

# LIVESTOCK+

**QMS** Sharing best practice from Scottish livestock businesses

**SPRING 2016**

## +Features

**FOCUS ON THE SCOTCH BEEF  
FARM OF THE YEAR**

**THE BENEFITS OF MANAGING  
COWS BY CONDITION SCORE**

**LANARKSHIRE FARMER HALVES  
FEED COSTS THROUGH BETTER  
MANAGEMENT**

## UPDATES

**Monitor Farmer Boosts  
Numbers and Lowers Costs  
How Does Carcase Balance  
Affect Producers?**

**Opportunities Ahead  
for Pig Industry**



MONITOR FARMS • MARKET FOCUS • GRAZING GROUPS • NEW TECHNOLOGY • FORAGE MANAGEMENT • NEWS



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## LIVESTOCK+

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# WELCOME



One of my priorities in QMS is to listen to views and ideas from those working at grassroots level in the different areas of the Scottish red meat industry.

Visiting different parts of our industry and making time for face-to-face meetings is something QMS views as important and in recent weeks auction markets have been one focus of my travels.

As well as meeting market staff and hauliers, this also gave me the opportunity to engage in some ringside conversations. One topic of discussion was the new Beef Efficiency Scheme (BES) which is the delivery vehicle for the £45m of “beef” money announced by the Scottish Government last year, following recommendations contained in the Beef 2020 report.

This scheme has the potential to greatly improve our national beef breeding programme, through the use of genotyping and sire recording, as well as the collection of information on weights and other key heritable traits. One key requirement for the BES is that the farm is a member of a recognised beef quality assurance scheme.

If we can't or don't measure things, we can't improve them, so I urge breeders of beef calves to register for this scheme through the ScotEID website and begin recording using the BES diary which you should have received in the post. The scheme, which requires the farm to be a member of a recognised quality assurance scheme, will formally open for the inputting of this recorded data later this year.

The positive price differential between quality assured versus non-assured stock was consistently obvious to me during my mart visits and during 2015, in response to feedback from the industry, we undertook a major recruitment campaign to encourage non-members to join up.

Of the 600 new applications for membership we received, around 200 were re-joiners whose membership has lapsed but more than 400 were entirely new members. This is extremely encouraging and augers well for the future of our industry.

We have also launched the Scotch Potential Eligibility Cattle Checker (SPECC) which allows farmers, auction markets and abattoirs to check whether individual animals are potentially eligible for the Scotch Beef brand – see page 18.

Sheep and cattle farmers will find a copy of our annual confidential farmer survey enclosed - we greatly appreciate the time you take to complete and return your survey to us.+

**Jim McLaren**, Chairman, Quality Meat Scotland

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## Engaging with the industry



**A significant element of the work QMS does on behalf of the industry takes place behind the scenes and very often goes unrecognised.**

A regular example of this is the work we do on issues management to keep key organisations, the media and others informed of the positive facts when a story which could potentially damage our industry threatens to break.

Strong working relationships with the media and other key stakeholders and organisations are vital when it comes to an effective response to issues, in order to cascade the right messages and counter a potentially negative story.

Another example of working behind the scenes is the time QMS has committed to progressing discussions with the other levy boards to recover levy which is lost as a result of livestock from Scotland being slaughtered elsewhere in the UK.

This has been a lengthy process but we are now seeing welcome progress and at the end of last year QMS, along with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) submitted a briefing document to ministers in England, Scotland and Wales outlining an alternative option for the distribution of statutory red meat levy.

This alternative, developed jointly by the three organisations, would take into consideration the scale of economic activity undertaken by the red meat industry in each country, rather than only where the animal is slaughtered.

At present, levy is collected at point of slaughter regardless of where animals have spent their lives and where value has been added in the raising of beef cattle, sheep and pigs. Under the potential new system, animals that have spent part of their lives in different countries would have the levy apportioned between those different countries.

The levy boards have also agreed to look at new ways of working in partnership on activity where there is mutual benefit, such as supporting export market access work in countries where there is potential to sell pig meat, sheep meat and beef from across Britain.

Clearly this is encouraging progress and we look forward to the proposals now on the table being fully considered by ministers, allowing a solution to be implemented.✚

*Uel Morton*

**Uel Morton,**  
Chief Executive,  
Quality Meat Scotland

## Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb Back Stars of Scottish Sport

**Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI had a high profile at the Scottish Sports Awards in Glasgow in December when QMS sponsored the Young Sports Person category, won by swimmer and gold medallist Duncan Scott.**

Jenni Henderson, Quality Meat Scotland's Health and Education Executive, said: "We were delighted to sponsor the Young Sports Person category in this year's Scottish Sports Awards.

"QMS undertakes a range of activities to encourage awareness of the role of red meat in a healthy diet.

"Our congratulations to Duncan and all the other finalists - their drive and commitment to their sport is truly inspirational and hopefully will encourage others to better understand the benefits of sport and eating well to achieve a healthy lifestyle."✚



Retired British racing drivers Dario Franchitti and Jackie Stewart sign a Scotch Beef t-shirt at the event.



# Campaigns to Boost Scotch Beef PGI as the Preferred Beef in England and Scotland



**QMS is communicating with target consumers in England and Scotland in two parallel marketing campaigns to promote the iconic Scotch Beef PGI brand.**

The two 13 week campaigns are showcasing Scotch Beef and the flavour, provenance, traceability and integrity which underpin the brand's PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) status.

A key objective of both campaigns is to clearly differentiate Scotch Beef. With the strapline "There's beef, there's Scottish beef, then there's Scotch Beef", the campaign will target 10 million consumers across Greater London and the Home Counties through advertising in tube and railway stations and also on outdoor billboards. It will be complemented by features and adverts in the National press and through social media.

In Scotland there will be both a radio promotional campaign as well as promotion in the National press. In February the campaign focus will be on steaks to coincide with Valentines Day whereas in March and April the campaigns will focus on roasts to coincide with Mothers Day and Easter.

Michelin-starred chef Tom Kitchin is happy to remind consumers of what sets Scotch Beef PGI apart.



*"Scotch Beef is an everyday premium product which is perfect for a special treat, dinner out or a simple family meal."*

Mr Kitchin, whose cooking philosophy is "from nature to plate", has a passion for the finest, freshest Scottish seasonal produce and serves Scotch Beef in all three of his top Edinburgh restaurants.

"I source Scotch Beef for my restaurants because it's the best quality beef available and will consistently deliver great taste.

"As a chef, it's one of my favourite products as it is so versatile."

From a roast sirloin of Scotch Beef to a more experimental dish such as slow cooked beef cheeks, it never fails to impress."

As part of the campaign, three hundred independent butchers, who are members of the Scotch Butchers Club, will also receive promotional packs with steak sauce recipe cards and resources to help them boost their sales of Scotch Beef steaks.

Laurent Vernet, Head of Marketing at QMS, said that the campaigns aim to inform people just how simple cooking with Scotch Beef can be.

"Scotch Beef is an everyday premium product which is perfect for a special treat, dinner out or a simple family meal.

"I would, therefore, encourage shoppers when they are in their butchers shop or supermarket aisles to look for the Scotch Beef PGI logo which guarantees quality in every bite as well as world-leading levels of traceability, assurance and welfare standards."+



## Series of Monitor Farm Videos Launched

**QMS has developed a series of videos highlighting the improvements four Scottish farms have made while monitor farmers in the QMS scheme.**

Amanda and John Paterson from Hartbush Farm in Dumfries, Andrew Baillie from Carstairs Mains in Lanark, Ed and Kate Rowell from Hundleshope in Peeblesshire and Duncan McEwan from Arnprior in Stirlingshire each feature in a short video and talk about their time as monitor farmers and how their businesses have benefitted as a result.+

You can see these videos, plus many others at [www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library)



**QMS**  
YouTube





## Report Highlights Value of Butchers to Scottish Red Meat Industry



The importance of the butcher sector to the Scottish red meat industry has been highlighted by QMS following new statistics published by Kantar Worldpanel.

The figures reveal that annual sales from Scottish butchers are estimated £34.4 million, accounting for almost 11% of the retail market for fresh red meat in Scotland.

"Butchers are very important to the Scottish red meat industry in terms of retail sales of Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork," said Laurent Vernet, Quality Meat Scotland's Head of Marketing.

"The statistics show that at least one in five Scottish shoppers has visited their local butcher in the past year. Those who visited a butcher shop during that period went on average nine times over the year. Additionally, a red meat shopper will, on average, buy more in a butchers shop than they will in a supermarket."

He added: "Scottish butchers are also selling more and more products which are not counted in the red meat retail sales figures, such as marinated products, sausages, burgers, ready-meals and other new innovative products which reflect

the dynamism of the sector which now accounts for about 50% of total red meat retail sales."

"Butchers are very important to the Scottish red meat industry in terms of retail sales of Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork."

QMS has supported the independent butcher sector for many years, especially those who sell Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork, and works closely with the butchers federations and associations both in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

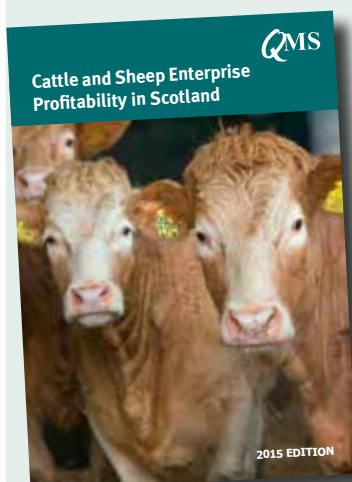
QMS also runs the Scotch Butchers Club, whose 300 members benefit from seasonal point of sale material along with various promotional activities to support members' trade and increase the visibility of red meat produced in Scotland.

A number of butchers also take part in the QMS Butchers Think Tank and make suggestions on areas such as the content and focus of QMS campaigns for butchers.+



## QMS Enterprise Costings 2015 Launched

The considerable variation in profitability between the top third and bottom third of livestock producers, in terms of business performance, is highlighted in the 2015 edition of the "Cattle and Sheep Enterprise Profitability" available from QMS.



Stuart Ashworth, Head of Economics Services with QMS, commented: "Looking at the general trends during 2014, the calf and lamb crop benefitted from a much-improved season weather-wise resulting in a general improvement in profitability among sheep farmers, although the position in the beef sector remained challenging."

Mr Ashworth added: "Calving and lambing was a more positive period than

in 2013 and mortality rates at birth were much reduced, while among sheep flocks ewe prolificacy was much improved.

"Additionally, feed and forage was in much better supply and animals thrived better than in 2013 and the increased availability of feed and forage contributed to animals generally being sold at higher weight."

The general improvement in ewe prolificacy during 2014 meant sheep enterprises were better positioned to benefit from improved physical and financial output than cattle enterprises.

Despite generally lower costs of feed and forage, largely due to lower purchased feed requirements and lower purchased feed costs, other costs continued to increase. Cattle producers selling prime stock in particular found it difficult to recoup this extra cost from the marketplace, stated Mr Ashworth.+

The 2015 Enterprise Costings can be viewed on-line at [www.qmscotland.co.uk](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk) or hard copies ordered free of charge by calling 0131 472 4040 or emailing [info@qmscotland.co.uk](mailto:info@qmscotland.co.uk).



## Scotch Lamb PGI Campaign Succeeds in Driving Sales

**The value of retail sales of fresh lamb in Scotland was boosted by over eight per cent as a result of QMS's 2015 Wham Bam Scotch Lamb marketing campaign.**

The increase, driven by a high impact QMS advertising campaign, lifted demand for lamb in Scotland over the two months of the promotional push and out-performed sales of fresh lamb across GB in the same period.

The campaign targeted 3.7 million consumers - over 90% of Scottish adults - and the marketing activities included 115 days of lamb sampling in retailers, 112 outdoor poster sites, a month-long radio advertising campaign and extensive on-line and social media activity.

A key objective of the 2015 campaign, which was focused on August and September, was to encourage consumers in Scotland to understand how versatile lamb is and how simple and quick it is to cook.

"The good news is that the average retail price for fresh lamb retailed in Scotland held firm and even strengthened by 1.5% during the course of the campaign, compared with the GB-wide price which went down by 0.5%," said Laurent Vernet, Head of Marketing with QMS.

"...understand how versatile lamb is and how simple and quick it is to cook."

"Our research also clearly indicates that the strong results were not triggered by reduced retail prices. The campaign resulted in shoppers increasing the number of occasions they purchased lamb and also the volume of lamb purchased on each shopping trip."

During the campaign there was an increase of Scottish shoppers aged under 45 years old purchasing fresh lamb, as well as an increase in the number of Scottish families with children purchasing lamb.✚

### SCOTCH LAMB CAMPAIGN : IN NUMBERS

**3.7**  
million  
consumers  
targeted

**Reached  
over  
90%**  
of Scottish  
adults

**115**  
days of lamb  
sampling

**112**  
outdoor  
poster sites

## Opportunities Ahead for Specially Selected Pork

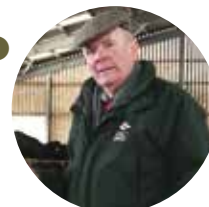
**QMS has met with the Specially Selected Pork Strategy Marketing Group to discuss future promotional activities to support the retail of fresh pork in Scotland.**

According to Laurent Vernet, Head of Marketing with QMS, the increase of pig levy to the Scottish industry following the expansion of slaughtering capacity at Brechin, should give a very welcome opportunity for the Specially Selected Pork brand.

"The QMS marketing team is looking forward to working with the industry to consider the options for re-launching the Specially Selected Pork brand, as levy income to support promotions in 2016/17 becomes available," said Mr Vernet.✚



## QMS Video Promotes Safety at Calving



**Unfortunately, on average two people from the livestock industry die each year due to injuries caused by cows that have recently calved.**

QMS has produced a short video which gives practical tips to reduce risks during indoor and outdoor calving. In the video, Basil Lowman, of SAC Consulting (a division of SRUC, Scotland's Rural College), outlines a four-point plan to help reduce risk of injury or loss of life. ✚

To view the video visit  
[www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library)

## Updated "Perfect Steaks and Roast App" now available

QMS has updated its very popular "Perfect Steaks and Roast" app which has attracted over 20,000 users in the last 12 months. The **FREE** app, which is available to download from iTunes and Googleplay, contains easy-to-follow instructions, mouthwatering and inspirational recipes, timings and alerts, the simple to use touch test and how to choose the perfect cut.✚



**FREE**



# MAJOR PROFITABILITY BENEFITS FROM MANAGING COWS ACCORDING TO CONDITION SCORE

Managing suckler cows according to their condition score can have a huge impact on herd output and profitability, according to **Dr Basil Lowman**, Beef Specialist with SRUC (Scotland's Rural College).

Look out for the Cow Condition Score videos at [www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/video-library)

**I**n two short videos produced by QMS, Basil demonstrates how and why to condition score and also emphasises the importance of using this key management tool at this time of year, for both spring and autumn calving herds.

Every farmer knows that cows which are too thin or too fat are more likely to have calving problems and be less fertile, but Basil's aim in these video is to take the mystery out of condition scoring by simplifying the process, setting key targets and managing the herd accordingly.

He says that condition scoring can be practised on two levels – herd and individual cow. "The national herd goes from lean to fat on an annual basis depending on grass growth and forage quality, and condition scoring simply reflects this. It is the variation within herds which is most important for farmers to deal with," observed Basil.

He points out that the vast majority of herds have cows with condition scores ranging from two to four. This difference is equivalent, in terms of energy available to the cow, to three big bales of silage.

"Many farmers do not appreciate what a dense source of energy body fat is. Achieving the correct score at calving and mating will reduce feed costs as well as maximising output and potential."

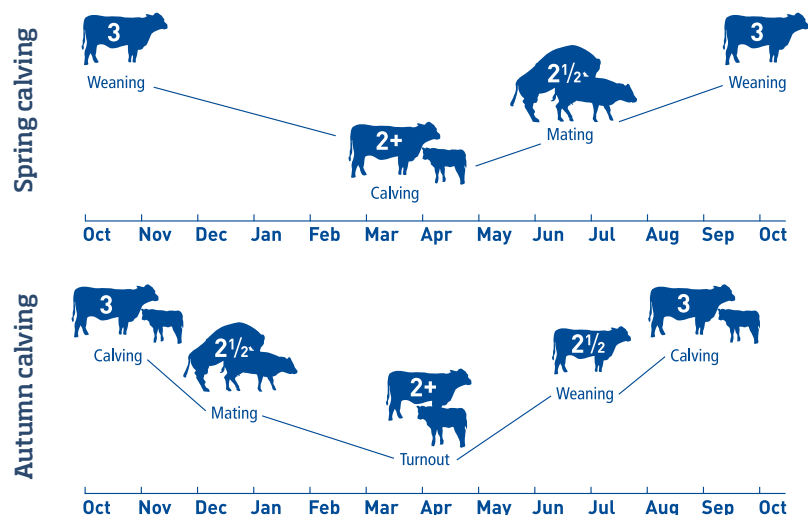
The most crucial aspect of condition scoring, according to Basil, is that farmers act on it. He says: "In the simplest form, farmers should take food from the fat to feed the thin in order to even out condition scores and improve productivity."

Basil continued: "Correct management at the critical stages of mating and calving offers huge benefits to output and profitability." And he cuts no slack to farmers who claim it is difficult to group cows according to condition, saying sheds can be simply divided by using electric tape.

Basil points out that long calving periods can make cow management tricky and, instead of following a whole-herd feeding policy, his advice is to divide the herd into those due to calve in the first month and later calvers.



## CONDITION SCORES FOR SPRING AND AUTUMN CALVING COWS



"It is always worthwhile dealing with even a small number of overly thin or fat cows as, without attention, they are likely to be barren."

He reckons this split would normally be roughly two-thirds/one-third, and ideally the larger portion of the herd should be grouped according to condition score and fed accordingly.

He also points out that it is always worthwhile dealing with even a small number of overly thin or fat cows as, without attention, they are likely to be barren.

The time of calving is important in setting condition scoring targets, as this can have an impact on fertility and how receptive the cow is to mating. Basil explains that cows calving in early spring should ideally have a score of 2.5 at calving because they are generally bulled as soon as they go out to grass so need to be in reasonable condition at turnout. However, those calving in late spring can afford to be leaner at a score of 2 as they will have the benefit of being bulled after a month or more on spring grass when it is at its best, and fertility peaks with the cows on a rising plane of nutrition.

Autumn calvers generally find it more difficult to put on weight over the winter, and Basil recommends a calving condition score closer to 3 to allow for some weight loss before bulling.

However, he warns: "The leaner a cow is down to a score of 2, the more easily she will calve, so only target a score of 3 in the autumn if the cows and bull both have easy-calving characteristics, otherwise aim for 2.5 and provide a high-energy feed post-calving to compensate."

The target score at mating should be 2.5, regardless of the time of year, but Basil emphasises his point by saying that a cow can put on half a score at grass and lose quarter of a score on winter forage within a month.

In the new QMS videos, Basil demonstrates ideal condition scores and what to look out for when a cow is too fat or too thin. He also advises farmers to handle 10 to 20 per cent of the cows in the herd, as visual assessment can be misleading due to gut shape and hair. Once they have a feel for the scores then the rest of the herd can be analysed visually. ➕

"In the simplest form, farmers should take food from the fat to feed the thin in order to even out condition scores and improve productivity."

## NEW QMS VIDEOS ▶

The aim of these videos is to highlight the importance of condition scoring cows; remind producers how simple it is to do and emphasise the importance of managing groups within herds according to condition score.



In the first video Basil Lowman explains why, how and when to condition score cows and the importance of actually handling cows as part of the process.



Basil highlights the key parts of the cow to consider when condition scoring.

In the second video Basil talks about the practicalities of managing suckler cows with different condition scores. The video contains practical tips on how to separate small groups of housed cows and the nutritional management required to ensure all cows can achieve their optimal condition score.



In the video Basil highlights how simply housed cattle can be managed in groups according to condition score by dividing the shed using electric tape.



# INCREASING STOCKING RATES AND REDUCING COSTS

Sharing ideas and developing systems to make farm businesses more profitable are key aspects of the QMS Monitor Farm programme, and host farmer **Andrew Baillie** of Carstairs Mains in Lanarkshire, has introduced a variety of changes to his farm business as a result of his experiences over the past three years.

**A**ndrew, who farms in partnership with his wife Jennifer, has managed to increase stocking rates significantly on the 253 hectare unit as a result of adopting a rotational grazing system during his time as a monitor farmer. He has also reduced fertiliser and fuel bills by introducing changes identified at group discussions with the help of the monitor farm facilitators.

## QMS VIDEO ▶

YouTube 

A video highlighting improvements Carstairs Mains Farm has made can be viewed on QMS's Facebook page and on QMS's MooTube channel on Youtube.



Since Carstairs Mains became a monitor farm in 2012, Andrew, a self-confessed sheep enthusiast, has more than doubled the ewe flock. The pedigree Beltex and Texel flock has been increased by 50 to 200, while commercial ewes have been increased from 85 to 300. As part of a benchmarking and business planning exercise, increasing output from sheep was deemed the optimum strategy to lift output and make best use of the farm's resources, including its reliance on family labour. As a consequence cow numbers have been reduced, with a core herd of 30 retained.

Andrew said: "I have made these changes as a direct result of the monitor farm experience and plan to increase ewe numbers further to between 800 and 1,000 over the next two to three years.

In summer 2014, Andrew began using a rotational grazing system with the cattle. He then tried it with the sheep over the winter and in 2015 had all the stock on the system. He said: "For around £1,500 investment in electric fencing, I have been able to double my stocking rates and reduce my grass fertiliser costs. I have kept 30 cows for grass management, but I am exploring other cattle options such as summer grazing or rearing dairy heifers."





Andrew is no stranger to the rotational grazing system as he worked on a farm in New Zealand a few years ago. However, he said it was still a surprise to him how well the system worked on his own farm and how much more productive it has become.

“For around £1,500 investment in electric fencing, I have been able to double my stocking rates and reduce my grass fertiliser costs.”

Another idea he is in the early stages of adopting from the New Zealand-style system is changing his traditional Blackface and Cheviot cross-commercial ewes to Aberdales, a type of prolific Texel cross which uses New Zealand genetics bred for a forage-based system. In 2015, he put 50 ewe lambs to the tup and is looking forward to seeing what difference they make to his commercial enterprise.

## CARSTAIRS MAINS FARM : AT A GLANCE

*Monitor Farm since November 2012*



Farmed by  
**Andrew Baillie**  
in partnership with  
wife, **Jennifer**.

**253**  
**ha**

Pedigree  
**Beltex**  
and **Texel**  
flock

**300**  
commercial  
ewes

He praised the input of the community group who attended the regular monitor farm meetings, saying he felt the open discussions that were held were hugely beneficial, not just to him as the host farmer, but also to other members of the group who adopted some of the ideas into their systems.

One such idea, which arose at the very beginning of the three-year programme, was to install a biomass boiler. As highlighted in the short QMS video, there are around 40ha of woodland at Carstairs Mains which were quickly identified as an under-utilised resource. Now the 60kw biomass plant heats the house, office and pedigree lambing shed and returns £7,000 per year on RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) payments and oil savings. As a result of this, several other members of the Clyde group have installed similar boilers.

Another area of the farm business to benefit has been the 100ha of arable land. Following soil analysis a fertiliser trial was carried out on the spring barley which showed that, due to the amount of slurry applied to the land, big savings could be made on phosphorus and potassium. Andrew said he has been able to cut his arable fertiliser bill by £4,000 but would not have been aware of this without the investigation initiated by the monitor farm group discussions.

“I would encourage anyone to take part in the Monitor Farm programme. By benchmarking and scrutinising every part of the business, I realised how I could do so many things better,” said Andrew. ✦





# COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING EFFICIENCY

*Key to Success on Award-Winning Farm*

A north-east cattle enterprise, which has grown steadily over the years through careful reinvestment of profits, has won the prestigious Scotch Beef Farm of the Year award run by Quality Meat Scotland and AgriScot.

From left - David Watson, Aynsley Watson (holding baby Vivienne) with husband Adam Watson and father Peter Watson. Lynne Watson is kneeling with young Xander Watson.

**T**he Watson family farm 1,350 acres at Darnford, Banchory, with the main enterprises being 700 acres of spring barley and 426 suckler cows. The two enterprises complement each other, especially on some of the lighter soils which benefit from a grass rotation and the application of dung, while straw is essential for the cattle side. The family also takes seasonal grazing on some hill land locally.

Unusually for the area, the herd consists of Salers cows and Peter Watson explained the background to their breed choice.

"A particularly bad calving with our continental crosses in 2008 led us to buy 23 Salers heifers at Castle Douglas. We then bought a few more the following year and have stuck with them since, as they are hard working cows and easy calving. We have not had a caesarean section for five years!"

Peter and his two sons, David and Adam, work full-time on the farm and they are all prepared to try something different to find a breed and system which suits their business. The most important aspect of the business, however, is that they keep a close eye on finances and the herd has to be self-sufficient.

"Although the cattle enterprise complements the arable, all the dung and straw are costed out to each part of the business, as is our time," said Peter. "We do not allow the arable side to subsidise the livestock or vice versa, which means we have a true picture of how profitable each enterprise is."

This business acumen is key to delivering an efficient farming system which makes a living for three families. "The herd is purely commercial; everything has to work and make money," said Peter. "We are proud of the fact that the herd has been built up through reinvestment of its own profits."



Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead presented the award to the Watsons at Agriscot 2015.

"The judges were particularly impressed with the Watson family's commitment to continually improving the efficiency of their farm."





David (left) and Adam (right) with father Peter Watson (centre).



The herd is split into 140 autumn calving and the remainder spring calving. The autumn cows are put to Salers bulls to breed replacements, while the spring herd is put to Charolais. Since the Watsons switched to Salers, the herd has been closed and monitored for Johne's every two years through SRUC's Premium Cattle Health Scheme. David and his wife, Lynne, also have a small herd of pedigree Salers.

The cows start calving outside from 20th September and come in when the weather deteriorates, while 200 of the spring calving cows are out-wintered on sandy soils next to the River Dee. They are all housed for calving, however, which starts at the beginning of March. Heifers calve down at two-and-a-half years old, which the Watsons are happy with.

Peter said: "We have quite big cows here, averaging about 720kg. By calving them at two we could reduce the size, but we are happy with what we've got. They are easily kept and get on with the job and I believe there is no point in having smaller cows."

Always prepared to try something different, Peter added they are planning to try a Hereford bull in the autumn in order to maintain hybrid vigour. "Every farm and farmer is different. You just try your best to find a breed that suits your farm," he said.

In order to spread the risk and help with cash flow, 50 of the top calves are sold store in February at Aberdeen and Northern Marts, where in 2015 they averaged 299p/kg or £1,265 per head. The remainder are finished and sold deadweight to McIntosh Donald.

"The judges were particularly impressed with the Watson family's commitment to continually improving the efficiency of their farm."

The Salers bull calves from the autumn herd are kept entire and finished at 14 to 15 months when they average 375kg, while the steers from the spring herd average about 400kg and the heifers 350kg at 18 to 20 months. They are finished on a fairly intensive ration of barley, oats and brewers dark grains plus minerals, and bedded on straw.

The family were absolutely delighted to win the Scotch Beef Farm of the Year award and said the feedback they have received from the industry has been fantastic.

This was the second accolade the farm won in 2015, as earlier in the year they also won the McIntosh Donald award for the highest percentage of heifers within the specification of E, U and R up to 4L.

The representatives from AgriScot and QMS who judged the Scotch Beef Farm of the Year award, Robert Neill and Douglas Bell, who visited Darnford as part of the judging process, were particularly impressed with the Watson family's commitment to continually improving the efficiency of their farm.

AgriScot board member Robert Neill, a former Scotch Beef Farm of the Year Winner, said: "Our congratulations go to the Watsons for their commercial skills and forward-thinking approach."

"It was a pleasure to visit the Watsons, who rightly have a real pride in the way they run their businesses," added Douglas Bell, Head of Industry Development with QMS. +

Inset image: Robert Neill, a former Scotch Beef Farm of the Year Winner.



## Darnford Farm, Banchory: At A Glance

Farmed by the **Watson family**, Peter and his two sons **David and Adam**.

**1,350 acres**  
(546 ha)

**700 acres**  
Spring Barley

**426**  
Suckler Cows

**720kg**  
Average cow weight

**Autumn** cows are put to **Salers** bulls to breed. **Spring** herd is put to **Charolais**.



# CHANGE OF FOCUS SEES BORDERS FARM HALVE VARIABLE COSTS

**A complete change of focus at Jim Logan's Pirntaton Farm near Galashiels has led to variable costs - and feed costs in particular - being slashed, while livestock numbers have increased.**

**J**im, who farms in partnership with his mother, Elizabeth, realised a few years ago that he was spending a disproportionate amount of time on pedigree sheep and cattle, and took the brave decision to pull out of the pedigree world and concentrate on improving the commercial side of the business.

Pirntaton has been one of the host farms for Quality Meat Scotland's Grazing Group project since July 2014.

It extends to 570ha, rising from 750 feet to 1,700 feet, and has a mixture of temporary and permanent grass with a significant area of rough grazing and some plantain fodder crop.

The farm traditionally ran a stratified system of 1,450 sheep – breeding pure Blackface and crossing these to produce Scotch Mules.

These were then crossed with Texel and Suffolk rams to produce prime lambs. But over the last few years, Jim has taken the big step of introducing Romney, Lleyn and Abertex genetics with the aim of producing an efficient, functional, easier kept ewe, more suited to an outdoor lambing, forage-based system.

There are six Grazing Groups throughout Scotland run by QMS with an overall objective of increasing the kilos of meat produced per hectare through better utilisation of grass. For further information about the grazing groups please visit [www.qmscotland.co.uk/grazing](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/grazing)





## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Principal Change

Rely far more on grass, far less on concentrate

### Decisions Made

Stop bull beef and graze second summer

Delay lambing to late April

Serious commitment to utilising grass much better

### Change is never simple – dealing with the challenges

Sub dividing fields – paddock design and water

Right entry heights and residuals. Too much grass

Trace elements a challenge

### Results

**80%** reduction in sheep feed bill

**65%** reduction in cattle feed bill

**20%** increase in sheep numbers

**30%** increase in cow numbers (planned)



Last year Jim also replaced the Blackface flock with Lairg Cheviots, half of which he crossed with Lleyns. He said: “I think the higher ground here is good enough to support Lleyn crosses, and I am keen that the hill sheep should also benefit from the hybrid vigour of a first cross.”

Rotational grazing has allowed better utilisation of grass across the farm. This has enabled Jim to increase ewe numbers on the hill from 400 to 540, with lowground numbers rising from 800 to 1,100 crossbreds, plus the 135 ewes in the pure flocks of Suffolk, Texel and Abertex.

Lambing date is now a month later so that peak grass growth coincides with peak lactation, ensuring excellent lamb growth rates and massively reducing reliance on concentrates. This year the majority of lambs were sold off grass, with only 70 fed a small amount of concentrate for two weeks and the final 30 fed for four weeks.

“The ability to finish lambs and rams off grass has cut the amount of concentrate they require by 90%, or 65 tonnes.”

Grazing efficiency is also key for the ewes, which are flushed and tupped on grass. Already ewe concentrate usage is down by 75%, equivalent to 90 tonnes, and Jim hopes that having made good silage and by adding a little soya before lambing in late April/May, he should be able to reduce his feed costs further.

All the pure-bred sheep are electronically tagged and recorded from birth, and the Abertex system – which records many female traits – should, Jim pointed out, result in a more productive ewe. The lambs’ performance is also monitored throughout the season.

Looking to the future, Jim can see an opportunity to sell more forage-reared rams. Traditionally Texels and Suffolks were sold at Kelso, but this autumn he sold his 75 rams either directly off the farm or at an Innovis sale, with 60 of them never having been fed any concentrates. Jim said: “The ability to finish lambs and rams off grass has cut the amount of concentrate they require by 90%, or 65 tonnes.”

Jim had dabbled in rotational grazing before he joined the Grazing Group, with some success, but he is now fully committed, with the task of erecting semi-permanent fencing and providing water supplies to paddocks ongoing.

There have been some teething problems, however, and Jim said: “We have seen trace element deficiencies this year. One possible explanation is that the fast-growing, lush grass has a lower concentration of them, but with the support of the Grazing Group, I have tested soil and forage, in addition to carrying out blood analysis to find a solution.”

The pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle enterprise has been replaced with a more commercial system, too, and two years ago Jim took the decision to use a Hereford bull over some cows and to stop producing

bull beef. He was delighted that the first rotationally grazed heifers and steers sold straight off the grass at 16 to 17 months at 570kg, having achieved an average daily gain at grass of 1.2kg. Finished weights after housing are around 590kg to 600kg.

This has led to significant feed savings on the cattle side, too. He said: “By the end of this financial year, I am hoping the reduction in bought-in feed for the cattle enterprise will be around 65%, equivalent to 90 tonnes.”

He continued: “Although I have taken massive amounts of variable costs out of the system, the fixed costs for the cattle are still too high, so the plan is to increase suckler cow numbers from 100 to 130 in order to spread these fixed costs.”

QMS’s Michael Blanche and Emily Grant have organised the Grazing Group meetings, and Jim said he has really appreciated the opportunity to speak with like-minded and innovative farmers as well as experts such as Trevor Cook and Murray Rohloff.

“I think the business has improved greatly as a result of hugely enhanced utilisation of grass and spending more time analysing our cost of production and getting that back under control. It is all about making the best use of the resources you have,” Jim concluded.+





# Sutherland Farm is Social Media Star

Social media, in particular Facebook, has had a huge impact on **Joyce Campbell's** farming business at Armadale in Sutherland, which was revealed as the **Scottish Sheep Farm of The Year** at Agriscot in November.

One of the judges of the competition, Richard Blake from sponsors Thorntons, said that what separated Armadale from the other three finalists was the way the farm was "showcased to a national and international audience by way of social media".

He also highlighted the "fantastic community engagement" and the "regular dialogue with multiple retailers resulting in the re-introduction of Scotch Lamb PGI on local shelves" achieved by the use of social media.

Joyce Campbell, who came home to run the family farm when she was just 20 years old, said it was the first time she had entered a competition and was thrilled to win, but what pleased her even more was the reaction from the local community at such an award coming to the area.



"We need to become better at telling our story of where and how food is produced, allowing the consumer to put a face and a story to the lamb products...."

The 5,600 acre farm runs from the beautiful beach at Armadale on the north coast of Scotland to about 800 feet above sea level and is exposed to the very worst that the Scottish climate can offer. It is stocked with 800 North Country Cheviot ewes, 250 ewe hoggs and 50 stock tups - along with 25 Salers and Salers x Simmental suckler cows.

Joyce's approach successfully combines traditional management techniques with modern ideas and practices to achieve the best results on the fragile peatland habitats and four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that form most of the hill ground at Armadale.

"We take grazing and forage management very seriously and consciously keep stock levels very low - currently 0.34 ewes per hectare, which is sustainable for the type of hill ground we have," said Joyce.





From left - Niece Frances Grant, Joyce Campbell and her husband Ian Macleay.



She compensates for the poor hill ground by making the most of the in-bye fields where the focus is on quality, young grass, with the cattle kept largely to complement the sheep enterprise and improve the grazing.

The policy of culling any ewes which have problems at lambing time with mothering, milk or feet has paid off, as Joyce is confident that only the best-performing ewes remain in the flock. She believes that this gives her a marketing edge for draft ewes, which regularly top the market at Lairg and this year set a new centre record of £172 per head for a pen of 102 five-year-old ewes.

Wether lambs and the ewe lambs not retained for breeding are sold at Lairg in August. Joyce said her aim is to sell lambs as she would like to buy them, so they are vaccinated, wormed and treated for ticks and trace elements to make sure they go on to thrive in their new homes. This year the 700 or so lambs sold at the first Lairg sale averaged nearly £64, with all the ewe lambs from the farm bought by breeders.

She has also had success selling tups, with around 20 to 25 sold under the Armadale prefix every autumn. This year at the main breed sale in Lairg her rams attained a top price of £7,500 and averaged £1,890. These tups are all used at home as shearlings and then sold as two shears.

This year she attracted a number of new buyers through profiling her tups on Facebook and Twitter.

Joyce's husband, Ian, is an auctioneer with Aberdeen and Northern Marts so when he is not around, she is helped on the farm by Billy Maclean, who is self-employed and a crofter in his own right, as well as her niece and nephew, 15-year-old twins Frances and Mure.

"I would never have believed that shifting a group of freshly weaned lambs would be of any interest, let alone receive 3.9 million views."

It was Frances and Mure who set Joyce up on Facebook two years ago, and no one is more surprised than her that she now has over 3,500 Facebook friends from all over the world. She posts nearly every day and, with the help of the young ones and their friend Stephen Forbes, who films from up above using his drone, she sets videos to music. "I would never have believed that shifting a group of freshly weaned lambs would be of any interest, let alone receive 3.9 million views," said Joyce.

The team at Armadale have become social media hits, filming and documenting the day-to-day events of a remote sheep farm, and Joyce believes that this form of interaction with the public is enabling people to connect with farming.

"We need to become better at telling our story of where and how food is produced, allowing the consumer to put a face and a story to the lamb products that they see daily in supermarkets shelves and butchers shops," Joyce commented.

As well as engaging with and encouraging members of the local community to get involved with the farm, Joyce and her team also work with the local high school at Bettyhill to support their rural skills programme.

She said: "We must be prepared to take the time to pass on all our experience and knowledge. After all, we are only custodians of the land for the next generation and we should try and leave it in as good heart as possible for them. What better way but to involve them, run with their ideas and let them see those ideas come to fruition for themselves."+



#### **Armadale Farm, Sutherland:** In numbers



Farmed by Joyce Campbell

5,600 acres

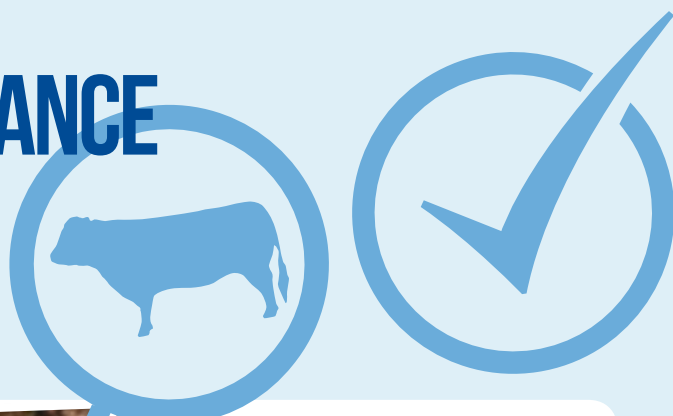
800 North Country Cheviot ewes

50 Stock tups

250 Ewe hogs

25 Salers x Simmental suckler cows

# VALUE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE HIGHLIGHTED BY EAST LoTHIAN FINISHER



**East Lothian cattle finisher Euan Smith plans to expand his cattle numbers in the coming year and is positive about the future of beef production in Scotland.**

## QMS VIDEO ▶

Designed with the user in mind, the benefits of SPECC are highlighted in a short video showing how East Lothian farmer

Euan Smith is using the cattle checker tool. The video also shows how Euan is using EID and regular weighing to ensure his cattle are performing well.

To view the video, just visit QMS's Facebook page or [www.qmscotland.co.uk/videolibrary](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/videolibrary)

**E**uan currently finishes 300–400 cattle each year at Cairndinnis, which is a 600 acre unit. The main crop grown on the farm is wheat, with winter and spring barley also grown and oilseed rape used as a break crop.

The farm is run by Euan, supported by staff member Murray MacDonald, and a new cattle shed on the unit is due for completion this year.

Store cattle are bought at around 12 months old weighing around 400 kgs. The cattle are sourced both privately and from local auction markets including UA Stirling and St Boswells.

Cairndinnis is a member of Quality Meat Scotland's quality assurance scheme and Euan views quality assurance as very important.

"Consumers want to know where their food comes from and they look for that Scotch label, which is renowned throughout the world."

Euan is finding the Scotch Potential Eligibility Cattle Checker (SPECC) a very useful tool. SPECC, recently launched by QMS, allows farmers, auction markets and abattoirs to check whether individual animals are potentially eligible for the Scotch brand.

"SPECC allows us to check that cattle we are buying from different holdings are potentially eligible to be sold using the Scotch label.

"When you buy an animal you don't know how many holdings it has been on, and the big advantage of SPECC is that it allows you to be confident the animal has been on Scotch assured farms its whole life."

"I've also downloaded the SPECC app onto my phone. This is very easy to use and handy for when you're out and about as it allows you to enter an animal's ear tag number; wherever you are, to check it is potentially eligible for the Scotch brand.

"Consumers want to know where their food comes from and they look for that Scotch label, which is renowned throughout the world."







The cattle are sold predominantly to Scotbeef at 680–700 kgs liveweight, aiming for 380kgs deadweight.

“Initially they go onto a growing ration which they are on until they are about 550kgs. At this stage, they are separated and go onto a finishing ration for the last 60–90 days.”

“As we are dosing cattle when they arrive on the farm, we put an electronic tag in their ears. This is a really valuable management tool which we use for routine weighing – it makes it very simple to run cattle through our handling system and weigh them,” said Euan.

“SPECC allows us to check that cattle we are buying from different holdings are potentially eligible to be sold using the Scotch label.”

“Our ration is based on wholecrop winter barley and about 600 tonnes of draff which is mixed in the pit with sugar beet pulp and, in some years, potatoes are added. We also grow our own feed barley, and we add pot ale syrup to make the ration more appetising and bind it together,” he said.

Cattle are weighed every four to six weeks to make sure they are thriving and check on feed efficiency. “This allows us to keep on top of all our costings and make sure the animal is running to its full potential. It also shows up any problems at an early stage, before we might otherwise detect them,” observed Euan.

Welfare is viewed as very important at Cairndinnis. “We walk through our animals every day, very often after they are fed in the morning, to make sure they are in good health and there are no problems. If we find any issues, we tackle them very quickly.”

“The farm has a long history of finishing cattle, and it is something I enjoy very much and take a great pride in.

“I’m very positive about the future of cattle finishing here at Cairndinnis. We are putting up a new shed and we hope to expand our numbers.

“However, there is always scope to do things better and we are constantly looking to improve what we are doing.”

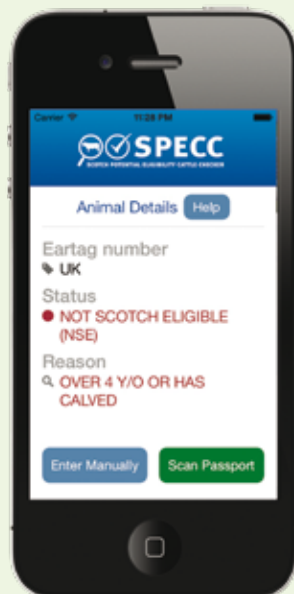
## SPECC CATTLE CHECKER - Simple, quick search tool

**The Scotch Potential Eligibility Cattle Checker (SPECC) is a new tool from Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) which allows farmers, auction markets and abattoirs to check whether individual animals are potentially eligible for the Scotch brand.**

SPECC, which is very easy to use and returns quick search results, makes it possible for farmers to view the status of all cattle which are currently registered on their holding(s). They can also check the status of any individual animal by manually entering the ear tag number or by scanning the short barcode at the top of the passport.

An unregistered user can also perform ear tag number searches. The following link: [www.scoteid.com/qms/specc](http://www.scoteid.com/qms/specc) takes you to the ScotEID website, where SPECC is hosted. For anyone not already registered with ScotEID, a simple two-step registration process is all that is needed to start using SPECC.

A SPECC app is also available, designed for when you’re out of the office, perhaps at the market and need to check the status of any animal. It allows the ear tag number to be scanned from the passport, using the mobile phone’s camera or, alternatively, the ear tag number can be manually entered.



Designed with the user in mind, the benefits of SPECC are highlighted in a short video showing how East Lothian farmer Euan Smith is using the cattle checker tool. The video also shows how Euan is using EID and regular weighing to ensure his cattle are performing well.

To view the video, just visit QMS’s Facebook page or [www.qmscotland.co.uk/videolibrary](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/videolibrary)

QMS reminds scheme members of the importance of notifying accurate and up to date CPH (holding) numbers, which are associated with your Cattle & Sheep assurance scheme membership. If they are not notified, the systems for checking Scotch PGI status will not be accurate and you might encounter problems when presenting livestock for sale. If CTS links are in place, no action is required. If no CTS links are in place, all relevant CPH numbers from which cattle movements are recorded, must be notified. Please notify any CPH updates to the farm assurance office, either by emailing [agriculture@acoura.com](mailto:agriculture@acoura.com) or by calling 0131 335 6602.

To find out more about SPECC and get started using the tool, simply visit [www.qmscotland.co.uk/specc](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/specc) or [www.scoteid.com/qms/specc](http://www.scoteid.com/qms/specc)



# Opportunities Ahead for Scottish Pig Industry

Scottish pig producers awaiting the increased processing facilities at Brechin welcomed the opportunity to hear more about the plans from the partners involved in Quality Pork Limited (QPL) at the recent Pig Industry Conference organised by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS).



**Q**PL is a collaborative business between Scottish pig farmers, marketing groups Scotlean and Scottish Pig Producers, and Tulip UK Ltd. QPL took over the Brechin site from AP Jess in 2014, and, with the help of a £10 million FPMC grant from the Scottish government, is significantly upgrading the existing facilities plus adding a new line.

Chairman of QPL Roderic Bruce said that the upgrade at Brechin is due for completion soon and would increase the capacity of the plant from its current weekly kill of 4,000 pigs to 8,000 pigs.

The aim is to provide a first-class abattoir for Scottish pig producers with high welfare standards including upgraded lairage and a state-of-the-art gas stunning system which reduces stress and, therefore, improves the meat quality. A rapid chill system for the carcasses has also been introduced which reduces drip loss and promotes eating quality.

Mark Houghton, supply chain manager for Tulip UK Ltd, said that he believes the new facility will help improve Scottish pig producers' margins, which in turn will lead to re-investment in their businesses.

He is keen to encourage heavier weights without penalty and said: "The average UK pig is 82.4kg deadweight. In Denmark and the Netherlands, it is nearly 94kg. More kg per pig would help producers' margins and would also allow us to compete better with producers elsewhere in Europe."

Both Roderic and Mark believe that the new facility would provide excellent marketing opportunities, particularly to engage retailers in the Specially Selected Pork brand and encourage them to sell Scottish pork to consumers in Scotland.

Mark said: "Scottish pork consumption is dropping; the UK spend is down 10% and that increases to 12% in Scotland. It is also considered an older person's meat."

Laurent Vernet, Head of Marketing with QMS, agreed consumption was down overall but said that Scottish-origin pork was maintaining its sales year-on-year thanks to the branding, which was very strong. He said: "Our consumer research indicates that the Specially Selected Pork brand is very much supported by younger Scottish consumers."



From left - Mark Houghton,  
Roderic Bruce,  
Prof. John Deen.





He outlined proposals to start working with the industry on a new promotional campaign behind the Specially Selected Pork brand. He said: "Our promotional campaigns, such as the one we have just run for lamb, are known to increase sales in Scotland, and we plan to do the same for pork in 2016/17 when production should have increased and levy income has become available."

The keynote speaker at Quality Meat Scotland's Scottish Pig Industry conference in November highlighted several opportunities ahead for the 90 or so Scottish pig producers who attended the event.

Professor John Deen from the University of Minnesota, USA, is a vet and an expert in epidemiology and economics within the pig industry.

He saw some real opportunities for Scottish pig farmers based on an island economy where commonality of resources and challenges, limited competition and a shared knowledge base are benefits which can be exploited. He urged farmers to understand the whole chain from birth to plate so they are in a position to adapt quickly to change.

He also pointed out that one of the biggest assets to the industry is the younger generation and said: "We should teach them well, but we can also learn from them."

"Pig quality is all about the challenges of getting a pig to slaughter point effectively and consistently," said Professor Deen. "In the past, that was all farmers had to worry about. Now they not only have to be concerned with disease and welfare, but also about the quality of pork to give consumers a good eating experience."

"Pig quality is all about the challenges of getting a pig to slaughter point effectively and consistently."

Professor Deen's presentation focused on quality in both marketing and manufacturing. He discussed the main objectives for successful pig production which apply regardless of state or country and include disease, cost and quality control.

He believes Scotland has an advantage over the USA in that the sector is small here in comparison and can change direction more quickly, taking advantage of changes in technology, production techniques and markets.

"Scottish producers have a good technical support structure through QMS which should enable them to address their challenges," he said. +

# BREAKING DOWN CARCASE USE

**When processors speak of carcass balance, what do they mean and how does this affect the price paid to producers?**

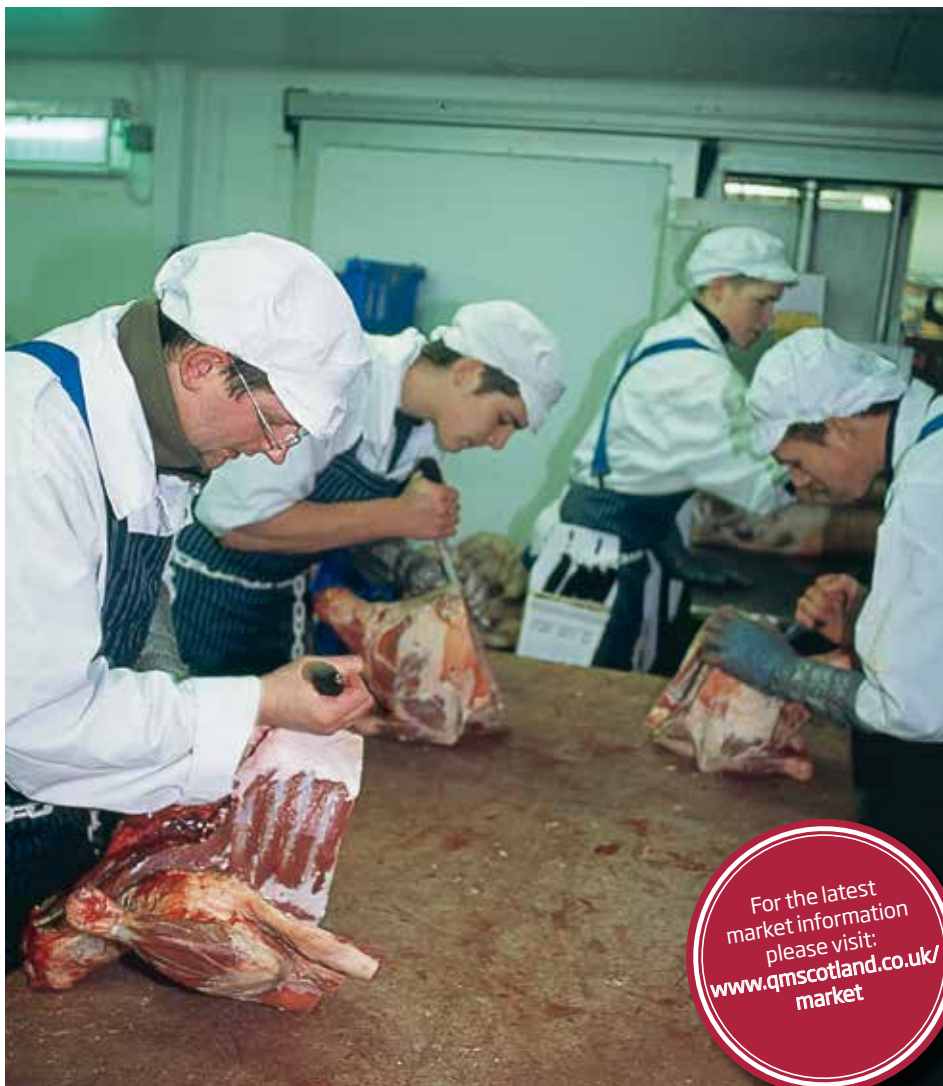
By **Stuart Ashworth**,  
QMS Head of Economics Services

**A**s the consumer market has developed over the decades, processors have moved from selling carcasses and half carcasses to quarters or, more likely, primal cuts.

Depending upon the marketplace, and reflecting the growth in supermarkets at the expense of butchers or indeed the growth in burger and ready meal demand, processors may go even further and wholesale boned-out cuts and diced and minced products. Consequently, they may find themselves selling pieces of meat from a single carcass to several customers.

Each of these customers may have slightly different protocols for what they require in terms of quality and product assurance. Clearly, of course, the whole carcass has to meet the requirements of the most demanding customers for the parts of that carcass. If it doesn't, the processor may not be able to maximise the value of that carcass.

One substantial example of this is the McDonald's restaurant chain. Their main burger supplier is on record as saying they require 40,000 tonnes of beef each year for the UK restaurant chain.



The most easily recognisable products derived from cattle and sheep are the hides and skins and the meat. These items have clearly recognised products whether that is a sheepskin rug, a pair of shoes, a leather jacket or a rump steak.

However, they only use forequarter and flank and, of course, it is boned out product.

A quick look at Kantar Worldpanel market research data also shows that UK consumer demand for prime beef and lamb cuts varies considerably through the year. Additionally, the largest single beef product bought out of shops is mince. In some cases this means abattoir cold stores filling with cuts of meat not seasonally in demand or, alternatively, having to devalue some of the cuts to meet market requirements – for example, by converting it into mince.

Export markets play an important part in helping to manage this seasonal variation in demand for cuts, by providing an outlet for product that would otherwise accumulate in chills.





Access to export markets is also important, as they may provide a higher value outlet for cuts not popular in the home market. Equally, though, imports can be important when there is not enough of a particular cut available locally. For example, there may simply not be enough domestic fresh/chilled lamb legs to supply the Easter trade but too many by mid-summer. Another influencing factor is that the type of product exported has changed. There is, however, a clear difference between exports of beef and sheepmeat, with the former increasingly concentrated on bone in or boneless cuts rather than carcasses. This is a reflection of the changing market demand and the use of exports to improve carcass balance.

There is also a stark contrast between sheepmeat exports and sheepmeat imports. While carcasses continue to play a significant part in sheepmeat exports, almost the entirety of sheepmeat imports come as cuts – either bone-in or boneless – meeting a specific buyer requirement.

#### So what does a carcass break down to?

The most easily recognisable products derived from cattle and sheep are the hides and skins and the meat. These items have clearly recognised products whether that is a sheepskin rug, a pair of shoes, a leather jacket or a rump steak.

The value of skins and hides is driven by their quality and the lack of cuts, scratches and insect bites. The value is driven even harder by exchange rates, as most of these products are exported in their raw state, and by demand.

There is no doubt the main value of the carcass is in the meat it produces. Nevertheless, typically a butcher will have less than 50% of a beef animal's liveweight to sell and, in some cases, it may be as low as 45% depending on how much boned out product he sells or fat trimming he has to do. He will have even less from a lamb carcass, with perhaps only 36% of liveweight available for sale.

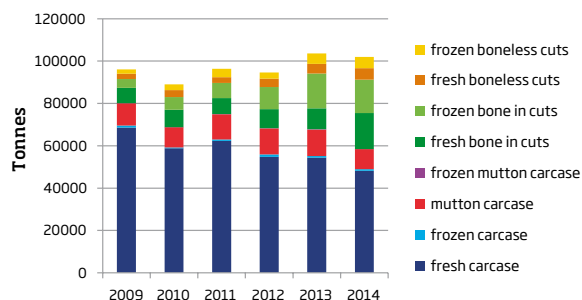
"...typically a butcher will have less than 50% of a beef animal's liveweight to sell".

In the retail sector, not all meat is of equal value. Beef mince, for example, may retail at two-thirds the price of a roasting joint, which may be half the price of a fillet steak. Half of what he sells may be mince, but initially more than half the carcass is suitable for higher value retail cuts. It is for this reason that many butchers choose to buy some or all their requirements from wholesale butchers rather than direct from a farmer as this allows them to buy the bits of the carcass they can sell, leaving the wholesaler with the challenge of selling the less popular cuts.

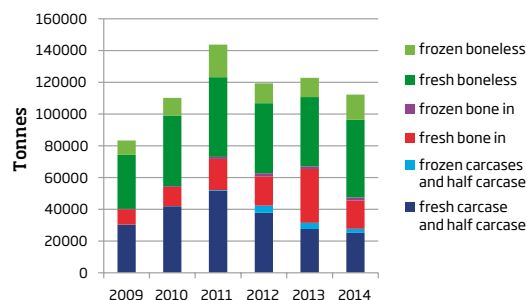
As new technologies become more capable of assessing the quantities of different cuts that can be drawn off a carcass then capacity will build to change the way in which producer prices are determined.+



#### Sheepmeat exports



#### Beef exports



**NADIS**

Animal Health Skills

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