

# Minutes of the Board Meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## Quality Meat Scotland

Minutes of the 76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board

10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

SARDC Boardroom, The Rural Centre

### Present:

K. Rowell (Chair)  
A. Irvine  
A. Ivory  
G. Wallace  
I. Bentley  
N. Jeffrey  
P. Brown  
S. Henderson  
S. Jarron

### In Attendance:

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

### Minutes:

K. McCormack

### Apologies:

A. McGowan (Joined at agenda item 13.)

Detail	Action
<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  Kate Rowell welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was an apology from Andy McGowan who joined the meeting at agenda item 13. Quality Assurance Withdrawals / Applications Report.	
<b>Additions to the Agenda</b>  The following item was added as agenda item no.14. Options Paper for the creation of a 'Super Technical Advisory Committee' covering all QMS Assurance Schemes.	
<b>Declaration of interests in any agenda item</b>  The following Board members declared an interest as being Quality Assurance members and levy payers however these did not conflict with any agenda item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Niall Jeffrey</li><li>▪ Kate Rowell</li><li>▪ Adrian Ivory</li><li>▪ Ann Irvine</li><li>▪ Scott Henderson</li></ul> When Andy McGowan joined the meeting, he declared an interest in agenda item 13. Quality Assurance Withdrawals / Applications Report, due to being on the Board of SAOS.	
<b>Minutes of Board Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022</b>  The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>Commercial in Confidence – Update on Action Points</b>	

<p>The Board reviewed the actions from the previous meeting and the following updates were given:</p> <p><u>No. 3 – 10.4 Audit &amp; Risk Management Committee</u> We are looking at an agreed code of conduct with partner organisations. A new stakeholder group has been put together and that could be the correct forum for it.</p> <p>As this action is with the Audit &amp; Risk Management committee. It was agreed to remove from the Board actions as it will come to Board when updates from the Audit &amp; Risk Management committee are given. Kirsty will mark this action as complete and remove</p> <p><u>No. 37 – Chief Executives Report</u> All Board members confirmed that they receive the QMS newsletter by email every Friday. Kirsty will mark this action as complete and remove.</p>	<p><b>Kirsty</b></p> <p><b>Kirsty</b></p>
<p><b>Financial Report 5 Months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b></p> <p>Paul Byrne presented the financial report for the 2022/ 2023 financial year to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.</p> <p>Paul highlighted the following main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Total income</b> of £4,095k is £150k (4%) above budget of £3,945k</li> <li>▪ <b>Levy income</b> of £2,530k is £125k (5%) above budget of £2,405k</li> <li>▪ AHDB have been invoiced for quarter 1 repatriated levy but have only made part payment, having excluded the VAT element which is being contested by AHDB. This VAT has already been paid to HMRC by QMS . July-September repatriated levy has been accrued at budgeted levels as we await actual figures.</li> <li>▪ Paul and Debbie are having monthly budget meetings to keep an eye on things</li> <li>▪ Ind Dev budget and tracking, Sarah and Bruce have reviewed, and the finance paper will reflect changes.</li> </ul> <p>The Board approved the re-forecasted budget.</p>	
<p><b>Review of Reserve's Policy – Discussion only if required</b></p> <p>It was agreed that going forward a Reserves Policy paper should be included in every Board pack and on the meeting agenda however it would only be discussed if required.</p> <p>The Board agreed there was nothing for discussion.</p>	
<p><b>Levy Organisation Benchmarking Report</b></p> <p>Paul Byrne presented the report which benchmarked against 5 other similar levy organisations.</p> <p>He highlighted that the figures used were from an average from 2 years of each organisations published accounts from 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.</p> <p>The Board discussed and agreed for Paul to look at the following requests to include in next year's report:</p>	<p><b>Paul</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find out how many staff are employed at Beef and Lamb NZ</li> <li>▪ Include AHDB figures for beef and lamb for income and expenditure</li> <li>▪ Include figures from Bord Bia</li> <li>▪ Show income source with and without assurance schemes</li> <li>▪ Show figures with and without grant income</li> </ul> <p>Sarah Millar agreed to check if the reserves policy/ amount in mentioned in the QMS Act.</p> <p>Sarah agreed to check with AHDB and HCC what their reserves policy is and if it is in legislation.</p> <p>Paul asked the Board if they have any other organisation or measurement they would like to be included in the report, to let Kirsty McCormack know.</p>	<p><b>Sarah</b></p> <p><b>Sarah</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p><b>QMS Committee Meeting Updates</b></p>	
<p><b>Cattle &amp; Sheep Industry Advisory Group – 28<sup>th</sup> September</b></p> <p>Scott Henderson gave an update to the Board from the Cattle &amp; Sheep Industry Advisory Group committee meeting which took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>Scott highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Purpose of the Committee/ day</b> – Sarah Millar outlined the purpose of the committee as there were a lot of new members</li> <li>▪ <b>Industry Development</b> - Bruce McConachie gave an Industry Development update</li> <li>▪ <b>Monitor Farms Programme</b> - Beth Alexander gave an update on the Monitor Farms Programme</li> <li>▪ <b>Animal Health &amp; Welfare</b> - Eilidh Corr gave an update on the Animal Health &amp; Welfare Projects QMS is involved in</li> <li>▪ <b>Meat Eating Quality Report</b> - Dr Jonathan Birnie, Birnie Consultancy presented to the committee on the Meat Eating Quality Report.</li> <li>▪ <b>K.I.S.S analysis</b> - Committee was split into 3 groups to share thoughts on three subjects: Health &amp; Welfare, Efficiency &amp; Productivity, and Communications.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Brands Integrity Advisory Group – 29<sup>th</sup> September</b></p> <p>Peter Brown gave an update to the Board from the Brands Integrity Advisory Group committee meeting which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>Peter highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Accreditation</b> – FIA have full UKAS accreditation – members being advised what this means by letter</li> <li>▪ <b>Renewals</b> – Cattle and Sheep complete; 5 Schemes are on track</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Assessments</b> – 3000 complete and 6000 to do; FIA to increase resource and push to complete</li> <li>▪ <b>FIA Projects</b> – Kathryn will get a projects timeline from FIA; they may not start this year</li> <li>▪ <b>Red Meat Quality Assurance Committee</b> – Options paper to go before the board; and board to decide if set up and run by third party or set up by QMS with independent chair</li> <li>▪ <b>Assessment Feedback</b> – survey to be done by FIA or QMS to get member feedback on assessment process</li> <li>▪ <b>PDPB/ Governance report</b> - being finalised and will be presented at November board meeting</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Beef &amp; Lamb Marketing Advisory Group – 4<sup>th</sup> November</b></p> <p>Adrian Ivory gave an update to the Board from the Beef and Lamb Marketing Advisory Group committee meeting which took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> November</p> <p>Adrian highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Scotch Lamb for St Andrews Day</b> – Kirsty MacDonald gave an update on the marketing activities for Scotch Lamb for St Andrews Day. Kirsty took an action to look at getting information booklets into schools as no committee members with kids knew anything about it.</li> <li>▪ <b>Brand Evolution</b> - Lesley Cameron shared updates on the brand evolution work</li> <li>▪ <b>Market Development</b> – Tom Gibson gave an update to the group on the activities within the Market Development department</li> <li>▪ <b>Industry Update</b> – Iain MacDonald gave an industry update to the group</li> <li>▪ <b>Other</b> – The committee were asked to comment on what was good, what could we do better on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scotch Lamb PGI – Discussions on the good that PGI has done for Scotch Beef but what has it done for Scotch Lamb?</li> <li>- Buying Scotch outside of Scotland, you do not get the incredible messaging that you do in Scotland. How do we get it out on a wider scale.</li> <li>- More collaboration with GoRural</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Management Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> November</b></p> <p>Ann Irvine gave an update to the Board from the Audit &amp; Risk Management committee meeting which took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>Ann highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Internal Audit Report GDPR</b> – Committee reviewed report which advised that the overall assessment score given was substantial assurance which is the</li> </ul>	

<p>highest assurance. No recommendations were made, and no operational effectiveness matters were identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>23/24 Audit</b> – We confirmed the Market Intelligence &amp; External Affairs department as an audit for 23/24</li> <li>▪ <b>Terms of Reference</b> – The Committee reviewed terms of reference with no changes</li> <li>▪ <b>ARC Meeting Schedule</b> – The committee agreed that all Audit &amp; Risk Management committee meetings will be kept virtual on Teams or Zoom.</li> <li>▪ <b>Risk Register</b> – Committee reviewed and agreed to make the following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2.6 – Remove reference to LR</li> <li>- 2.7 – Change to continuing accreditation, remove within the 6 month period.</li> <li>- 2.8 – Risk be set at low risk, medium impact – expand text on withdrawals, resulting in loss in membership income</li> <li>- 2.9 – Risk numbers to be set once all conversations are had with stakeholders.</li> <li>- Add in new risk under 3 Financial – Risk to be 3.2 re levy increase. Text and numbers to be agreed at next meeting</li> <li>- Add new risk under 4 Regulatory – Risk to be 4.3 re Review and manage guidance on standards for board members/ register of interests</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed with all changes to the risk register.</p>	<b>Debbie</b>
<p><b>Pork Marketing Advisory Group – 9<sup>th</sup> November</b></p> <p>In Andy McGowan’s absence, Scott Jarron gave an update to the Board from the Pork Marketing Advisory Group committee meeting which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> November</p> <p>Scott highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Attendance</b> – Attendance was low, Andy McGowan has taken an action to look at getting more farmer rep on the group especially from Aberdeenshire area. There was good rep from Browns Food Group.</li> <li>▪ <b>Marketing Activity</b> - Kirsty MacDonald shared updates on marketing activity</li> <li>▪ <b>Brand Evolution</b> - Lesley Cameron shared updates on the brand evolution work</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Remuneration Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> November</b></p> <p>Peter Brown gave an update to the Board from the Remuneration committee meeting which took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>Peter highlighted the following key information from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Report on Mid-Term Appraisals</b> – Sarah Millar gave a progress update on staff Mid-Term Appraisals advising that the appraisal process has been</li> </ul>	

<p>revamped and everyone has received training. 3 areas of focus, objectives, values and training &amp; development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Results of Remuneration Committee Effectiveness Self-Evaluation Questionnaire</b> – Reviewed and a couple of actions to take away including possible training for committee members</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Highlight Report &amp; Implementation Plans 2022/ 2023</b></p> <p>Sarah Millar presented the highlight report and implementation plans for 2022/ 2023 with the Executive Team present to answer any questions the Board had.</p> <p>The following key information was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Services</b> – All staff have received training in our new performance review process incorporating the development of our 3 company values – Lead, Trust, &amp; Support.</li> <li>▪ <b>Industry Development</b> – Re prioritising projects due to Animal Health &amp; Welfare Manager leaving us at the end of the year.</li> <li>▪ <b>Brands Integrity</b> – Following feedback from the QMS and FIA roadshows, we have been reviewing website accessibility tools. This has now been costed and agreed, with a tool being selected for the new QMS website meaning all documents and web pages can be read aloud, translated, and magnified to make them easier to read.</li> <li>▪ <b>Market Intelligence &amp; External Affairs</b> – Meeting with the Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport to highlight role of red meat as part of a healthy, balanced diet</li> <li>▪ <b>Market Development</b> -. SIAL Paris was a massive success. 24 staff from eight processors with us on stand. Each one reported excellent opportunities to develop export business.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Quality Assurance Withdrawals / Applications Report</b></p> <p>Kathryn Kerr presented the paper highlighting the number of Quality Assurance applications and withdrawals received over September and October.</p> <p>The Board thanked Kathryn for this useful report.</p>	
<p><b>Options Paper for the creation of a 'Super Technical Advisory Committee' covering all QMS Assurance Schemes</b></p> <p>Kathryn Kerr presented the options paper for the creation of a 'Super Technical Advisory Committee' covering all QMS Assurance Schemes.</p> <p>Kathryn asked the Board to review the document, considering each option's and asked for any questions, comments to be sent to her in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Kate suggested that there may be a possible meeting set up in the coming weeks to discuss all comments/ questions received and for an option to be agreed.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>Kate</b></p>

## Update – Future Brand Development Task & Finish Group

Lesley Cameron gave an update on Future brand development and covered the following areas:

- **Evolving the Brand**
  - Objective to evolve our existing new QA standards building a sustainability tiered system aligned to Scotgov track 1 and 2
- **Evolving the Brand – Short Term**
  - Ensuring our current sustainability credentials stand out in our consumer communications / optimising creative and content to address the needs of our consumers.
- **What our brands currently stands for and how we connect with our target market:**
  - Sustainability will play the key role in the future of our brands
- **Campaign – 2021/2022**
  - Make It with Field Cred – Beef & Lamb only
  - Stand alone proposition for Scotch Butchers Club:
- **Campaign Evolution – 2023**
  - Food / occasion / livestock
  - Integration of Scotch Butchers Club comes into the Make It Scotch style
  - Makeitscotch.com (now live) a digital experience from recipes, to regional flavours, to education
- **Brand Proof Points**
  - Quality Assured, Locally Sourced, Farmed with Care
- **Supporting Key Messages**
  - Provenance Trusted Scottish farms
  - Traceability Beef and pork only
  - Health - Protein & Vitamin B12/ Iron – beef only/ Low in fat – lean cuts on
- **Media / Channel Mix**
  - Our Challenge: Choosing the right media / channel mix to meet our objectives which align with how our target audience consume media

## Chief Executives Report

Sarah Millar highlighted key information from her report which included the following areas:

- **General** – SIAL Paris was a big success. Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon attended which was well received and relations are improving.
- **Quality Assurance Services** – FIA gained UKAS accreditation. FIA have brought in an additional 13 new assessors
- **Staff** - The Monitor Farm Scotland Programme team is now fully staffed, with Christine Cuthbertson and Maura Wilson joining Peter Beattie on the delivery team

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> – Attended the Societal Role of Meat-What the Science Says Summit in Dublin with Kate</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Engagement Plan</b></p> <p>Sarah Millar presented to the Board her 24 month engagement plan which covered the following 5 steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Designated point of contact for stakeholder segments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mainly focusing on contact for farmers/ processors/auction markets/allied supply chain. Looking at best possible way for this</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. 24 month rolling programme of open meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 per year, 3 spring, 3 autumn reaching 12 locations over a 24 month period.</li> <li>- Year 1: Ayr, Caithness, Dundee, Oban, Edinburgh, Moray</li> <li>- Year 2: Dumfries, St Boswells, Orkney, Lanark, Stirling, Aberdeen</li> <li>- 3 Shows a year: Beef event/Scotsheep, RHS, Agriscot</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Revamped corporate communications which includes regular interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communications tender due to go out post Christmas with new agency in place for 1st April 2023.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Making use of our committee structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As discussed at the Board planning meeting, Sarah is looking at potential options for revamping our committees and will bring back proposals to the Board.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>5. A dynamic strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kick off after Christmas with all staff/board conference</li> <li>- External facilitators</li> <li>- Launch RHS 2023</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The Board agreed with the direction of travel.</p>	
<p><b>Chairs Report</b></p> <p>Kate Rowell updated the Board on the meetings and activities that she has been a part of over the couple of months which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Farming Roundtable meetings</li> <li>▪ Farmers Guardian Column</li> <li>▪ Monitor Farm Selection Visits</li> <li>▪ FAST Meeting</li> <li>▪ Meetings in Westminster with MP's</li> <li>▪ Interview with ITV Borders</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p>	
<p><b>Meat Eating Quality Update</b>  <b>Presentation from Jonathan Birnie, Birnie &amp; Associates</b></p> <p>Dr Jonathan Birnie joined us remotely over Teams to present an update on the Meat Eating Quality Project.</p>	



Kirsty is to share with the Board, the recording from the presentation along with a copy of the slides that Jonathan used.	<b>Kirsty</b>
<p>There being no further business, the meeting was closed.</p> <p>The next key date is Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December – Board &amp; Executive Team Planning Day in person at The Norton House Hotel, Edinburgh.</p> <p>If you require any travel or accommodation for this date, please contact Kirsty McCormack.</p>	