

**Quality Meat Scotland**  
Minutes of the 86th Meeting of the Board  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
SARDC Boardroom, The Rural Centre

**Present:**

K. Rowell (Chair)  
A. Irvine  
A. Ivory  
A. McGowan  
C. Ruxton  
E. Buckby  
G. Wallace  
I. Bentley  
J. Duncan Grant  
N. Jeffrey  
P. Brown  
S. Jarron

**In Attendance:**

S. Millar (Chief Executive)  
D. Phillips (Standards Officer)  
P. Byrne (Accountant)  
H. Curran (Sponsor Team)

**Minutes:**

K. McCormack

**Apologies:**

Detail	Action
<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  Kate Rowell welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>Additions to the Agenda</b>  The following item was added to the agenda under AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World Meat Congress 2027</li></ul>	
<b>Declaration of interests in any agenda item</b>  The following Board members declared an interest as being Quality Assurance members and levy payers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Niall Jeffrey</li><li>Kate Rowell</li><li>Adrian Ivory</li><li>Ann Irvine</li><li>Emma Buckby</li><li>Jilly Duncan Grant</li></ul> Ian Bentley declared an interest as being on the Board of Scotbeef Ltd.	

<p>Andy McGowan declared an interest due to him being a member on the Board of SAOS who established FIA and who are part of the ownership board of SARDC who own the rural centre where the QMS office is based.</p> <p>Andy also declared an interest due to him being Managing Director of Wholesome Pigs Scotland and Director at Scot EID.</p> <p>The Standards Officer advised for Andy McGowan to leave the room for the following agenda items:</p>	
<p><b>Minutes of Board Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b></p> <p>The minutes from the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>Commercial in Confidence – Update on Action Points</b></p> <p>The Board reviewed the actions from the previous meeting and updates were given.</p>	
<p><b>Chairs Report</b></p> <p>Kate Rowell highlighted key information to the Board from her Chair’s report and updated them on key activities since the last meeting in September which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People workshop – Board and Staff</li> <li>▪ Planning Day – Board closed session</li> <li>▪ Scot Gov livestock genetics meeting</li> <li>▪ SF&amp;D Excellence Conference and Awards</li> <li>▪ MP Greg Poynton visit to AK Stoddarts</li> <li>▪ SIAL Paris</li> <li>▪ NFUS Autumn conference</li> <li>▪ Scottish Agriculture Awards</li> <li>▪ Livestock workshop – Climate Change Initiative</li> <li>▪ Societal Role of Meat and Livestock Summit, Denver</li> <li>▪ Farming roundtable</li> <li>▪ ARIOB</li> <li>▪ Farmers Guardian Column</li> </ul> <p>Kate highlighted that she is going to attend part of the SMT planning meeting later this month to present the notes following the Board planning day in October. As Andy did not make the planning meeting, Kate asked for Andy McGowan to review the notes to make any additions before passing on to SMT.</p> <p>Kate and Sarah gave an update from the recent visit to Denver for the Societal Role of Meat and Livestock Summit. The objective of the summits are to encourage open, frank, and transparent dialogue among an international audience about what the science says about the role of livestock and meat (including poultry) production in a global society.</p>	<p><b>Andy</b></p>

<p>They expressed that it was a good event to attend with great networking opportunities to gain good connections with international stakeholders and also key UK stakeholders.</p>	
<p><b>Chief Executives Report</b></p> <p>Sarah Millar highlighted key information to the Board from her report updating them on activities since the last meeting in June which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SIAL Paris – Successful show. Processor export activity for the last 12 months confirmed an increase of value and volume with £137m worth of export business being undertaken.</li> <li>▪ New marketing campaign – Its been extremely well received by industry stakeholders and consumers. Christmas ads will go live at the end of November.</li> <li>▪ 25/26 Planning – Internal Corporate Sustainability Group are doing an exercise for the all staff planning meeting in December where we are asking staff where possible to use public transport to attend the meeting in Edinburgh city centre. This is to track emissions and to do a comparison against usual travel which is mainly by car.</li> <li>▪ New office – Informed staff this week, news went well. FAQ doc will be sent to staff.</li> </ul> <p>Andy McGowan highlighted his conflict of interest regarding the new office however the Standards Officer stated that as there was no discussion or decisions required and it was for information purposes only, Andy did not have to vacate the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>Financial Report 6 Months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b></p> <p>Paul Byrne presented the financial report for the 2024/ 2025 financial year to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</p>	
<p><b>QMS Media Tender and Agency Appointment Approval</b></p> <p>Sarah Millar on behalf of Emma Heath presented the paper requesting approval on the decision to appoint a new QMS Media agency.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the paper which detailed the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Background of the tender process</li> <li>▪ Contract duration &amp; estimated value</li> <li>▪ Tender process</li> <li>▪ Requirements/ Scope of work</li> <li>▪ Tender result</li> <li>▪ Next steps</li> </ul>	

<p>The Board discussed the decision required and approved the decision to appoint Essence Mediacom as the new media agency.</p> <p>The Board thanked Emma Heath for a well detailed paper.</p>	
<p><b>Review of Reserves Policy - Discussion not required</b></p> <p>The Reserves policy will be reviewed and discussed at Board meetings in September and February. It will be on the agenda at the meetings in April, June and November however will only be for discussion if required.</p> <p>The Board agreed there was nothing for discussion/ no changes to be made.</p>	
<p><b>FOI Costs</b></p> <p>Debbie Phillips confirmed that there have not been any further costs that relate to FOI's this year.</p>	
<p><b>Levy Organisation Benchmarking Report</b></p> <p>Paul Byrne presented the report which benchmarked against 7 other similar levy organisations.</p>	
<p><b>QMS Committee Meeting Updates</b></p>	
<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Management Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b></p> <p>Ann Irvine gave an update from the recent Audit &amp; Risk Management Committee meeting which took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024.</p> <p><u>Internal audit – Payroll</u> Overall assessment score given was substantial assurance which is the highest assurance. No recommendations were made and no operational effectiveness matters (OEM) were identified. Two points of good practice.</p> <p><u>Risk register</u> Reviewed the risk register, Debbie Phillips will send the updated version to the Board.</p> <p><u>Fraud Response Plan</u> Reviewed the plan which was for information purposes only. No changes made. This will be reviewed annually going forward.</p> <p><u>Scheme Of Delegation Contract Value Review</u> The committee requested at the last meeting to see a list of all QMS contracts to see what ones would fall under, or over the proposed increased amount of £500k from the current £100k before making a decision.</p> <p>Two options were presented in a paper however a third option was added during the</p>	<p><b>Debbie</b></p>

<p>meeting. In summary the options were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Option A – Leave limit at £100k</li> <li>▪ Option B – Increase limit from £100k to £500k</li> <li>▪ Option C – Increase limit from £100k to £200k</li> </ul> <p>The committee discussed all options in detail and agreed to approve option C to increase the limit to £200k. A review would be done in 3 years when a decision would be made to increase again if appropriate.</p> <p>Ann asked for approval from the Board on this decision. The Board agreed to approve the decision to increase the limit to £200k. and that a review would be done in 3 years when a decision would be made to increase again if appropriate.</p> <p>The Board asked to be shared with them, a list of all contracts and when they are approved.</p>	<p><b>Debbie</b></p> <p><b>Debbie</b></p>
<p><b>QMS Committee Membership</b></p> <p>Sarah Millar presented the Board with a list of members on each of the QMS committees (not including the new industry groups), and when their terms are due to end.</p> <p>Sarah advised that this was for information purposes only and that the QMS team are working on confirming new members where necessary.</p> <p>Kate Rowell gave an update from the new Industry Leadership Groups highlighting that all members have been confirmed and dates for first meetings are in progress.</p> <p>Kate advised of the following changes to the Industry Leadership Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emma Buckby will now chair the Climate and Nature Industry Leadership Group instead of Jilly Duncan Grant.</li> <li>▪ Kate will now chair the Sheep Industry Advisory Group instead of Emma Buckby however Emma will still support.</li> </ul> <p>Kirsty McCormack will share with the Board the list of each committee and their members, this will include the new Industry Leadership Groups.</p> <p>Kirsty will update the page on the website with the list of committees and their members.</p>	<p><b>Kirsty</b></p> <p><b>Kirsty</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Indicators Update</b></p>	

Sarah Millar presented the Board with an update to the strategic indicators.	
<p><b>Update Report &amp; Implementation Plans 2024/ 2025</b></p> <p>The Strategic Management Team highlighted some of their key activities since the 13<sup>th</sup> September which included:</p> <p><u>Corporate Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insights work – People workshop was a positive day with good input from all.</li> </ul> <p><u>Business Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet the market workshops – They were oversubscribed so we have arranged more for the new year. We are also looking to see if the workshops could be captured by video next year so they could be shared with those who are not able to attend in person due to limited space.</li> </ul> <p><u>Marketing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New campaign – Positive feedback from stakeholders since the launch. New Christmas ad will be going live at the end of November.</li> </ul> <p><u>Communications &amp; External Affairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A world without cows screening – Organised a screening for the documentary for the night before Agriscot Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November. It is a thought-provoking documentary about the cultural, economic and environmental significance of cows</li> <li>▪ Media forum – Planning underway for next media forum on the 14<sup>th</sup> Jan which will be focused on Monitor Farm programme and post SIAL success</li> </ul>	Emma H
<p><b>Business Development - Game Changer Projects</b></p> <p>Tom Gibson presented an update on the Game changer projects his department are working on.</p>	
<p>There being no further business, the meeting was closed.</p> <p>The remaining Board meeting dates for 24/ 25 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January – Board and SMT Planning</li> <li>▪ Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February – Board meeting</li> </ul>	