

# Developing the Supply Chain through Increasing Skills and Education Opportunities

A Position Paper by the Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group



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## 1.0 Context

The Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group is an industry leadership body designed to provide a collaborative working mechanism for key membership organisations within the Scottish red meat sector. Membership consists of representation from NFU Scotland, the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers, Scottish Craft Butchers, the Institute of Auctioneer and Appraisers in Scotland, the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, the National Sheep Association Scotland, Scottish Beef Association and the Pig Industry Leadership Group. It is chaired by Quality Meat Scotland.

The Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group commissioned this position paper, as strengthening the supply chain through the enhancement of education and skills is a key concern for the sector.

## 2.0 Executive summary of our position

The Scottish red meat sector has an ageing population and a declining skilled workforce. This is not a new issue, but one which has been accelerated by the UK's exit from the EU, leading to severe shortages in skilled workers. The decline in new entrants to the sector is a challenge which needs to be immediately addressed.

There are currently several ways to enter the red meat industry in Scotland, whether you are a 'grass roots' school leaver, or a 'career changer'. There is also a variety of support available to facilitate this. However, the routes of entry and support available are not always clear, and more needs to be done to raise awareness of the opportunities available, as well as establishing a joined-up approach from educators. Promotion of the industry itself needs to be developed, to tackle misconceptions of a traditional, parochial and low-paying sector and instead portraying it as the positive, progressive and high-tech industry that it is. However, changing the sector's image will not be achieved immediately and the results of successful promotion will be seen in the mid to longer term.

There are some steps that can be taken to make an impact in the shorter term. These will address:

- Increasing awareness at school level of the roles available in the red meat supply chain
- Understanding the demographic of career changers entering the red meat industry
- Building connections with targeted areas of the job market to promote the red meat sector as a career pathway
- Enabling businesses to attract and retain staff

These can be achieved by the following actions:

1. Processors partnering with schools to deliver Skills for Work in Food and Drink Manufacturing. Working with butchers and schools to encourage schools to develop meaningful relationships with their local butcher shops
2. Collating data on the background of career changers to build a picture of industry cross over and understand if there are areas to capitalise on
3. Explore a change in policy to include Polaris/Craft Skills Scotland as registered trainers with charities that support ex-service people
4. Work with Release Scotland to explore potential opportunities for ex-offenders entering the red meat sector
5. Investigate opportunities to raise the profile of working in the red meat industry to staff in Jobcentre Plus and Skills Development Scotland centres

6. Create an employer's toolkit for butchery and processing businesses, to include salary scales and business modelling, highlighting the benefits of providing a clear structure in salary ladder for employees
7. Work with education and skills providers for the red met sector to ensure consistency and synergy across courses in line with the needs of the sector

### 3.0 Introduction

The Scottish red meat sector workforce is passionate, resilient and dedicated, with strong technical skills and a broad knowledge of the industry. Scotland has several academic institutions and vocational skills providers who offer a wide range of courses related to the sector, as well as a wealth of world-leading research institutes whose work can advise on the changes required in the sector and how these can be achieved. Knowledge transfer experts and peer learning groups within the sector are successful in delivering improved efficiency and sharing best practice.

The Scottish red meat supply chain generates over £2 billion annually to Scotland's economy. The supply, use and input-output tables produced by the Scottish Government highlight how valuable meat processing is to the Scottish economy, ranking it in the top 10 out of Scotland's 98 industrial sectors. Currently, there are over 36,000 people working in the food and drink manufacturing sector in Scotland which accounts for 19% of the Scottish manufacturing workforce. Gross value added to the economy is £1.9bn which is 14.2% of Scottish manufacturing value added. Food and drink manufacturing is Scotland's largest manufacturing sector, made up of almost 900 businesses. Over the last ten years, food exports from Scotland have increased by more than 50% to £815 million. Food and drink manufacturing accounts for around 45% of Scotland's full supply chain turnover and the number of people it employs<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the continuing success of the industry, it is not a popular career pathway for new entrants. 0.9% of Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) starts at the end of Q3 2021/22 were in the animal care, land and water-based category (which includes Horticulture, Rural Land Use and Management Technical Apprenticeship, Rural Skills, and Veterinary Nursing MAs) and 3.4% were in the food and drink category (covering Agriculture, Technical Apprenticeship, Food and Drink Operations and Food and Drink Technical MAs)<sup>2</sup>.

The red meat sector in Scotland currently supports around 50,000 jobs. However, the combination of an ageing workforce, the UK's departure from the EU, the Covid pandemic, and the misconception that agriculture is low tech, low skilled, low paid and slow moving, means that the entire supply chain, from farm to the food service sector, is experiencing a critical shortage of skilled labour. Food and Drink Federation Scotland estimated that food manufacturing alone will need 19,000 new recruits by 2024 to meet skills needs.

To address these issues and to prosper through to 2030 and beyond, the sector needs to attract people with progressive mindsets and ensure that structured skills progression is available throughout the supply chain. The pre-existing challenges faced by the processing and retail sectors in attracting and retaining staff have been significantly exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and the UK leaving the EU: the combination of these two factors saw many EU migrants return home. Now,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/43589/fa-l6-food-and-drink-technologies-framework-specification.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48909/modern-apprenticeship-statistics-quarter-3-2021-22.pdf>

despite the willingness of some to return, increasingly stringent immigration rules are preventing them from doing so. With 15% of Scotland's manufacturing workforce previously coming from the EU, this poses significant issues. This dearth in the EU workforce is exacerbated by an extremely competitive domestic labour market, resulting in a transient workforce seeking more lucrative opportunities.

Focusing on innovation and automation as well as developing clear career paths by which people can progress and develop, will help to create a vibrant and progressive sector that people will want to join. It is essential to adopt research, technology and innovation so that farmers, crofters and producers have the confidence and skills to maximise the efficiency and productivity of their holdings and to encourage and develop their workforce.

The job landscape itself is changing. The urgent need to address the impact of climate change and the ways in which we work has led to the introduction and promotion of 'green skills'. The Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP) outlined by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) identifies immediate actions to support the development of the skills needed to meet the climate change challenge, particularly in relation to sectors identified as key to the transition to net zero - one of which is agriculture and land use management. CESAP identifies the need for "a significant realignment of our investment in education, training and work-based learning towards green jobs", stating that "an adaptive skills system is vital to maintaining the productive performance of economies"<sup>3</sup>.

The gender pay gap is considerably higher than average across the red meat supply chain. It was reported at 16% in across agriculture, forestry and fishing in 2021<sup>4</sup>, and at 14.1% for food and drink manufacturing in 2020<sup>5</sup>. The national average in Scotland is 3%. This does not support a diverse workforce or improve the narrative that the red meat supply chain offers low paid employment. Work needs to be done to introduce clear salary structures and progression trajectories in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

## 4.0 Situation analysis:

In order to best understand the scope for increasing opportunities in skills and education with regards to developing the red meat supply chain, a review of the current situation was undertaken. Research was conducted in relation to the demographic as a whole, before analysing each part of the education and skills pathway, from primary education to work-based learning.

### 4.1 Demographic challenges in rural areas and the impact on skills

The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland 2019-2021<sup>6</sup> produced by SDS identified the following issues with a direct impact on skills:

- There is limited population growth. Scotland's rural areas account for 31% of Scotland's total population. Forecast growth to 2041 in rural areas is 3%, two percentage points lower than the Scottish average, with the population of all Islands and Remote Rural communities forecast to decrease

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47336/climate-emergency-skills-action-plan-2020-2025.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47417/agriculture-ssa.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47425/ssa-food-and-drink-manufacturing.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45683/skills-action-plan-for-rural-scotland-summary-report.pdf>

- There is an ageing population, with the working age population of Scotland's rural areas forecast to decrease by 9% by 2041
- A significant challenge is posed by the out-migration of young people, which impacts on overall population size, community sustainability and economic growth
- There is a persistence in outdated perceptions of the types of work and occupations which are available in rural areas. There is a need for greater awareness of the diverse economy and range of high-quality employment opportunities on offer in rural areas
- The occupational make-up of Scotland's rural areas differs from the rest of Scotland, with lower levels of managerial, professional and associate professionals and higher levels of skilled trades
- A significant gender imbalance remains in agriculture, with more considerably more men than women employed in the sector
- Approximately 20% of students study at higher education level in rural areas. There has been a slight decrease in overall provision in rural based colleges over the last three years, and a 7% decrease in enrolments in 'rural subjects' since 2013/14. However, leavers from rural based colleges are more likely to move straight into work than the national average
- There are a relatively small number of higher education institutes (HEIs) located in rural areas, with six of the 19 HEIs having a presence in rural areas. However, there has been an increasing uptake of 'rural' subjects – between 2012/13 and 2016/17, the total number of entrants studying rural subjects at HEIs in Scotland increased by 36%

## 4.2 Education

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in Scotland is based on learning experiences and outcomes, with benchmarks for each learning area (early years, primary, secondary, additional support needs (ASN)), many of which cover farming, food production and sustainability. Teachers can access resources from a range of places and are often created by peers. It is essential that teachers are provided with easy-to-use, curriculum-relevant, factual, non-biased resources in relation to red meat education.

Education Scotland's Food for Thought Mind Map<sup>7</sup> outlines how food and drink can be explored in the curriculum, for all levels of learning. There is a suite of resources to support all ages and stages of the curriculum using the 'Food for Thought' theme. In addition, there is an associated annual Food for Thought Fund up to £3,000 to help develop food and health as a context for learning (available from early years through to secondary schools). In 2019, 174 schools benefited from the fund.

The Scottish Government identified 'People' and 'Just Transitions' as key themes for the COP26 Summit, including a strong focus on young people and engaging disadvantaged and hard to reach communities. Education Scotland published the Climate Change in Education report<sup>8</sup> which outlined how Learning for Sustainability is embedded in the curriculum, providing key opportunities to discuss climate change and what Scotland is doing to tackle it.

In secondary schools, although food and farming can be used as a context for learning in any subject, there are some subjects that fit more naturally and would seem obvious routes into linked careers. The following statistics are taken from SQA data<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/hwb19-food-for-thought-mindmap.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/ClimateChangeinScottishEducationBriefing140819new.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/98566.html>

Food related courses (2021/22):

- Number of pupils taking Health and Food Technology: 3,948
- Number of pupils taking Practical Cookery: 11,803
- Number of pupils taking Modern Apprenticeship in Food and Drink: 29

Rural Skills (2021/22):

- Number of pupils taking Skills for Work (SCQF Level 4) Rural Skills: 291 (down 16% from 2020 and 80% entrants are male)

Environmental Science (2021/22):

- Number of pupils taking Higher Environmental Science: 600 across 50 centres

#### 4.2.1 Good Food Futures

The Scottish Government launched the food education programme in June 2019. It aims to provide an overarching, coordinated and end-to-end approach to the delivery of food education to young people and encourage careers in the food industry. The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) were awarded funding to increase the number of farm visits and events for school children, with the aim of benefiting around 14,000 children.

In 2021, RHET were awarded funding to deliver a programme of 80 digital farm experiences, which they estimate will reach around 2800 pupils directly, with additional numbers able to benefit from the use of pre-recorded material. As it is organisations Scottish Government directly funds that are part of this programme, QMS are deemed not eligible to join (although they were previously part of the group).<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)

Advancements in technology, both on farm and in food production, has meant that STEM subjects are critical to the future workforce. Due to this, a wider variety of careers will originate from STEM subjects in the future.

A wide range of industry-based STEM Ambassadors<sup>11</sup> provide a useful support to schools and colleges. STEM ambassadors make an impact through supporting learning, illuminating careers and raising aspirations of learners. This could a resource used to promote the red meat sector.

Organisations such as RHET advocate for farming and food and drink data to be used in relevant STEM subjects, such as the Data for Schools programme<sup>12</sup>.

The Scottish Government has set out a STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland<sup>13</sup>. It reports that there has been an encouraging uptake of pre-apprentice and foundation apprenticeship in STEM related programmes, with young people from 325 schools across 32 local authorities participating foundation apprenticeships. Entry into SQF level 6 data shows a 0.4% increase across STEM subjects, with there being a 20.7% increase in passes across STEM subjects from 2019 to 2020.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-food-nation-programme-measures-2022-interim-update/pages/4/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.stemambassadors.scot/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rhet.org.uk/teachers/resource-portal/data-4-schools>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/stem-strategy-education-training-scotland-third-annual-report/documents/>



The National Farmers Union's (NFU) Inspiring STEM through Agriculture report<sup>14</sup> looks at the impact of 'STEMterprise' resources on encouraging teachers to use agriculture and farming as a means to teach STEM.

#### 4.2.3 School visits

School visits to deliver education around the red meat industry are delivered by RHET and Quality Meat Scotland's health and education team who deliver both education sessions and educational cookery demonstrations.

Prior to Covid, butchers also delivered butchery education sessions in schools. This was also a valuable opportunity to promote career pathways within the industry. However, some butchers are constrained by time, logistics or a lack of confidence.

#### 4.2.4 College visits

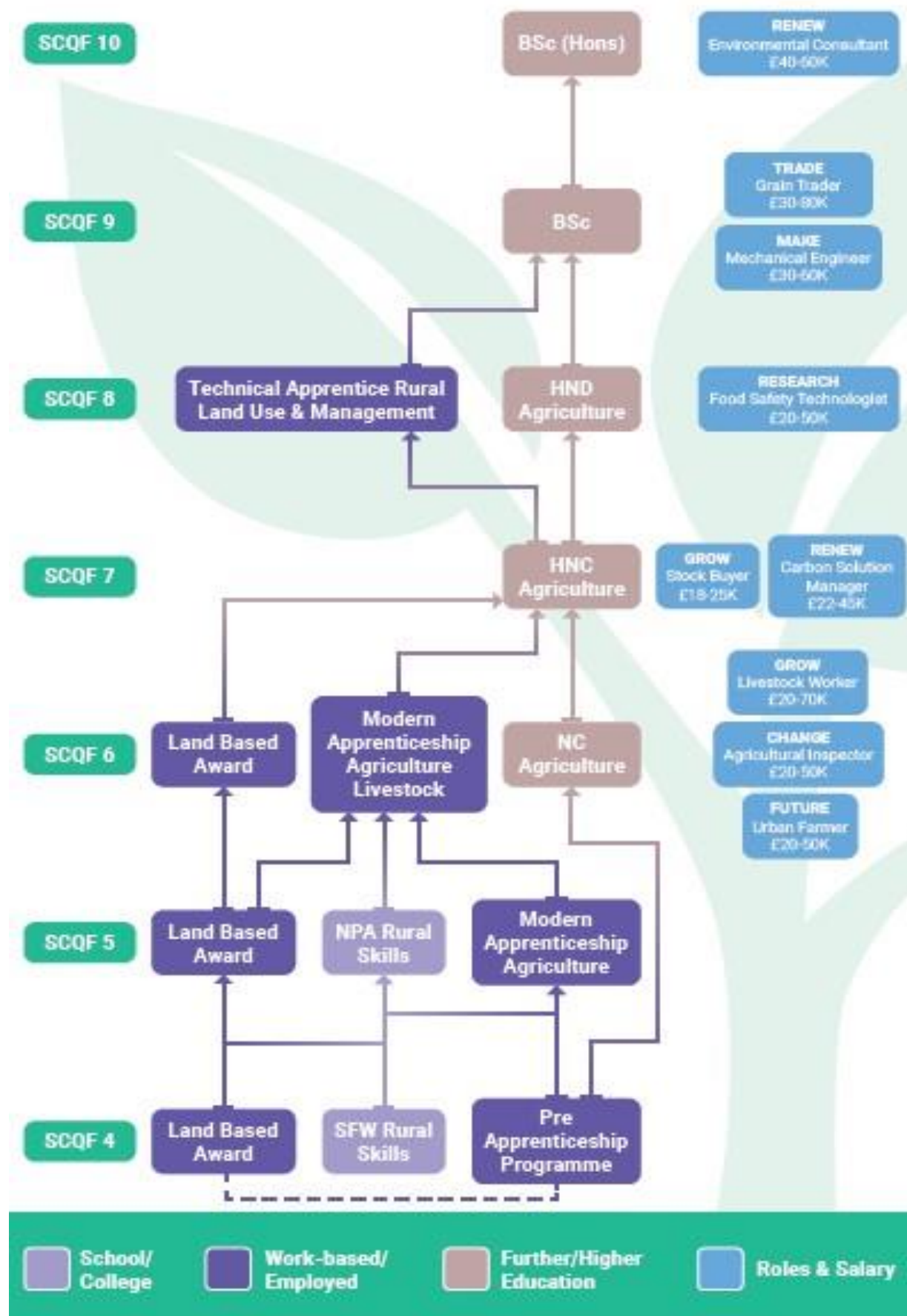
Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) works with colleges to showcase the skills that butchers have and discuss the opportunities available within butchery. Steps are being taken to formalise this process to ensure that colleges across Scotland are able to take up this opportunity.

### 4.3 Career pathways overview

The career pathways can broadly be split into two main categories: vocational or academic. Students can often transfer from one to the other as the diagram below highlights:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nfuonline.com/archive?treeid=150799>



#### 4.3.1 Connecting Education and Industry

The red meat industry needs to be promoted as a positive career destination by Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) school coordinators, teachers and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) coordinators in schools.

Scottish Government outlined Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Regional Groups as:

“A network of 21 industry led groups tasked with strengthening employer engagement with education. The establishment of the groups was a key recommendation in the Youth Employment Strategy – Developing the Young Workforce. The groups work to support employers, and pupils, teachers and school leaders in Scotland's publicly funded secondary schools to bring about a permanent improvement in how employers engage with schools”.<sup>15</sup>

Skills Development Scotland is “Scotland’s national skill body who support individuals to build their career management, work-based and employability skills, throughout their career journey, from school, into further learning opportunities and employment.”<sup>16</sup>

Developing connections with DYW and SDS and raising awareness of the opportunities within the red meat industry are key actions of both the Butchery Careers, and Beef & Sheep Careers projects. This work needs to build strong links between the red meat sector and schools, to promote the sector as a viable career path.

#### 4.3.2 Lantra

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for Scotland’s land-based, aquaculture and environmental conservation sectors. It aims to ensure that these sectors can meet their skills needs and have the right people and promotion of learning opportunities for new entrants. Lantra aims to promote the land-based sector as a rewarding career choice, and helps to ensure that learning and training provision addresses industry requirements and skills gaps.<sup>17</sup>

Lantra’s ‘#NoTwoDaysTheSame in Land-based and Aquaculture’ campaign provides the opportunity for school students to find out about the wide range of careers available in the land-based and aquaculture sectors and how young people can get there. It is delivered in partnership with Developing Young Workforce Live.

### 4.4 Academic Pathways: Further/higher education

Colleges and universities will teach students at a range of levels including entry, National Progression Award (NPA), pathway, National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), degree, honours degree, masters and doctorate (PhD). They are also increasing delivering shorter Continued Personal Development (CPD) courses for career long learning.

As well as the more traditional agriculture courses, there are a range of agriculture-based courses including agricultural technology, sustainable food production and land use, and organic farming. These courses are offered at a variety of levels ranging from SCQF – SCQF 10.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/implementation-developing-young-workforce-dyw-school-coordinators-child-rights-wellbeing-impact-assessment-crwia/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.lantra.co.uk/about-us>

Other courses linked to the red meat food sector include:

- Food Science & Technology
- Food Security
- Food Safety
- Food Nutrition
- Environmental Science
- Conservation
- Animal Care
- Veterinary Courses
- Animal Nutrition
- Global Food Security & Nutrition

SRUC are currently undergoing a review of their agricultural courses and are working with stakeholders to develop the Agriculture NextGen HNC and HND courses which will launch in September 2022.

## 4.5 Vocational qualifications and work-based training pathways

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are based on national standards and provide evidence that learners can do their jobs well. They are studied in the workplace, in college or with training providers.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications start at entry level and can be studied during the senior phase of school, at pre apprenticeship or Modern Apprenticeship level and can go through to Technical Apprenticeship Level (SCQF 8).

SVQs linked to the red meat sector<sup>18</sup>:

- Food & Drink Operations SCQF 6
- Food & Drink Operations (Livestock Market Droving Skills) SCQF 5
- Food & Drink Operations (Meat & Poultry) SCQF 5 & 6
- Food & Drink Operations (Engineering Maintenance) SCQF 6
- Food & Drink Operations (Food Manufacturing Excellence) SCQF 5 & 6
- Food Technology SCQF Level 6
- Food and Drink Operations (Production and Processing Skills) at SCQF level 5
- Food and Drink Operations (Food Sales and Service Skills) SCQF level 5
- SVQ Food and Drink Operations (Supply Chain Skills) at SCQF level 6

### 4.5.1 In-school learning

Many schools are increasing their opportunities for young people to develop relevant skills and knowledge through work placements during their senior phase at school. This work is supported by Developing the Young Workforce and Skills Development Scotland Coordinators who are in all secondary schools in Scotland. Not all schools provide these opportunities.

Skills for Work courses (SCQF 4)<sup>19</sup> focus on generic employability skills that relate to the world of work. The courses offer pathways into further education, training and employment. Skills for Work courses linked to the red meat industry are Food and Drink Manufacturing Industry and Rural Skills.

The Employability Award (SCQF 3 & 4)<sup>20</sup> is flexible and allows delivery methods to be tailored to the candidate.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41339.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5951.html>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/BD6657\\_SQA\\_Employability\\_Award.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/BD6657_SQA_Employability_Award.pdf)

A good example of in school learning is Growing Rural Talent (GRT) which focuses on the land-based sector in the South of Scotland. GRT is a collaborative project between Dumfries and Galloway Council, SRUC Barony, Borders College, Tarff Valley Services, National Farmers Union, Lantra, Confor, SDS, DYW and South of Scotland Enterprise.

#### 4.5.2 Pre-apprenticeships and National Progression Awards

A pre-apprenticeship is a course that equips a student with foundation knowledge and skills to prepare them for a National Progression Award (NPA) or a modern apprenticeship (MA). Pre-apprenticeships can be taken from the age of 16 years old.

National Progression Awards (NPAs) are aimed at assessing a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas. NPAs are at SCQF Levels 2-6 and are delivered in partnership between schools, colleges and employers.

- Agriculture Pre-Apprenticeship Programme – funding for the pre-apprenticeship has not yet been confirmed by the Scottish Government for 2022-23 although providers are enrolling students.
- Butchery NPA – Forth Valley College and City of Glasgow College are both working with Scotbeef to set up NPAs in Butchery and Food Production Skills

According to SDS's February 2022 sectoral skills assessment, "pre-apprenticeship models and NPAs continue to raise awareness of the [food and drink primary production] sector amongst young people, and build a pipeline of new recruits. Recent developments include flexible delivery to address seasonality. Strong partnerships at a local and national level have helped drive innovation and business engagement".<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.5.3 Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) offer a blend of academic and work-based learning. They are designed to enhance and expand existing pathways from school, with multiple progression routes on completion to work, college or university. Lasting one or two years, pupils begin their Foundation Apprenticeship in S5 or S6. The Food and Drink FA was introduced in 2017 and provides a gateway into other courses within the food and drink industry.

#### 4.5.4 Modern apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) normally take between 1–3 years to complete and are open to anyone aged 16 or over. Subjects linked to the red meat sector are<sup>22</sup>:

- Agriculture Level 2 (SCQF 5) and 3 (SCQF 6)
- Horticulture Level 2 (SCQF 5) and 3 (SCQF 6)
- Land-based Engineering Level 2 (SCQF 5) and 3 (SCQF 6)
- Rural Land Use and Management Level 4 (SCQF 8)
- Rural Skills Level 2 (SCQF 5) and 3 (SCQF 6/7)
- Food and Drink Operations (SCQF 5/6)
- Food and Drink Technical (SCQF 6)
- Process Manufacturing (SCQF 6/7)
- Veterinary Nursing (SCQF 7)

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48811/food-and-drink-primary-production-ssa-1.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.apprenticeships.scot/>

#### 4.5.5 Technical Apprenticeships

Technical apprenticeships are higher-level apprenticeships that offer those aged over 16 paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs at senior supervisory and management level. The Technical Apprenticeship in Rural Land Use and Management enables individuals wishing to progress from a full-time course or Modern Apprenticeship to obtain an accredited management level qualification. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) will commence this course in September 2022.

#### 4.5.6 Butchery and processing

There are 15 catering butchers and secondary processors listed under the QMS Brands Licensing Scheme and approximately 600 high street butchers based in Scotland. The average age of a butchery business owner in Scotland is 60.

The majority of processing plants in Scotland have reduced their staffing numbers since the Covid pandemic and Brexit. It remains to be seen whether the processors will revert to pre-pandemic staffing numbers.

Butchery SVQ training is completed in-house and is undertaken by the trainee butcher before being signed off by verified assessors. The organisations that design the training modules are commercial companies and there are currently no butchery courses delivered at Scottish colleges – however, from July, Forth Valley College will introduce a course in butchery.

Processing training is received in-house and is very thorough and to exacting standards. Some businesses incentivise training by offering employees an enhancement in rate of pay once their training is complete and signed off by the line manager.

Highland Meats, owned by Dunbia, launched a Butchery Academy in October 2019, in partnership with Scottish Meat Training.

#### 4.5.7 Craft Butcher Diploma of Scotland

The diploma is internationally recognised as formal and comprehensive evidence of quality training and achievement in the Scottish retail meat industry. It is for experienced butchers requiring certification or for those looking for the next step following the completion of Modern Apprenticeship in SVQ Meat and Poultry Skills at Level 3 (SCQF 6). On attainment of the diploma, the recipient can call themselves a Craft Butcher of Scotland.

To undertake the diploma, the trainee must fund this themselves as there is no supported funding from SQA for this qualification. The cost of undertaking the diploma is £500, which Craft Skills Scotland charge. The Scotch Butchers Club has contributed £250 to those taking the diploma, and to date has supported eight trainees.

#### 4.5.8 Auction markets

Harper Adams University in England runs a Livestock Operations and Management course<sup>23</sup> aimed at aspiring auctioneers, animal health officers and others. The IAAS provides financial support for the tuition fees of Scottish students undertaking this four-year course<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/courses/short-course/201010/livestock-market-operations-and-management>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.iaas.co.uk/iaas-supports-next-generation-of-auctioneers/>

The students are employed full-time by auctioneering companies, with this practical training being supplemented by learning the academic aspects of the business – including its legal, regulatory and financial frameworks – taught by the team of experts at Harper Adams.

Drover training has been discussed in the industry as an area requiring more input. Polaris Learning offer Animal Welfare courses aimed at processors for live animal handling.

#### 4.5.9 Hauliers

There is currently no training programme for hauliers. From May 2022, QMS will be piloting a scenario-based training course for existing hauliers, in partnership with Seafield vets.

#### 4.5.10 Veterinarians

There is a significant recruitment and retention issue within the veterinary sector, exacerbated by corporatisation, Brexit (many vets working in public health/food standards roles have returned to the EU) and comparatively low rates of pay for vets in public health. Veterinary public health work is arguably not viewed as highly as other vet work, so prospective vets may not view it as appealing or challenging.

Attempts are being made to address some of these issues, such as the formation of a Scottish Veterinary Service and a new vet school being established by SRUC which aims to make the course more accessible to those from rural and practical backgrounds, but this will take time. For now, many veterinary practises are struggling to maintain adequate staffing levels, especially with huge increases in pet ownership since the pandemic lockdowns, putting extra strain on mixed practices.

### 4.6 Entering the red meat sector

It is difficult to get an accurate depiction of the number of people from outside the red meat sector who retrain within it. Statistics do not differentiate between those who are retraining to join the industry from those who already work within the red meat sector and are undertaking additional training. It would be useful to have insight into how many make a career change and join the red meat sector from other industries (and what these industries are) each year.

#### 4.6.1 The Scottish Land Matching Service and Farming Opportunities for New Entrants

The Scottish Land Matching Service (SLMS) acts as a free service connecting those in the agricultural sector throughout Scotland<sup>25</sup>. It engages with those seeking or offering joint venture arrangements in relation to land and facilitates discussions with a view to parties progressing to successful arrangements. By doing so, it provides a platform for opportunities for the next generation of farmers and forms part of an exit strategy for farmers wishing to take a gradual or complete step back from farming.

This can include tenancies; contract farming; share farming; joint venture. Availability of land and finance are two barriers new entrants to farming face. Share farming is a flexible business arrangement where two parties (the farm owner and the share farmer) carry out separate farming businesses without forming a partnership or company. The model is common for dairy farmers in New Zealand and is growing in popularity in the UK. Terms of a share farming arrangement are by mutual agreement. As a result, each agreement will differ according to a variety of factors.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://slms.scot/about-us/>



Taking forward the governance of the SLMS is the group, Farming Opportunities for New Entrants (FONE). Following the success of an initiative to lease part-time starter farms on Scotland's Forestry and Land, a group was established by the Scottish Government to identify proposals to maximise starter opportunities on publicly owned land. Their report highlighted the value of a coordinated approach and as a result, FONE was put in place to coordinate a New Entrants opportunities programme<sup>26</sup>. FONE's priorities for 2022 are:

1. Extend the scope of the Land Matching Service to cover crofting
2. Make available 400 hectares of publicly owned land to new entrants
3. Advocate the support of new entrants in future policy, ensuring that future support recognises the needs of new and young entrants and represents their interests
4. Continue beyond the public sector, highlighting opportunities to private estates and owner occupiers
5. Facilitate the promotion of case studies and other promotional material to include further development of general guidance and signposting for new entrants.
6. Facilitate three Starter Farms to progress beyond their 10-year tenure

#### 4.6.2 New Entrants and Young Farmers Start-Up Grant Schemes

As set out in a recent Scottish Government publication<sup>27</sup>, the Young Farmers Start-Up Grant (YFSUG) and New Entrants Start-Up Grant (NESUG) provide funding to farmers who were either under 41 or early in their agricultural business development, respectively. The schemes were set up as part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The YFSUG was aimed at those who are starting an agricultural business for the first time or who are taking over an existing agricultural business. This grant was worth €70,000.

The NESUG was aimed at those who started their agricultural business in the last 12 months. This grant was worth €15,000.

The schemes closed early due to the exhaustion of funds.

#### 4.6.3 Recruiting skilled workers

Over the past few decades, in the absence of local workers with the right competencies, Scottish red meat businesses have relied heavily on recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from outwith the UK, with 15% of all workers in manufacturing alone coming from the EU. Since the UK's exit from the EU and the subsequent pandemic, many workers have left the industry, exacerbating pre-existing labour shortages. Businesses have struggled to find workers who will work for the same rate of pay that the EU national workers have commonly been paid.

#### 4.6.4 Ex-offenders

The need to reduce re-offending rates in Scotland is well recognised and supported by Scottish Government justice policy, as is the recognition that providing sustainable job opportunities is one of the most effective ways of achieving this. Given that in Scotland approximately 1 in 3 men and 1 in 10 women of working age have at least one conviction, there is a substantial pool of people with a wide range of talents, skills and experience that is too often overlooked by employers when looking for new employees.

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<sup>26</sup> [Farming opportunities for new entrants \(FONE\): information pack - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fone-information-pack/pages/introduction.aspx)

<sup>27</sup> [New Entrants and Young Farmers Start-Up Grant Schemes: Evaluation \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-entrants-and-young-farmers-start-up-grant-schemes-evaluation/pages/introduction.aspx)



Release Scotland is a network of Scotland's employers promoting a fair and equitable recruitment process to ensure people with convictions have a fair chance of getting employment<sup>28</sup>. Encouraging the whole Industry to get involved with such initiatives could potentially provide a new and skilled workforce stream.

#### 4.6.5 Ex-service people

There are a number of charities that support ex-service personnel in finding jobs when they leave the military. SaluteMyJob is one of the charities which advertises opportunities to ex-service people<sup>29</sup>.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (an executive agency of the UK government) offered funding to sectors and occupations where short term contracts or other non-standard employment models are the norm, so they can access the benefit of apprenticeships<sup>30</sup>. Flexi Job Apprenticeships and agencies have been funded to assist with this. MDS Ltd, a training provider in the fresh food, produce, horticultural and agricultural industry, is an example of an agency who have received funding. With their government grant, they are targeting ex-forces and career changers to join the fresh produce sector. To do so, they are working with the armed forces Charity SSAFA<sup>31</sup>.

#### 4.6.6 Unemployed

Jobcentre Plus has centres throughout Scotland as well as online services such as [myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://myjobscotland.gov.uk).

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) centres are open on high streets across Scotland with careers advisors working with the local community to support people to develop their skills.

Both of these services offer support in choosing a career, learning and training, applying for jobs, making a career change and dealing with redundancy.

### 4.7 Ongoing training: Continuous professional development, knowledge transfer

#### 4.7.1 Scotland's Farm Advisory Service

Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (FAS) is part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) which is co-funded by the EU and Scottish Government, providing information and resources aimed at increasing the profitability and sustainability of farms and crofts. Grant support, a full programme of events, a subscription service for crofts and small farms, and a range of articles and publications form the core of this service which is designed to provide integrated advice for farmers and crofters across Scotland.

#### 4.7.2 Monitor Farm Scotland

The Monitor Farm Scotland (MFS) initiative is an industry recognised farmer/crofter led, farmer/crofter driven programme which looks to establish a group of farms and crofts to serve as monitor farms to help improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of producers through practical demonstrations, the sharing of best practice and the discussion of up-to-date issues.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://releasescotland.com/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.salutemyjob.com/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.mds-ltd.co.uk/naw2022-funding-boosts-fresh-opportunities-for-ex-military-in-food-supply-chain/>

The revamped programme for 2022 to 2026 aims to instigate positive transformational change in innovative sustainable farming and crofting practices on nine farms and crofts across Scotland and to use the learnings from them for the benefit of farmers and crofters across Scotland. Our aim will be achieved through assisting to build resilient, dynamic farms and crofts focused on attaining full economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The methods used and results achieved will be developed using the data gathered from the 100+ farming and crofting businesses participating in the programme and will help create outputs in greater detail and at a larger scale than any Scottish knowledge transfer programme has ever achieved.

#### 4.7.3 Benchmarking/discussion groups – peer to peer learning

Peer to peer learning has been recognised as one of the most successful methods of knowledge exchange in the agricultural sector. It is at the heart of many initiatives including FAS and MFS. Benchmarking groups such as QMS's Graze+ and the newly formed Sustainable Producer Groups facilitated by QMS aim to form peer to peer networks to drive change and innovation using the farmers' and crofters' own data as the discussion basis.

#### 4.7.4 Qualifications

The red meat sector differs to the arable sector where mandatory certificates are required for certain tasks, for example, spraying. The red meat sector is lacking in a range of continuous professional development (CPD) courses, but there are some available, such as Lantra's Better Livestock Handling for Increased Profitability course<sup>32</sup> and CATraining's Transport of Livestock course for self-haulage<sup>33</sup>.

Similarly, the qualifications required of farm advisors is not comparable to other areas in the agriculture sector. BASIS offers a range of examinations and recognised qualifications for people working in the pesticide, fertiliser and related sectors, but there is no equivalent for the livestock sector. It should be noted that the Register of Sheep Advisors (ROSA) aims to address this in the sheep sector, however there is no equivalent for cattle.

The Red Tractor Scheme delivers a mandatory 1.5 hour training course for all individuals handling and moving pigs. A certificate is awarded to individuals on completion.

Pig Pro was launched by AHDB in 2017. Pig Pro is a free online training recording system accessed through Pig Hub. It allows business users to record details of staff training and development and provides easy access to evidence for assurance schemes

#### 4.7.5 Continued Personal Development funding

The Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund has been established by the Scottish Government, administered by Lantra Scotland, to support the personal development of women, providing them with additional skills to progress their careers and employment opportunities in Scottish agriculture beyond their current role<sup>34</sup>.

Courses eligible for funding include: business skills, environmental and sustainability, health and safety, plants and animals, and vehicles, machinery and equipment.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.lantra.co.uk/course/better-livestock-handling-increased-profitability>

<sup>33</sup> <https://catrain.co.uk/product/transport-of-livestock-training/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/women-agriculture-practical-training-fund>

The Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Practical Training Fund, administered by Lantra Scotland is currently open to applications for people aged 13 and above<sup>35</sup>. They can apply for £500 or more for the cost of 'climate change badge' practical or technical training course through the Skillseeder platform.

#### 4.8 Green Jobs Workforce Academy

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to reach net zero by 2045, SDS has developed the Green Jobs Workforce Academy hosted on the My World of Work website. The aim is to highlight and attract young people to the roles which will be needed in order to achieve this target, including those within agriculture. The website states that:

"The agriculture and land use industry will grow in response to net zero, meaning there will be new roles to fill. An ageing workforce means that the industry is seeking fresh talent. Companies are actively recruiting the next generation of green workers... Agriculture, forestry and fishing will need around 8,600 new workers over the next three years. It's also expected that by 2031 there'll be around 18,200 new job opportunities in food and drink"<sup>36</sup>.

#### 4.9 Support for employers

The employers' toolkit was launched in 2019 as a resource for agriculture businesses<sup>37</sup>. The toolkit was developed by Lantra Scotland on behalf of the Skills for Farming Group with support from SDS, and aims to support employers in making informed decisions on different types of training as well as providing practical information on wages, responsibilities, funding and mentoring.

### 5.0 International Examples and Case Studies

The following examples from across the globe demonstrate how effective education and training programmes can rejuvenate and future proof the red meat sector.

#### 5.1 New Zealand: Beef and Lamb 'Generation Next' programme

The Generation Next: Our Future's Sheep & Beef Farmers programme is provided by Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd, the farmer-owned, industry organisation representing New Zealand's sheep and beef farmers<sup>38</sup>. The organisation invests farmer levies in programmes that aim to grow the sheep and beef industry and provide sustainable returns now and for future generations. The programme began in 2015 and has now had 95 graduates.

The programme is designed to nurture, assist and encourage the current and future farmers within the sector, enabling them to learn technical skills while widening their network. The programme strives to ensure the younger profile of the industry have an equal voice without the influence from more established industry voices. The main goal of the programme is to maintain those already within the sheep and beef industry and allow them to be valuable assets.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.skillseeder.com/climate-change-fund>

<sup>36</sup> <https://careers.myworldofwork.co.uk/green-jobs-workforce-academy/industries/nature>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/news/farming-employers-benefit-new-toolkit>

<sup>38</sup> <https://beeflambnz.com/about-blNZ/company-profile>

Over the years the course has grown and there are now spaces for 80 successful applicants aged 18 to 45. It is free for levy payers and their employers. The programme is aimed at those aspiring to move up the beef and sheep ladder to become a future leader.

The programme involves online learning and the delivery of three workshops over a four-to-six-month period with the following objectives:

- Understand the farm business – financial basics and management.
- Develop better decision-making skills.
- Understand technology and genetics within the industry.
- Understand the importance of managing mental health and personal wellbeing.
- Understand the overall industry goals and aims.

The annual programme includes a 'focus-on-finances' workshop, a two-day workshop centred on understanding technology and genetics within the industry and a workshop to provide an understanding of the processing industry and the marketing of their products.

## 5.2 Canada: Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C) is a Canadian charitable organization with a vision to “bring agriculture to every classroom to inspire every student”<sup>39</sup>. Its ambition is to ensure that every Canadian student is inspired to consider the role they play in Canada’s agriculture and food story.

AITC-C comprises 10 provincial member organisations which act as the delivery network to provide accurate, balanced, and current curriculum-linked resources, programmes and initiatives for educators and students at all levels. Over the year 2020-21, AITC-C delivered over 2 million student experiences in agriculture education.

The charity has recently held impact framework sessions in every province, and in February 2021, subsequently laid out its path to success in agriculture education<sup>40</sup>. The key observations from its national engagement sessions were:

1. Importance of both in-person and online delivery
2. Opportunities for more collaboration/partnerships
3. Better align what industry wants students to learn about with what teachers need to do their jobs
4. Stakeholder communication about Canada-wide approach
5. Importance of measuring impact (not just reach)

From these observations, the following recommendations were made:

1. Delivery of agriculture education should continue to be a combination of both in-person and online, even when the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are lifted
2. A more united approach within provinces to effectively deliver resources, initiatives and programs to teachers. Local agricultural stakeholders will have greater teacher reach and overall impact by partnering with AITC organizations as the channel to reach classrooms
3. Three ways to help teachers:

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<sup>39</sup> <https://aitc-canada.ca/en-ca/who-we-are/our-story>

<sup>40</sup> [https://aitc-canada.ca/Portals/0/documents/National%20Impact%20Framework/AITC-C Impact Framework Report2021.pdf?ver=2021-02-09-202536-573&timestamp=1612920717445](https://aitc-canada.ca/Portals/0/documents/National%20Impact%20Framework/AITC-C%20Impact%20Framework%20Report2021.pdf?ver=2021-02-09-202536-573&timestamp=1612920717445)

- Teacher awareness of resources, initiatives and programmes (RIPs) – raise awareness and make it easier for teachers to find/access AITC RIPs through their provincial organization.
  - Quality of RIPs – continue to ensure all RIPs are accurate, balanced, current and based in science (ABCs). Also ensure RIPs are unique and deeply rooted in agriculture.
  - Curriculum linked and teacher friendly – frame the RIPs to meet teachers’ needs
4. Provincial AITC organizations can benefit from increased communication with stakeholders about their participation in the national AITC organization and the benefits of the Canada-wide approach
  5. Measure impact using consistent terms and metrics so that results can easily be cumulated and communicated from coast to coast.

### 5.3 Australia: Attracting Youth into Agriculture

Clare Peltzer produced a report in 2019 for Nuffield Australia to explore solutions to the issue of too few young people embarking on a career in agriculture<sup>41</sup>.

Peltzer observes that in Australia (as well as other countries globally), the continuum of young people entering a career in agriculture is lower than required to meet the current challenges facing food and fibre production systems. The full spectrum of career prospects available in agriculture are not well understood and therefore not pursued. Peltzer attests that an interest in agriculture can be sparked through interactions both in school and through outside school programmes and activities.

Tasmania was used as the pilot study state as it is economically dependent on the agricultural industry and currently has a strong foundation of suitable programmes and activities into which international examples could be integrated or altered to suit. School, universities and agricultural industry advocates were interviewed across six countries to determine suitable programmes and activities to be integrated into the Tasmanian system using a suitable framework to encourage young people to pursue post-16 studies in agriculture.

The study revealed the need for a strategic framework to ensure a high number of quality interactions are acquired by individuals, both in school and through outside school activities and programmes in order to fill their ‘Ag Bag’. Peltzer highlights the work that Professor Louise Archer and her team in the UK carried out to analyse reasons why young people pursue post-16 studies in science. This framework was adapted for agriculture and applied to the current Tasmanian system with international suggestions for strengthening existing activities/programs. The aim is to increase to number of young people entering the agricultural industry.

Peltzer concluded that young people will interact with agriculture at pivotal times through accessing quality programmes and activities that will lead to an increase in young people pursuing post-16 studies in agriculture. This framework will be a common document used by schools, industry bodies and other stakeholders in Tasmania where the aim will be to ensure the individual's ‘Ag Bag’ will be filled and remain full so they pursue post-16 studies in agriculture. The framework can be adopted by other regions, states or countries.

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<sup>41</sup> [https://www.nuffieldscholar.org/sites/default/files/reports/2019\\_AU\\_Clare-Peltzer\\_Attracting-Youth-Into-Agriculture-Developing-A-Strategic-Framework-To-Encourage-Young-People-Into-Agriculture.pdf](https://www.nuffieldscholar.org/sites/default/files/reports/2019_AU_Clare-Peltzer_Attracting-Youth-Into-Agriculture-Developing-A-Strategic-Framework-To-Encourage-Young-People-Into-Agriculture.pdf)

## 5.4 Netherlands: Butchery apprenticeships

SVO is the national trainer for professionals in the food sector in the Netherlands. They offer full-time and part-time options for their apprenticeship schemes, both lasting two years<sup>42</sup>. The butchery apprenticeships are formatted in the following way:

1. The BBL (part-time) course is one day a week classroom-based and the remaining four days working at a work placement. The classroom training is delivered by a skilled butcher from practice, and the training at the placement is delivered by the business owner.
2. The BOL (full time) course is four days classroom-based and is assessed by an experienced butcher from practice. This is complemented by a three-month apprenticeship at a butcher's shop.

The available courses within butchery are:

- Butcher
- Sales specialist – butchery
- Sales employee – butchery
- Production employee – butchery
- Production employee – meat processing
- Production employee – slaughter process

## 5.5 Wales: Food Workforce Wales

Food Workforce Wales is a campaign delivered by Food Skills Cymru (Lantra) on behalf of Food & Drink Wales (Welsh Government)<sup>43</sup>.

Lantra illustrates how the campaign showcases how fulfilling and diverse a career in the growing Welsh food and drink industry can be, and aims to steer a focus onto roles that are helping to feed the nation.

The campaign sets out to demonstrate how each role has its part to play in the important journey from ingredients to finished products, from contributing across the supply chain and food production through to being at the cutting edge of new and innovative international product developments.

This campaign was launched in early 2022 and is aimed at all levels of the workforce, from the recent school leaver and the college/university graduate through to career changers and those retired interested in a refreshing change. The campaign highlights that everyone has a role to play in energising and growing the industry in Wales.

The campaign's initial starting focus is in food and drink processing and manufacturing, and it aims to provide a platform for food and drink businesses in Wales that will include:

- An overarching identity for future recruitment drives and pilot work around sustainable workforce issues.
- Develop further the Food Skills Cymru Jobs Notice Board to highlight current positions in the industry.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.svo.nl/opleiding/page/2/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.foodskills.cymru/food-workforce-wales/>

- Case study interesting personal and company stories that will entice potential applicants into the industry.
- Work with stakeholders, from key representative bodies through to varying groups, aimed at amplifying our campaign message far and wide.
- Signpost to a range of wider online material but currently hard to find due to the dispersed nature of the information.

## 6.0 Industry Opinion on Skills and Education

There is plenty verbal and anecdotal industry opinion on skills and education, but written sources of qualitative or quantitative viewpoints are not as abundant. That being said, the following sources are referenced as insight into this subject.

### 6.1 NFUS briefing

NFUS published a briefing in September 2021, outlining the feedback it had received from farmers and crofters in identifying the challenges and opportunities their sector faces in attracting and retaining staff<sup>44</sup>. It must be noted that this briefing focused on the farming sector in Scotland, not the complete red meat supply chain.

The NFUS held 15 focus groups, spanning all of Scotland's regions and farming and crofting sectors. A summary of some of the conclusions that were reached is:

- The sector needs clearly defined career pathways, from entry level and beyond. The employer's outlook needs to be modernised to offer good contract terms, with training and clear prospects to develop their careers and responsibilities.
- Rural education has logistic and cost implications. Geography, critical mass, accommodation, transport and providers' resources all provide challenges
- There was keen interest in upskilling existing staff. Available courses could be more clearly promoted, and accessible, particularly in remote regions. Farmers and staff would benefit from an effective point of contact/information with clarity on courses available, from whom, where, and the ability to flag up an interest. There was a preference for the information to be on one site and the ability to speak to a knowledgeable person for initial guidance
- There needs to be collaboration between skills and education providers, rather than competition. Currently, this leads to them operating in silos rather than as a network. Providers could increase student numbers through better collective marketing with each other and industry, with clear signposting
- Similarly, there is potential for more proactive collaboration with key partners, including Government policy makers, Government agencies and education and training providers
- There needs to be a national strategy for land-based education and skills
- The sector needs to be promoted as positive, high tech and progressive
- Strong belief that schools and career advisors do not promote the farming and food sector, which is often perceived as a 'last resort' for those less able or academic
- Well intended government initiatives fail to resonate with employers if they are perceived to be complex and ever changing

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<sup>44</sup> [NFUS%20Briefing%20-%20Education%20and%20Skills%20Report.pdf](#)

- Employer input is crucial, and the farming sector must find the time and resource to contribute as an equal partner. The course content and delivery will be more robust and relevant if Industry can influence from their perspective
- Schools, land-based colleges, and other skills providers are central to recruitment and retention. Schools are influential in developing interest in 'jobs', careers and further education. The food and farming sectors must work with and influence the school curriculum, promote better uptake of food and farming related subjects and qualifications and promote food and farming as an education and career option
- The Agriculture Wages Board salary requirements can be a disincentive for farmers to employ young people with limited experience

## 6.2 Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers (SAMW)

SAMW recently issued a press release, highlighting the increasing labour challenges within the red meat processing sector<sup>45</sup>. Particular challenges highlighted in recruiting and retaining staff were the lack of applicants with the required skills, and attracting people wanting to work in a meat production environment.

The statement observed that the issue is a long standing one, although it has been intensified due to Brexit. SAMW acknowledged that, as an organisation they can address this problem by showcasing the wide variety of positions available within meat processing, while working with bodies such as SDS to provide a more cohesive and comprehensive pathway to employment within the red meat sector.

However, the results of this work will not be seen in the short term, and in the meantime, the organisation still needs to increase the volume of new workers in the processing sector.

## 7.0 Current Legislation and Policy Impacting Skills and Education

Education and training (including vocational and career services) are matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament, whereas job search and support remains reserved to the UK Parliament under the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Equal opportunities (except in relation to devolved bodies) is also reserved to the UK Parliament and sits within the Government Equalities Office.

As the current parliament is one year into its five-year term, it is prudent to outline key aspects of the 2021 SNP and Scottish Greens party manifestos in relation to skills and education.

### 7.1 SNP manifesto<sup>46</sup>

A priority of the SNP manifesto was to recruit 3,500 additional teachers and classroom assistants, allowing teachers more time out of the classroom to prepare lessons and improve their skills. The Curriculum of Excellence (CfE) places the ability to shape a school's curriculum with its teachers, but, as the 2021 OECD report has highlighted, this has become challenging due to Scotland's comparatively high rate of teachers' class contact time and its expectations for teachers to lead and plan curriculum locally<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://samw.org.uk/2021/09/30/labour-challenges-mount-for-scotlands-red-meat-industry/>

<sup>46</sup> [https://issuu.com/hinksbrandwise/docs/04\\_15\\_snp\\_manifesto\\_2021\\_a4\\_document?mode=window](https://issuu.com/hinksbrandwise/docs/04_15_snp_manifesto_2021_a4_document?mode=window)

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1043bd5d-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/1043bd5d-en#section-d1e280>



The SNP manifesto also cites the creation of new, good and green jobs as central to Scotland's Covid recovery. The party pledges to work with employers and individuals to build the skills and infrastructure that we need to succeed in the industries of the future.

Other aspects of the manifesto impacting education and skills are:

**Young person's guarantee** – we will ensure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland has the opportunity, based on their own personal circumstances and ambition, to go to university or college, get a place on an apprenticeship, training or work experience programme, secure a job or participate in a formal volunteering programme

**Green skills and jobs for the future** - we will invest an additional £500 million over the next parliament to support new jobs and reskill people for the jobs of the future. Our National Transition Training Fund will support workers whose jobs are at risk and provide retraining opportunities for high tech, high skilled jobs and the provision of green skills to support Scotland's transition to net zero... We will establish a new Green Jobs Workforce Academy to help people secure work in the low carbon economy. Over the next five years we will invest £100 million in our Green Jobs fund, investing alongside businesses and organisations to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland

**Apprenticeships** - we were on track to meet our target of 30,000 Modern Apprenticeships starts by 2020 - however, Covid affected new apprenticeship starts as employers had to review, delay and pause recruitment plans. As part of the recovery, we will build back up to 30,000 starts and assess demand to see how much further we can go

**Veterans** - to highlight and promote the many positive contributions of veterans... we will lead a public awareness campaign, specifically targeting employers and the business community to help increase employment opportunities

**Land based education** - we need more young people and women to want to be farmers and land managers but the role is changing. We will therefore undertake a root and branch review of land-based education from early years to adulthood to provide opportunities and qualifications through school, college, university and apprenticeships for more people, and specifically more women, to work with and on the land, particularly in green skills.

## 7.2 Scottish Greens manifesto<sup>48</sup>

### **Support green jobs and skills development:**

- Retain and grow the Green Jobs Fund and Green Jobs Workforce Academy
- Support increased investment in innovation and R&D in green technologies

**Food and Farming: Healthy, Sustainable, food for all:** The Scottish Greens will bring forward a Good Food Nation Bill that establishes an integrated food policy, tackling the health, social and environmental impacts of food. This will be overseen by a statutory Food Commission, charged with a duty to ensure the right to food is maintained and that decisions in areas such as health, planning, and education contribute towards a positive food environment.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://greens.scot/ourfuture>

## Support education and research into climate friendly and restorative agriculture

- Restore funding to Scotland’s renowned agricultural research institutes, with a focus on developing farming techniques, plant breeds and soil science that tackles the climate and nature emergencies
- Make agroecological and regenerative agriculture techniques the standard curriculum in rural education institutions
- Offer qualifications in crofting and sustainable farming in Scotland’s rural schools, with partnership programmes with colleges available in urban areas.

## 7.3 Skills and education within Scottish Government climate change transformation strategy

One of the five pillars in the recently announced Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation is 'skills'<sup>49</sup>. The strategy states that:

“A key focus of skills provision is the implementation of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan. Our Green Jobs Skills Hub will gather and cascade information on skills shortages and opportunities throughout the labour market, enhancing intelligence and promoting more effective responses. The current land-based review of learning offers an opportunity to link across existing work in the Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland and the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan”.

The following projects are of particular relevance to education and skills:

**Project 11: Adapt the Education and Skills System to make it more Agile and Responsive to our Economic Needs and Ambitions.** Implement the next phase of the Green Jobs Workforce Academy and launch a new skills guarantee for workers in carbon intensive industries [such as agriculture], providing career guidance and training opportunities, enabling people to seek employment in other sectors.

**Project 13: Expand Scotland's Available Talent Pool, at all Skills Levels, to Give Employers the Skills Pipeline They Need to Take Advantage of Opportunities.** Implement a focused Talent Attraction programme to attract key skills and talent from the rest of the UK. This will align with Scotland's identified key sector strengths and new market and cluster building opportunities and provide a joined-up "landing zone" for targeted employees and their families supported through our commitment to create a Migration Service for Scotland. We will work closely with industry partners, and the recruitment sector, to leverage best available data and ensure most effective targeting. Progress the actions from Scotland's Population Strategy aimed at attracting, welcoming and supporting those who choose to make Scotland their home to help address rural and island population challenges and sectoral skills shortages in the labour market.

## 7.4 Scottish Government review

The Scottish Government has set up a Commission to undertake a review of learning in Scotland’s land-based and aquaculture sectors, to provide opportunities and qualifications through early years, school, college, university and work-based learning - including apprenticeships - for more people, and specifically more women and young people, to work with and on the land, particularly in green skills. This review will provide recommendations on how to attract more people into these sectors. The Commission will provide independent, evidence-based advice and recommendations to Scottish

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/pages/7/>

Ministers by December 2022<sup>50</sup>.

## 7.5 Immigration

Immigration is a matter reserved to the UK Government. Since the UK left the EU, many workers within the food production and processing sectors returned to their native countries. This was further amplified by the Covid pandemic which saw another wave of the workforce returning home.

Reports indicate that since the EU referendum and the end of free movement of labour, processing and butchery businesses have found it much harder to replace leavers and maintain their workforce levels, as the UK now presents a less appealing working environment for workers from overseas.

A challenge to recruiting new EU workers is the points-based immigration system. In many Eastern European countries, English is not a main language and many lack formal English language skills. Under the points-based system, the main visa routes are for high-earners, with almost no route at all for so-called 'low-skilled' workers.

As a result, businesses in this part of the supply chain are experiencing significant labour shortages and are unable to replace skilled workers.

## 8.0 Industry initiatives and education providers

### 8.1 Quality Meat Scotland – Farming Foodsteps

QMS has maintained strong links with Scottish educators over a number of years. Up until the Covid-19 pandemic, QMS's Health and Education team frequently visited schools to deliver face to face workshops. From March 2021, the methods of interaction had to change, which led to the development of Farming Foodsteps, a fully online and interactive educational resource based on the whole red meat food system in Scotland<sup>51</sup>. It has a particular focus on STEM subjects and includes all the food-based courses, as well as environmental science, rural skills and geography. With an easy to follow 'Farm to Fork' based system, the resource is broken up into five main lessons covering Scottish farming methods, sustainability, food production and careers, health and nutrition, and cooking with red meat.

Other organisations such as RHET, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful with Climate Ready Classrooms, Lantra, the Soil Association and others all provide education resources focused on food and drink production in Scotland.

### 8.2 Butchery careers

In November 2021, QMS and SDS launched a new programme to highlight over 750 potential vacancies in the butchery sector<sup>52</sup>. The programme aims to ensure that there is a pipeline of young trainees coming through to future proof the red meat sector, amidst a serious shortfall of skilled positions. With women and girls currently representing 14% of current apprentices in the retail

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-for-the-land-based-learning-review-terms-of-reference/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://education.qmscotland.co.uk/FarmingFoodsteps/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.qmscotland.co.uk/news/call-fresh-talent-protect-butchery-industry%E2%80%99s-long-term-future>

butchery sector, the programmes focused on removing outdated perceptions and showcasing the diverse and accessible range of technical and business skills to be learned through the trade.

Approximately 25% of current vacancies are apprenticeship opportunities in the retail, processing and catering sector. The programme will underline the crucial business skills that the career provides, from selection of products and product development to learning about the supply chain, recipe development, pricing, profitability and customer service.

The campaign is being supported by a new careers website where potential candidates can learn about training opportunities, read and watch the real stories of young butchers' careers and explore job postings. Case study videos featuring different job roles within the industry are also being promoted, alongside social media adverts which will be shared across Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

The programme will also raise awareness of the government funding opportunities available to support businesses in employing young people.

### 8.3 Backed by Harbro

In 2021, Harbro launched an initiative to support the next generation of farmers who have taken on a farming enterprise<sup>53</sup>. The scheme sees Harbro selecting and working with two UK farmers that have recently taken on a livestock farm, providing advice and nutritional products to help support the performance and profitability of their businesses.

As part of the scheme, the successful applicants are offered:

- Nutritional advice and support
- Livestock enterprise benchmarking through Glasgow Vet School
- Sustainability and futureproofing guidance
- Industry mentoring
- £3,000 credit on Harbro account.

Harbro has utilised its links to the supply chain within both beef and sheep to team up with leading industry influencers who will mentor the chosen farmers, offering them a unique insight into the wider food sector and meeting environmental challenges.

**8.4 #ThisisAgriculture** The Farmers Guardian along with several partners launched #ThisisAgriculture in 2021, a campaign to raise awareness of the diverse career opportunities available in agriculture and encourage people to pursue a career in the industry<sup>54</sup>.

The campaign saw 17 key industry stakeholders from across the farming sector come together to promote careers in agriculture. The partnership aims to collaborate with industry bodies and to explore how they could work together to shape the political agenda and drive educational reform.

The campaign intends to provide guidance and advice to individuals working in agriculture who are looking to upskill and self-develop, as well as providing support to those from a non-agricultural background and looking for more information about the wealth of career choices available across

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.harbro.co.uk/nutrition/nutritional-articles/beef/backed-by-harbro/>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.fginsight.com/thisisagriculture>

the sectors.

### 8.5 Meat Business Women: #SheLooksLikeMe

Meat Business Women is a professional networking group to help promote the meat sector as a positive career choice for women<sup>55</sup>. Meat Business Women was recently recognised by the United Nations, when founder Laura Ryan delivered a presentation on the contribution that Meat Business Women makes to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The recent #SheLooksLikeMe campaign aimed to challenge the perception that it is only men that work in the meat industry, and received global coverage<sup>56</sup>.

### 8.6 Education and Careers Hub

This initiative is supported by FDF Scotland, RHET, QMS, DYW, Sefari, The Royal Environment Health Institute of Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland and others, to provide resources and Career Long Professional Learning for teachers. A Careers Hub website is being developed by FDF Scotland and it will act as a platform to host materials to support continued engagement for education providers. In the meantime a 'Food and Drink Education Resources' website has been created<sup>57</sup>.

### 8.7 Working Groups

**Skills for Farming Group** – The Group is made up of NFUS, SDS, Lantra, Scottish Colleges, Scottish Machinery Ring Association, SQA, RHET, Scottish Association of Young Farmers and DYW. According to SDS's February 2022 Sectoral Skills Assessment, the Group "is playing a key role in articulating pathways into the sector and ensuring provision is meeting the needs of businesses. The Group is also developing a plan to support recommendations from NFUS on how to engage with members and stimulate demand for skills and learning interventions".

**Scotland Food & Drink Partnership** – Over the course of 2021, the Partnership developed a future skills strategy, leading to the establishment of a new Skills Advisory Group. The Group met in October 2021 with a facilitated workshop to help to shape the recommendations for the ongoing skills agenda.

**Further Education Network Group:** This is a partnership between College Development Network, The Scotland Food & Drink Skills Advisory Group, Food and Drink Federation Scotland and SDS. The purpose of the network is to support the Scotland Food and Drink Recovery Plan.

**Butchery Careers Working Group:** This is a partnership between Dunbia Highland Meats, Craft Skills Scotland, Polaris Training and SDS, aiming to promote the world of butchery as a fruitful, interesting and rewarding career path for Scotland's young people.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0699vwpK-qk>

<sup>56</sup> <https://youtu.be/g8vcLRSjes0>

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## 8.8 Scottish Training Providers

**Vocational Courses:** Craft Skills Scotland, Borders College, SRUC, Ringlink (Scotland) Ltd, Tarff Valley Services, Orkney College, LANTRA

**Agricultural:** SRUC, University of St Andrews, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Aberdeen, Borders College, University of the Highlands and Islands, Dundee & Angus College, Orkney College

**Food Science:** Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), Queen Margaret University (QMU), Abertay University, Robert Gordon University (RGU)

**Food Nutrition:** GCU, QMU, Abertay, University of Aberdeen

**Food Safety/Security:** University of Glasgow, SRUC, Edinburgh University

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