamins can help with energy production in the body. They also help with the normal function of the immune system.

Scottish eatwell guide

Get in the know

This year, Scotland launched its first-ever Scottish Eatwell Guide—a celebration of the country’s rich natural larder! This guide highlights the wide variety of delicious and nutritious produce available locally, supporting Scotland’s health, environment, and economy.

No single food or food group can provide everything our bodies need to stay healthy. That’s why maintaining a balanced and varied diet is essential to ensure we get the full range of nutrients. Health claims must emphasize this, reminding us that a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle are key to overall well-being. For instance, **“A balanced diet and healthy lifestyle are recommended for good health.”**

It’s also fantastic to see Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork featured as part of this balanced plate, reminding us that we can source everything we need for a healthy diet right here in Scotland. Find out more [Scottish eatwell guide](#)

Red meat is rarely eaten on its own; it’s typically combined with starchy carbohydrates like potatoes, pasta, or rice, along with vegetables or salad. This combination is a perfect contribution to a healthy, balanced diet.

In terms of how much meat to consume, the current the current UK NHS guidelines advises keeping our intake of red and processed meat to **70g (cooked weight)** or less per day, and no more than around **500g (600–700g raw weight)** a week. In Scotland, average intakes of red meat now fall below this, with women showing notably lower consumption compared to men.



Understanding iron needs in Scotland

Get in the know

A staggering 78% of people in Scotland are unaware of their recommended daily iron intake. This lack of knowledge is particularly concerning, as 75% of women and 82% of men admit they don't fully understand their iron needs.

The NHS guidelines suggest that men require **8.7 mg of iron** daily, while women need **14.8 mg**. To meet these recommendations, women would need to consume **2 kg of broccoli** or **two cans of chickpeas** each day—quite a daunting task!

Fortunately, there are more practical options. Lean beef provides **2.7 mg of iron per 100g**, making it an effective and tasty way to contribute to daily iron requirements. It's worth noting that the iron from red meat is absorbed more efficiently by the body than iron from plant sources or fortified foods.

Iron Deficiency in women: Iron deficiency is a significant concern, affecting around **1 in 10 women and girls** in Scotland, with **4 in 10** having low iron stores in their bodies.

As a registered nutritionist, Dr. Carrie Ruxton, highlights:

“Iron deficiency affects around one in ten women and girls, while four in ten of us have low iron stores in our bodies. Being chronically low in iron can lead to serious health issues if not addressed, including fatigue, weakened immunity, brain fog, and breathlessness.”

It's essential for everyone to understand their iron needs and learn how to meet them through a balanced and varied diet. Scotch Beef, for instance, is one of the best sources of iron available and is suitable for all ages. Whether you prefer mince or steaks, Scotch Beef is versatile and easy to incorporate



into meals. Plus, any beef bearing the blue Scotch Beef logo is guaranteed to be locally sourced, quality assured, and farmed with care, making it an excellent choice.

Pairing quality assured Scotch meat with iron-rich foods such as green veg can get you off to a really good start to increase your iron intake (plus vitamin C and fibre). Why not try our Make it Scotch Seared Scotch Beef Steak Poke Bowl, which offers a substantial amount of your daily iron needs (7.9mg per serving) with a variety of other healthy nutrients?

Sources YouGov Plc survey of 1,006 adults in Scotland, conducted online from 29th August to 3rd September 2024. The figures have been weighted to represent all Scottish people (aged 18+). National Diet and Nutrition Study

Should I still eat red meat?

Get in the know

While plant-based diets are often promoted for their health and environmental benefits, studies suggest they can risk nutrient deficiencies if not carefully balanced.

Nutrient deficiencies in plant-based diets A study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition revealed that cutting out animal foods often leads to lower levels of key nutrients like zinc, calcium, and vitamins A, B12, and D, essential for growth, immune function, eye health, and bone strength.

Surprising findings An analysis of 56 international studies found that diets focused on reducing environmental impact may unintentionally reduce essential micronutrient intake.

Red meat's vital role According to Dr. Carrie Ruxton, lead author of a review published in Animal, moderate red meat consumption (around five servings the size of a deck of cards per week) provides vital nutrients for growth and repair, with more health benefits than risks.

Veganism and plant-based diet trends Meat-free protein sales have struggled in the retail sector over the past two years, with volume sales in Great Britain (GB) dropping sharply by nearly 13% in 2023. The decline was milder in 2024, at -4.8% (Kantar, 52 weeks ending 29th September 2024). In Scotland, however, the decline deepened to -15.5% in 2024. In out-of-home occasions, vegetarian-centred meals accounted for just 1.3% of total spend in GB, with spending on vegetarian protein in Scotland underperforming the GB level.

Red meat can be a part of a healthy balanced diet, providing essential nutrients that can otherwise be tricky to replace!



Taste, ultra-processed food (UPF) concerns, and relatively higher prices remain key challenges for the plant-based category. Nutritionally, consumers are increasingly seeking fewer ingredients and greater transparency in products. The negative perception of UPFs continues to impact the plant-based sector.

Sources American Journal of Clinical Nutrition Study
Contribution of Red Meat to Adult Nutrition and Health | YouGov
Kantar, 52 weeks ending 29th October 2023
Kantar, 52 weeks ending 29th September 2024
The Knowledge Bank: Scotland Foodservices channel in 2024 with Kantar; Kantar, 52 weeks ending 21st January 2024



Red meat consumer trends

Sources Kantar, 52 weeks ending 29th September 2024
QMS Independently commissioned research Summer July 2024. Sample size 2,570 adults across Scotland and north of England. Survey ran from 10th July - 22nd July 2024

Get in the know

Red meat is a staple for most households, with 88% of the population purchasing it over the course of the year. From our recent brand research, some of the results might be useful for you to consider:

- 82% of the red meat eaters consume red meat weekly, while Beef is the most commonly eaten meat on a weekly basis.
- Nearly one third of respondents have increased/intend to increase their red meat consumption. Most cite personal taste preference, followed by better protein and improving iron levels as health benefits.
- Red meat eaters actively look for quality, prioritising provenance and good animal welfare credentials when shopping red meat. 93% of them take product labels into consideration, with country of origin and high animal welfare being top criteria.
- Factors would encourage shoppers to pay a premium for red meat:
 - A good look of meat
 - Buying from a butcher/farm shop
 - The meat is born, reared and slaughtered locally
- Regional provenance is considered more important in Scotland compared to red meat eaters south of the border; Local being defined as 'Scotland' is maintained across all Scottish regions; Scottish red meat eaters rank product traceability and regional trust higher than the North of England
- 75% could be encouraged to pay a premium price for meat born, reared, and slaughtered in Scotland.

Sustainable land management

Get in the know

Around 80% of Scotland's land is dedicated to agriculture, with a diverse landscape supporting various farming types. While some regions are ideal for livestock grazing, others boast fertile soil for crops, showcasing the adaptability and richness of Scotland's agricultural sector.

Nearly **80%** of Scottish land is used for agriculture, according to the latest agriculture census.

Scotland's utilisable agricultural area spans a vast **5.5** million hectares.

One hectare = 10,000 square meters
Similar to the size of a rugby pitch

In 2023, **69%** of Scotland's land, equal to **5.33** million hectares, was used for farming.

While the percentage of land used for agriculture has remained stable over the past century, farming practices have evolved dramatically to boost productivity.

Much of Scotland's landscape is hilly or rocky making it perfect for rearing livestock but challenging for growing crops.

Farming livestock isn't just about food, it also promotes biodiversity and healthier soil, helping the natural environment thrive.



Sources Scottish Agricultural Census: June 2023

Sustainable land management

Get in the know

Sustainable land management practices are crucial for maintaining healthy ecosystems and supporting biodiversity. Farmers across Scotland are implementing innovative techniques to protect the environment while producing high-quality food.

Promoting soil health and biodiversity Farmers implement sustainable agricultural practices that prioritise soil health, enhance biodiversity, and promote natural ecosystems. Techniques such as crop rotation, cover cropping, and reduced tillage play a vital role in preserving soil structure and fertility.

Integrating livestock and crops Integrating livestock with crop production enhances nutrient cycling and improves land use efficiency, creating a more resilient farming system.

Habitat preservation Farmers actively work to preserve habitats for local wildlife, including rare and endangered species, by maintaining hedgerows, wetlands, and grasslands.

Incentivising biodiversity Initiatives like the Scottish Government's Agri-Environment Climate Scheme incentivise practices that support biodiversity, encouraging farmers to adopt environmentally friendly methods.

Climate change mitigation Agricultural practices such as reforestation, peatland restoration, and maintaining permanent grasslands contribute to carbon sequestration, which helps mitigate climate change. Farmers can play a key role in enhancing the carbon storage capacity of soils through regenerative agriculture practices.

Cultural heritage By continuing traditional farming practices—such as sheep grazing on hills and moors—farmers help maintain Scotland's iconic landscapes and cultural heritage. The preservation of dry stone walls, dykes, and other historical features contributes to the scenic beauty of rural areas.

Water management Effective water management practices, including the restoration of wetlands and careful drainage management, help maintain water quality and prevent flooding. Farmers also work to prevent soil erosion and runoff, protecting water sources and aquatic ecosystems.



Farming circle of life

Get in the know

Grazing animals play a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, supporting biodiversity, and promoting soil health.

The role of grazing animals Grazing animals are essential for breaking up the soil, allowing new life to emerge, spreading seeds, and fertilising the land. They act as habitat managers, carefully maintaining species-rich grasslands that are abundant with pollinators.

Supporting biodiversity These grasslands provide vital habitats for some of Scotland's most iconic species, including the capercaillie, wildcats, otters, and eagles. By sustaining these ecosystems, livestock contribute significantly to biodiversity and the overall health of the environment.

For more information on sustainability in red meat production, visit **Make it Scotch**.

Watch the **Circle of life** video here to see these concepts in action!



Greenhouse gas emissions stats

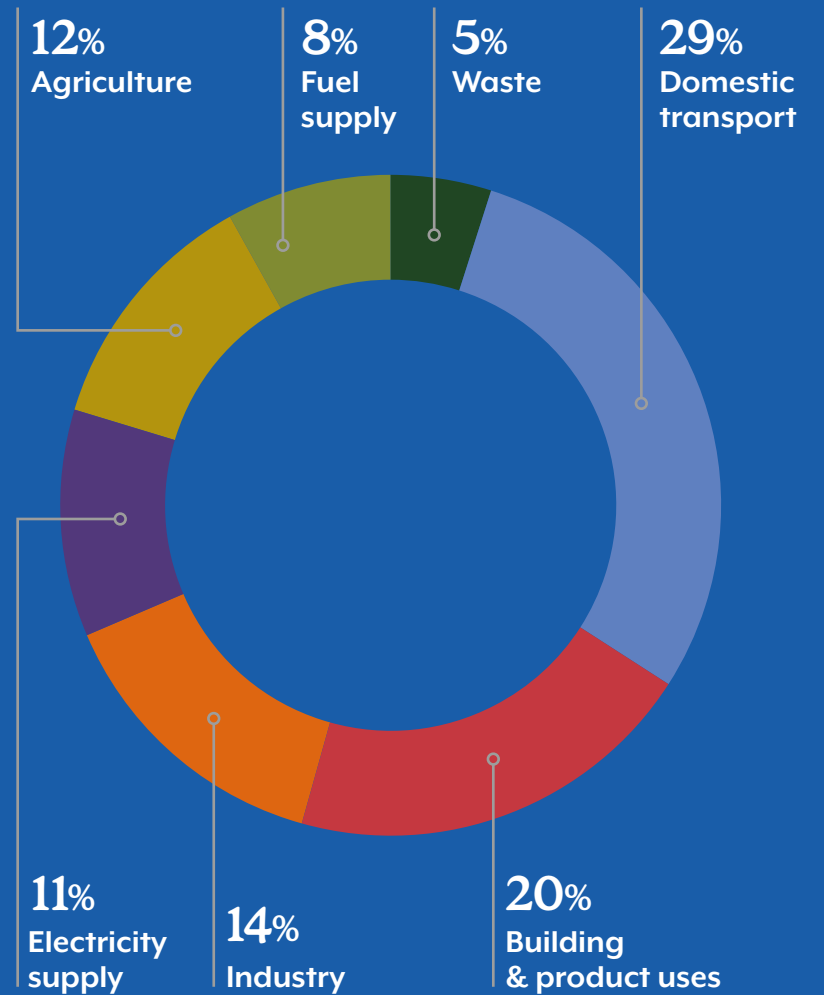
Get in the know

Agriculture contributes approximately 12% of the UK's net territorial greenhouse gas emissions. This includes emissions from livestock, soil management, and energy use on farms. This contribution reflects the sector's role in food production and its associated environmental impacts, but also highlights ongoing efforts to reduce emissions through improved farming practices and technologies aimed at sustainability.

Nitrogen Use Estimates: The report highlights nitrogen use estimates, indicating that the nitrogen balance (the difference between total nitrogen input and output) fell by 28% for the average Scottish farm from 2021-22 to 2022-23. This significant reduction has led to improved nitrogen use efficiency.

This positive trend was observed across most farm types, with cereal farms experiencing the most substantial decrease in nitrogen input from fertiliser.

Grazing animals support conditions for carbon sequestration in soil, where carbon is absorbed from the air and animal dung into the soil, and stored and used by microorganisms for energy.



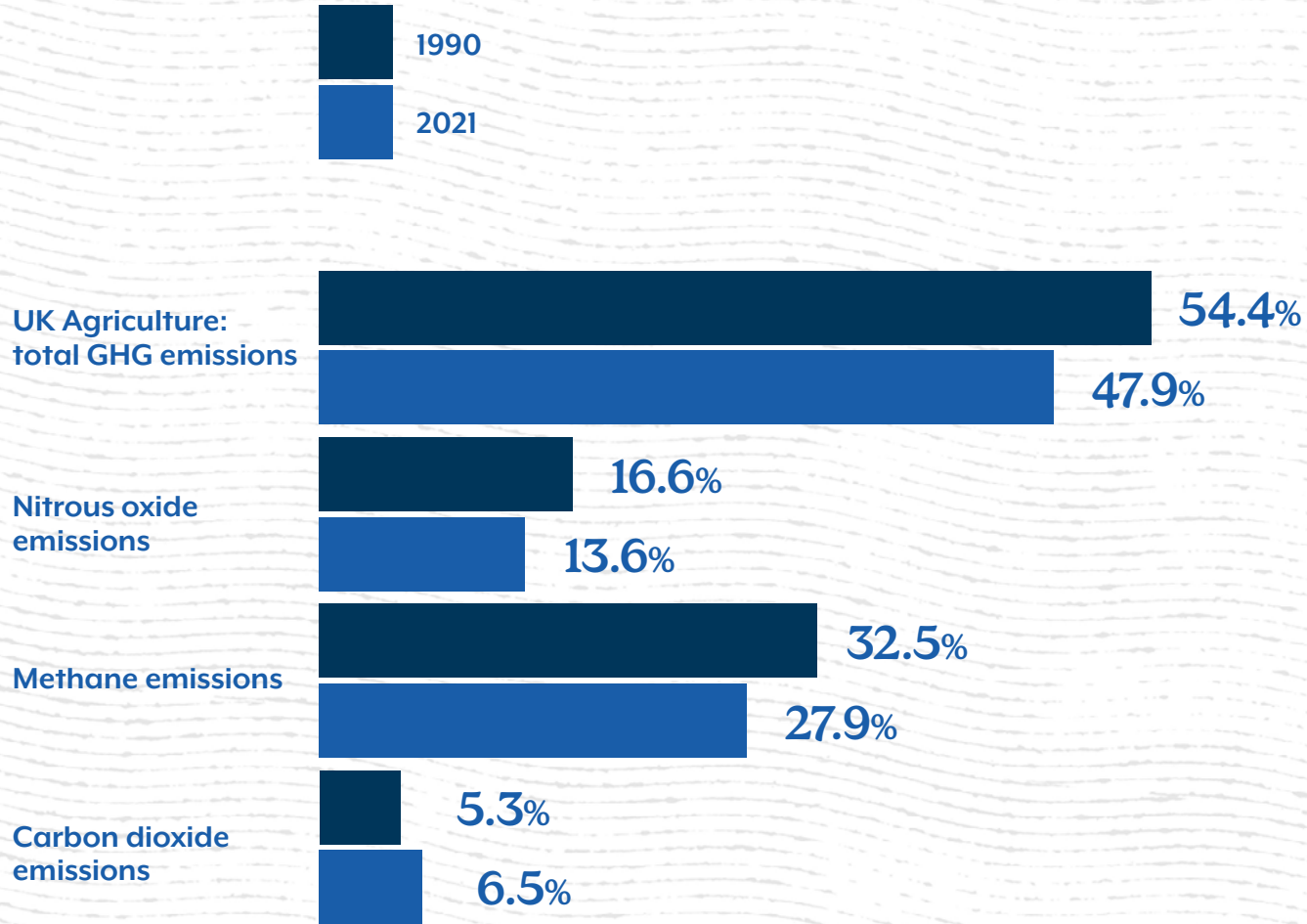
Sources UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions Provisional Figures Statistical Release 2023
Scottish Agriculture Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Nitrogen Use

Change in greenhouse gas emissions

Get in the know

In the UK the total agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have decreased by 12% between 1990 and 2021.

The 2023 Farm Practices Survey (FPS) indicated that 62% of farmers thought it important to consider GHGs when making farm business decisions.



Sources Final UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions National Statistics 1990 to 2021



Community impact

Get in the know

The red meat industry isn't just a vital part of Scotland's economy, it's a part of its culture, supporting communities and sustainable practices. Here's why it matters:

Economic impact The Scottish red meat industry is a powerhouse, contributing **£2.8 billion** in output and supporting more than **39,000** jobs in farming, processing, and retail. The red meat industry represents over **36%** of national farming output, driving economic growth and resilience in rural areas by championing local farmers and businesses.

Cultural heritage Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork are more than just ingredients; they hold a special place in Scotland's cuisine. From celebrated dishes like haggis to hearty mince and tatties, red meat reflects rich Scottish culinary traditions and showcases the quality of home grown produce

Supporting local, sustainable choices Choosing locally sourced red meat means supporting farm-to-table practices, reducing food miles, and strengthening the bond between consumers and producers. Local farm tours and education programmes help to show first-hand how important sustainable farming is in its role in preserving Scotland's landscapes.

Championing quality with local butchers Scotland's independent butchers, especially **members of the Scotch Butcher's Club**, are dedicated to sourcing from high-welfare, quality-assured farms. When you shop with a Scotch Butcher Club member, you can trust that every cut of beef, lamb, or pork meets the highest standards of sustainability and animal welfare.

Discover delicious recipes at Make It Scotch!

Head over to [Make It Scotch](#) for a fantastic selection of mouth-watering recipes featuring Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork. Whether you're looking for hearty meals, quick weeknight dinners, or impressive dishes for special occasions, we have something for everyone!

Here are a few highlights to inspire your next culinary adventure:

**HARISSA SCOTCH LAMB AND SWEET POTATO
TRAYBAKE WITH ROASTED GARLIC YOGHURT**



SPECIALLY SELECTED PORK CARNITAS



HOMEMADE NOODLE POT WITH SCOTCH BEEF



Get in the know Visit our [website](#) to explore more recipes and make the most of Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork

Videos and case studies

Want to know even more about what makes Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork so exceptional? Watch our videos and dive into case studies that reveal the sustainable farming practices, care, and quality assurance that go into every bite.

🔊 LISTEN TO THE PODCAST WITH JOHN GILLILAND



▶ SHARING A PRIDE IN ENVIRONMENT AND WELFARE



▶ FARMING WITH FIELD CRED



▶ FARMING FOODSTEPS SUSTAINABILITY VIDEO



▶ QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS



Consumer health & wellbeing marketing campaign

When You Know You Know is set to return to screens from 6th January with a focus on enjoying red meat as part of a healthy balanced diet – talking to those who are “on a mission to better nutrition”.

The campaign not only features delicious recipe inspiration such as our Scotch Beef Seared Poke Bowl and Specially Selected Pork Pad Thai, but also highlights the nutritional benefits of the dish such as being high in protein or a source of vitamin B12 – all essential nutrients we need for our bodies to function normally.



Consumer health & wellbeing marketing campaign

In terms of the wider media plan, highlights include:

NEW: STV brand story

Brand story advertisements are special segments shown in the ad breaks of popular STV shows which allow advertisers to tell the stories of their brands in unique and different ways. For our campaign, nutritionist and influencer, Scott Baptie will be speaking to a busy mum looking for inspiration for a quick and easy midweek dinner that helps support the growth and development of her children as well as an older female viewer who is fit and active and wants to ensure she fuels her body with delicious and nutritious meals.

NEW: Billboard advertisements in selected Pure Gym & David Lloyd sites

We will utilise advertising space within Pure Gym & David Lloyd gyms to promote high protein recipe ideas using the Scotch brands

Building on our previous campaign activity, this phase of the campaign will also be seen across:

- STV / Border / STV Player – re-running our 60 second and 30 second adverts which focus on why Scotch is the meat that sets the standard
- Bauer Radio Partnership
- Online articles in The Times and Scottish Sun
- Billboards in the proximity to retail
- Meta, TikTok and You Tube

This activity is set to reach over **81%** of all adults in Scotland.

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW.



Choose Scotch.
For those on a mission
to better nutrition.

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW.
SCOTCH BEEF SCOTCH PORK
GET IN THE KNOW AT MAKEITSCOTCH.COM

**When You Know,
You Know.**
Video Advert



Education

Working closely with teachers, partners and the red meat industry, the QMS outreach team endeavours to ensure that schools have access to resources covering everything from sustainable farming to food production and from healthy diets to career opportunities.

More broadly, we aim to futureproof the red meat industry by working with colleges and universities as well as with other departments within QMS and our external partners to ensure that consumers of the future are positively informed about the red meat industry and the health and wellbeing benefits that Scotch red meat brings to a balanced diet.

In partnership with Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Rugby, we are also emphasising the vital role of premium red meat nutrition in enhancing athletic performance, which is integrated into our educational initiatives.

[Read more](#)

Farming foodsteps

The digital initiative covers the journey from farm-to-fork and everything in between, including technology in farming, food production and health. Designed by QMS, the platform also covers important messages around sustainability, the environment, food safety and careers.

Watch the video to find out more about **Farming Foodsteps**

Visit **Farming Foodsteps**



Scotch ambassadors

Get in the know

QMS is proud to have a dedicated group of ambassadors who play a key role in promoting the benefits of Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork to communities across Scotland.

Ambassador activities:

- Engage in on-farm food and farming events
- Conduct classroom sessions and cookery demonstrations
- Support industry events such as Highland Sheep
- Contribute to case studies for various campaigns

Impact of ambassadors:

- Enhance consumer understanding of red meat's role in a healthy, balanced, and sustainable diet
- Promote positive conversations about Scotland's red meat sector, connecting farm to fork

Community marketing fund

Get in the know

At QMS, we're dedicated to showcasing our iconic red meat brands—Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork.

Our **Community marketing fund** exists to empower local projects and events that inspire consumers to choose high-quality, locally sourced Scottish meat.

Do you have an initiative focused on raising awareness, educating the public, or driving consumer engagement? We want to hear from you! Whether it's a grassroots event, educational workshop, or promotional campaign, we welcome applications from all corners of Scotland.



Find us
@MakeitScotch



Here's how to apply:

Application	Fill out the form and apply early, as funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
Review process	Every submission is carefully assessed for its potential impact, and all applicants receive a decision within six weeks.
Funding	There is no upper limit on funding amounts, though the overall fund is finite.

We're excited to support initiatives that shine a light on the exceptional quality of Scottish red meat.

If your project aligns with our mission, apply today!

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Quality Meat Scotland