

2026  
Toolkit

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

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW.



**QMS**  
Quality Meat Scotland



# Introduction

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

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



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# Infographics

Discover the benefits of red meat through our handy infographics!

## Why share?

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

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



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

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



Iron is vital for **energy, immunity** and **concentration**, especially in girls who need to make up for iron losses during menstruation.

CARRIE RUXTON

The UK NHS guideline recommended amount of red meat per day is

70g

However, the reality in Scotland is that our average intakes are now below (66g) the daily limit.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - 2024



Blanket recommendations to limit red meat consumption would disproportionately limit nutrient intake as highlighted by a recent modelling study commissioned by Food Standards Scotland (FSS).



## The Scottish red meat industry is a powerhouse,

Supporting around **40,000** jobs and contributing an estimated **£3.5 billion** of output in 2024. Combined output from farming and processing of cattle, sheep and pigs is estimated to have grown by **2%** from 2023, reaching **£2.7billion**.

QMS RED MEAT INDUSTRY PROFILE

Half of Scottish women are **'not confident'** or **'unsure'** whether their diet provides enough iron.

MAKE IT SCOTCH SURVEY - 2025

Farming delivers multiple environmental goods from its carbon removal potential through soil sequestration to grazing animals promoting **soil health** and **biodiversity**.

QMS CHAIR, KATE ROWELL

# Health Benefits of Meat

## Get in the know

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

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

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

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

**Sharp mind:** Zinc and iron in red meat, especially beef, aid cognitive function, supporting mood and mental well-being.

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

Scottish Swimming athlete Lili Mundell uses red meat to keep her iron levels up:



**"Without adequate iron in the body, the muscles don't get enough oxygen, which can lead to fatigue and a lowered aerobic capacity. Small changes to your diet can have a big impact on your energy and performance."**

## Meating our children's growth needs

Protein is needed for the normal growth and development of children's bones. Beef, lamb and pork are high in protein and contain all the amino acids (protein building blocks) needed for our bodies.

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

- A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, complemented by lean red meat, offers a perfect balance of nutrients.



## Benefits of red meat



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



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



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



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



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

# Scottish Eatwell Guide

## Get in the know

Did you know, Scotland now has its own Eatwell Guide – a celebration of the country's rich natural larder! This guide highlights the wide variety of delicious and nutritious produce available locally, supporting Scotland's health, environment, and economy.

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

It's also fantastic to see Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork featured as part of this balanced plate, reminding us that we can source everything we need for a healthy diet right here in Scotland.

Find out more: [Scottish Eatwell Guide](#)

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

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



# Understanding iron needs in Scotland

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

Registered Nutritionist,  
Dr Carrie Ruxton

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

## Get in the know

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

The NHS guidelines suggest that men require **8.7 mg of iron** daily, while women need **14.8 mg**. To meet these recommendations, women would need to consume **2 kg of broccoli** or **two cans of chickpeas** each day—quite a daunting task! Average red meat intakes in Scotland are now below the daily 70g limit set by government experts, with women having significantly lower red meat intakes compared with men.

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

**Iron Deficiency in women:** Research commissioned in 2025 by Make It Scotch uncovered a significant health gap, in that almost half of Scottish women (45%) are 'not confident' or 'unsure' whether their diet provides enough iron to support overall good health in daily life. In the survey, **93%** of women recognised tiredness and low energy as key signs of iron deficiency but were less familiar with some of the other symptoms such as shortness of breath, headaches and brain fog or difficulty concentrating.

It's essential for everyone to understand their iron needs and learn how to meet them through a balanced and varied diet. Scotch Beef,



for instance, is one of the best sources of iron available and is suitable for all ages. Whether you prefer mince or steaks, Scotch Beef is versatile and easy to incorporate into meals. Plus, any beef bearing the blue Scotch Beef logo is guaranteed to be locally sourced, quality assured, and farmed with care, making it an excellent choice.

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

# Should I still eat red meat?

## Get in the know

With lots of differing messages out there, it can be tricky to know what's actually good for our health and well-being. Check out the pointers below to fuel your appetite...

**Nutrient deficiencies:** According to the Scottish Dietary Goals, the average intake of red and processed meat should be pegged at around **70g per person per day**, which is around 500g a week of uncooked meat. This is a portion similar to a deck of cards, five times a week. Whilst people eating more than 90g a day of red meat shouldn't eat any more, the reality in Scotland is that our average intakes are now below (66g) the daily limit (University of Edinburgh, 2024). Women and girls in particular struggle to meet the dietary recommendations, so blanket recommendations to limit red meat consumption would disproportionately limit nutrient intake, as highlighted by a recent modelling study commissioned by **Food Standards Scotland (FSS)**.

**Veganism and plant-based diet trends:** The meat-free market in 2025 is showing signs of stabilisation. According to NIQ, value sales of chilled meat alternatives remained broadly flat in the 52 weeks ending 5 October 2025, after two consecutive years of decline. Category performance has been supported by extensive price promotions and rising meat prices, which have encouraged some consumers to trial meat-free options. However, increasing concern over ultra-processed foods (UPFs), particularly within the meat-alternative segment, has prompted greater scrutiny of nutritional value and ingredient quality. As a result, some consumers have switched back to fresh meat and poultry, seeking less-processed, more nutrient-rich choices. Overall, taste continues to represent a key barrier to adoption, while growing emphasis on **health, clean ingredients**, and **transparency** is expected to remain a defining influence on meat-free category performance.

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



**"Moderate red meat consumption (around five servings the size of a deck of cards per week) provides vital nutrients for growth and repair, with more health benefits than risks."**

Registered nutritionist, Dr Carrie Ruxton

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

# Red meat consumer trends

## Get in the know

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

- **66% of red meat consumed in Scotland is beef**, followed by 25% being pork and 8% being lamb (volume share by kg).<sup>1</sup>
- Shoppers aged 65+ represent the largest group of red meat purchases, accounting for **36%** of total red meat volume sales.<sup>1</sup>
- Price, the appearance of the meat and the range of choice of products are the top factors that Scottish shoppers consider when choosing red meat.<sup>2</sup>
- High animal welfare ranked third top priority for shoppers when asked what ranked as '**extremely important**', after the appearance of the red meat and the price.<sup>2</sup>
- Convenience has become key for consumers, with **69%** of Scottish shoppers agreeing that they like food which can be prepared quickly and easily.<sup>2</sup>
- **71%** of Scottish shoppers are more likely to buy beef if they know it's 'made in Scotland' - the number one category within the food and drink market, with **66%** for pork and **61%** for lamb.<sup>3</sup>
- **One in three** Primary MFP (minimally processed foods) servings are had for a positive health reason, up from last year and **outperforming** total Food & Drink. For shoppers under 35 years of age, they see red meat as a natural, lighter and low FSS (fat, salt and sugar) option. Red meat is more of a health occasion for under-35s than chicken.<sup>4</sup>

1. Worldpanel by Numerator, primary red meat, Scotland, total coverage, 52 weeks ending 05/10/2025.

2. QMS butchers research 2025, nationally representative online sample of 1000 Scottish adults (18+).

3. The Knowledge Bank Provenance research 2025

4. Worldpanel by Numerator

**Sources** Kantar, 52 weeks ending 29th September

2024 QMS Independently commissioned research Summer July 2024. Sample

size 2,570 adults across Scotland and north of England. Survey ran from 10th July - 22nd July 2024



# Sustainable land management



## Get in the know

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

### Key Points

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

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

Scotland's sole right usable agricultural area spans **4.58m** hectares, with a further **0.58m** hectares of common grazings.

In 2025, **64%** of Scotland's land, equal to **5.02m** hectares, was used for farming.

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

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

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

Sources Scottish Agricultural Census: June 2025

# Sustainable land management

## Get in the know

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Farming circle of life



## Get in the know

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

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

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

For more information  
on sustainability in  
red meat production,  
visit [Make it Scotch](#).

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



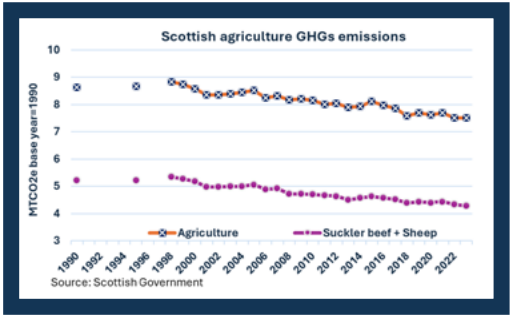
# Greenhouse gas emissions stats

## Get in the know

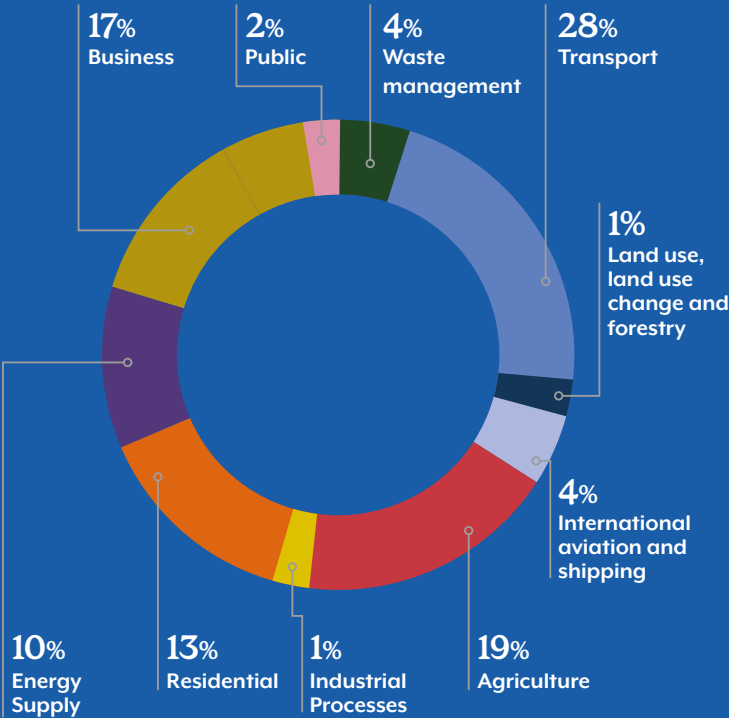
Agriculture contributes approximately **19%** of Scotland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions, totalling **7.5MtCO<sub>2</sub>e** in 2023. This includes emissions from livestock, soil management, and energy use on farms.

This contribution reflects the sector's role in food production and its associated environmental impacts, but also highlights ongoing efforts to reduce emissions through responsible land management, improved farming practices and technologies aimed at sustainability.

The full carbon balance of agriculture – coupling emissions reductions with soil sequestration – must be acknowledged. Farming delivers multiple environmental goods from its carbon removal potential to grazing animals promoting soil health and biodiversity.



# Percentage contribution to Scotland's agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by sector



All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

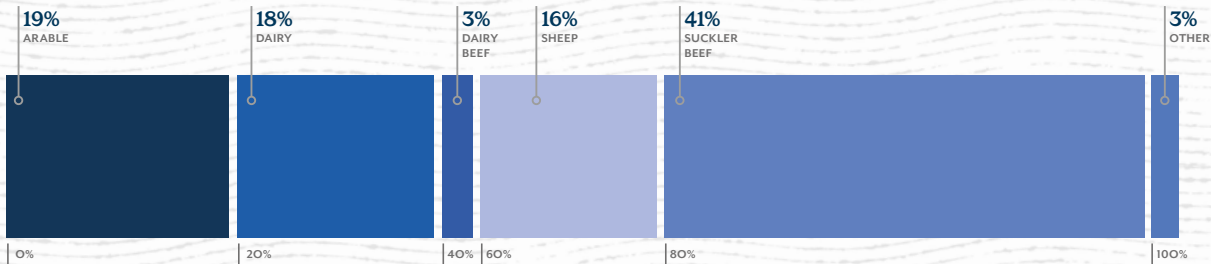
# Change in greenhouse gas emissions

## Get in the know

The Scottish red meat industry has already made progress in reducing its environmental impact, with many farmers adopting sustainable practices and investing in new technologies. Suckler beef and sheep farming reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by **18%** between 1990 and 2021, heavily influenced by a reduction in stock numbers.

Suckler beef farming has historically been the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions within the agricultural sector, at **41.4%** in 2023, although its share has been decreasing since 1990. Similarly, the sheep sector, which is the fourth largest contributor to agricultural emissions, has also seen a decline in its share. Lowering greenhouse gas emissions is a natural priority for farmers and the wider red meat supply chain in Scotland. Sustainable practices and technologies is good business, resulting in greater productivity and profitability as well as more beneficial environmental outcomes.

## Percentage contribution to Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, by livestock type



# Community impact

## Get in the know

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

**Economic impact:** The Scottish red meat industry is a powerhouse, supporting around **40,000 jobs** and contributing an estimated £3.5 billion of output in 2024. Combined output from farming and processing of cattle, sheep and pigs is estimated to have grown by 2% from 2023, reaching £2.7bn, with another £800m of output generated once the economic activity of the supply sectors to farming and processing have been considered, such as animal nutrition, veterinary services, auction marts, haulage and financial services. The red meat industry represents over 35% of national farming output, driving economic growth and resilience in rural areas by championing local farmers and businesses.

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

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

## Championing quality with local butchers:

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



## Discover delicious recipes at Make It Scotch!

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

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

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**SPECIALLY SELECTED PORK PAD THAI**



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**SEARED SCOTCH BEEF STEAK POKE BOWL**



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**HARISSA SCOTCH LAMB AND SWEET POTATO TRAYBAKE**



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

# Videos and case studies

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

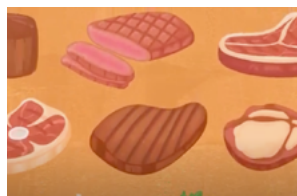
## ▶ LISTEN TO OUR QMS PODCAST



## ▶ SHARING A PRIDE IN ENVIRONMENT AND WELFARE



## ▶ FARMING FOODSTEPS SUSTAINABILITY VIDEO



## ▶ WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW - TV ADVERT



## QMS NEWSLETTER



## QMS PUBLICATIONS





## Consumer health & wellbeing marketing campaign

### Make it a strong start with Scotch – Our Health & Wellbeing Campaign

January is a key time for health, nutrition, and wellbeing, as consumers embark on a New Year reset and turn their focus to eating better. Our health & wellbeing campaign launching in January and running until March, positions Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork as natural, trusted choices that can be enjoyed with confidence as part of a healthy, balanced diet.



**Make it a strong start with Scotch** aims to cut through the New Year wellness noise by reframing January as a time for beginnings, not extremes. The campaign champions better choices rather than short-lived fads, starting with food that's real, nutritious, and quality-assured as the strongest foundation for long-lasting habits.

# Consumer health & wellbeing marketing campaign

Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb, and Specially Selected Pork are born and reared in Scotland, quality-assured from farm to fork, and naturally rich in protein and essential nutrients. Each can be incorporated into satisfying, sustaining meals that fit a wide range of budgets, lifestyles, or health goals, making them easy choices to return to when motivation dips or life gets busy.

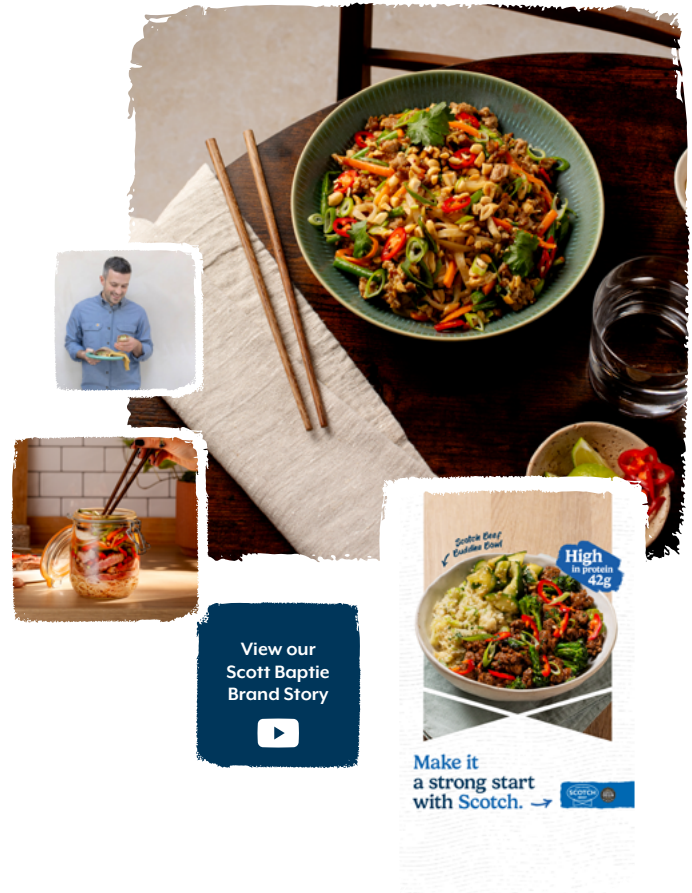
## The multi-channel campaign will be seen across:

- STV, STV Player, and Sky Regional
- Meta and YouTube advertisements
- Audio streaming
- Digital display advertisements
- Adverts across David Lloyd and Pure Gym sites

The campaign is set to reach **76%** of all adults in Scotland.

Scott Baptie also returns to screens across STV, STV Player, and Sky Regional, sharing quick, easy, nutritionally balanced meal solutions. He will once again front our STV Brand Story content and a social video series, **A Strong Start with Scott**, delivering fast, fun explainers on the nutritional benefits of red meat, paired with simple recipe inspiration from Make It Scotch.

WHEN YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW.



# Community Engagement

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

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

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

[🔗 Read more](#)

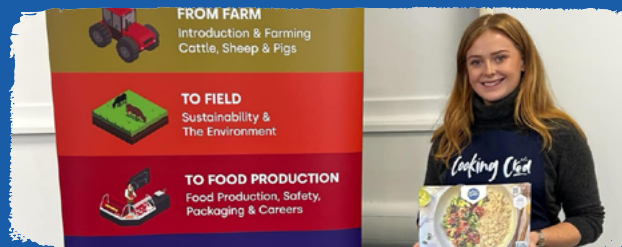
## Farming Foodsteps

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

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



Visit **Farming Foodsteps**



## Make It Scotch Ambassadors

### Get in the know

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

#### Ambassador activities:

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

#### Impact of ambassadors:

- Encourage healthy consumption of beef, lamb and pork through Make it Scotch recipes and live cookery demonstrations
- Enhance consumer understanding of red meat's role in a healthy, balanced, and sustainable diet
- Promote positive conversations about Scotland's red meat sector, connecting farm to fork

# Community Marketing Fund

## Get in the know

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

Our £50,000 **Community Marketing Fund** exists to empower local projects and events that inspire consumers to choose high-quality, locally sourced Scottish meat.

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



Find us at  
@MakeitScotch



## Here's how to apply:

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

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

**If your project aligns with our mission, apply today!**

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