

Livestock⁺

SUMMER 2020



Feeding the Nation





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The QMS technical podcast focuses on initiatives which can help Scottish Farmers improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of their business.



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Livestock⁺

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Welcome



Welcome to the summer 2020 edition of **Livestock⁺**, produced during some of the most challenging conditions most of us have ever experienced.

Everyone in the team is working remotely from home, which is very different from normal, but, like many other people in our industry, they've adapted, innovated and put in extra hours to make sure it's "business as usual", as much as possible.

The past five months or so have been like nothing most of the population have ever lived through before, but for me the early weeks felt a bit like those awful months in 2001 when we were all engulfed by the foot-and-mouth outbreak. There was huge uncertainty, a feeling of impending disaster and a real worry about what the future might hold. The timing was similar as well, with the following period of busy spring work making sure we were all physically, as well as mentally exhausted.

But, as in previous crises, the farming community has risen to the challenge, and we've all worked hard to keep the country supplied with our high-quality Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork. Consumers seem to have a new desire to learn about production methods and supply chains and are becoming increasingly confident in cooking from scratch at home with locally sourced ingredients.

Our new "Make It" campaign has responded to this change in direction, providing recipe inspiration and cooking hacks to encourage people to branch out and try some new, quick and easy meals made using our fantastic Scottish red meat. High street butchers have seen a significant increase in demand, and the QMS team has been working to help take advantage of the opportunity it has provided.

Keeping the supply chain open and moving has been a major achievement for which everyone involved in the red meat industry must take enormous credit for. Shelves have been kept stocked due to the hard work of farmers and crofters throughout Scotland, and I am proud that QMS has played its part in this success. Be assured that the whole team will continue this work as the whole country moves forward into this "new normal".+

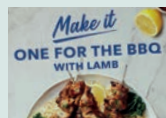
K.A. Rowell

Kate Rowell,
Chair, Quality Meat Scotland

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Chief Executive's Message



The global Coronavirus pandemic caused huge disruption to the Scottish economy, the food and drink sector and the red meat supply chain.

The introduction of lockdown by the UK and Scottish Governments led to the overnight closure of food service markets such as pubs and restaurants. This, combined with substantial restrictions on exports, meant that more than 20% of the red meat market closed overnight. In response to this, QMS had to move quickly to focus all efforts on keeping the Scottish red meat supply chain open.

We worked with industry partners to ensure that the Scottish red meat supply chain continued to operate. This included assisting in keeping auction marts open, ensuring employees within the sector were designated as key workers, helping with the extension of livestock hauliers' hours and assisting with the introduction of social distancing measures in processors.

We also had to re-align our marketing campaigns to promote higher-value cuts including steaks and roasts after demand plummeted in the wake of COVID-19 due to the loss of foodservice. To do this, we switched on dedicated advertising in Scotland and worked in partnership with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) to develop a joint 'Make It' marketing campaign across England, Scotland and Wales.

I'm delighted to report this activity has produced strong results, reaching millions of consumers across Scotland and the rest of Great Britain with delicious beef recipe inspiration.

The pandemic has made consumers more concerned than ever about where their

food is coming from and the buy local message is an important one. However, getting a fair return back to producers is a key element in this and the red meat industry must work together to achieve this - it's the only way the long-term future can be secured.

The team at QMS has developed strategic plans which outline how we will assist the Scottish red meat chain to reset and restart on our road to recovery and all parts of the supply chain have a vital role to play in this.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Livestock⁺, and please don't hesitate to contact me at any time if you have any concerns or questions about QMS and the work we are doing. +

Alan Clarke
Chief Executive,
Quality Meat Scotland

New-look Infographics Launched by QMS

QMS has launched a series of new infographics highlighting the Scottish red meat industry's positive credentials relating to animal welfare, sustainability and nutrition.

The infographics combine a colourful style with easily absorbed information about the production of red meat in Scotland, highlighting the priority the industry places on animal health and welfare and the great environmental role played by farmers.

With many consumers increasingly looking for information on where their food comes from, the infographics, combined with the hashtag #foodforthought, will communicate to consumers the all-important facts relating to the Scottish red meat industry, allowing them to choose Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork with confidence.

Lesley Cameron, Director of Marketing and Communications with QMS said: "We are delighted to share our new look infographics - it's vitally important that we continue to drive consumer awareness of the Scottish red meat industry's exceptional welfare and sustainability credentials.

"We will be posting the infographics on the QMS and Scotch Kitchen social channels and I would encourage everyone to get involved to play a part in sharing these assets, to spread these messages as far as possible." +



The infographics can also be downloaded via the QMS website www.qmscotland.co.uk

Make it WITH LAMB

The first phase of a GB-wide campaign encouraging consumers to 'Make it' with lamb launched in July.

Delivered by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC), it included video on demand, radio sponsorship and digital and social advertising as well as local news partnerships and reached over 75% of all adults (aged 15-64) in Britain.

The new campaign followed the extremely popular 'Make it Beef' campaign which focused on promoting steak and roasting cuts after demand plummeted in the wake of COVID-19 due to the loss of foodservice such as pubs and restaurants. Retail demand for premium beef cuts has increased in recent weeks and farmgate prices have stabilised.

Further phases of promotion are planned for later in the year, responding to evolving market and retail conditions as the UK emerges from lockdown and begins to fully reopen venues for eating out.

"We will respond as needed through engaging campaigns targeted at the most appropriate segments of the market."

Recipes featured in the first phase of advertising included quick and easy one-tray Lamb Chops with Feta, Lamb Wraps, Lamb & Tzatziki Pittas and BBQ-friendly Lamb Satay Skewers.



Throwing his support behind the campaign was TV presenter and chef John Torode, who helped share lamb's unique flavour, high quality and versatility with consumers.

A joint statement from the levy boards, said: "The 'Make It Lamb' campaign aimed to drive lamb sales across the country by providing consumers with a range of new simple, delicious lamb recipes as well as tips and ideas, perfect for family meals or summer BBQs.

"It's difficult to predict how demand will evolve in the second half of the year as we reach the peak production period for lamb in the UK. We will respond as needed through engaging campaigns targeted at the most appropriate segments of the market."

The campaign was funded from the £3.5 million fund of AHDB red meat levies ring-fenced for collaborative projects which is managed by the three GB meat levy bodies – QMS, AHDB and HCC.

The ring-fenced fund is an interim arrangement while a long-term solution is sought on the issue of levies being collected at point of slaughter in England for animals which have been reared in Scotland or Wales. +



If you are interested in sharing your passion and knowledge about red meat and want to get involved with supporting the national campaign contact info@qmscotland.co.uk.

The Value of Scotch

Q&A with Lesley Cameron

Director of Marketing & Communications, QMS.



How do you think consumer trends have changed since COVID-19?

Consumers have reverted to tradition and trusted brands. Red meat has become part of the weekly shop again. Younger consumers also traded into the red meat category driving sales of beef, pork and lamb. COVID-19 had a positive impact on butchers' trade, elevating them from fifth in the retailer rankings this time last year, to second behind some of the main retailers at the height of the pandemic.

Where previously it was the job undertaken by busy parents, lockdown cooking became a family occasion in many households, from BBQs and Sunday roasts, through to mid-week favourites.

Do you think local/homegrown and 'whole food' produce will continue to be keenly sought-after lockdown?

This is our goal. QMS is in the process of conducting consumer research that will evaluate the importance of local versus cheaper imports. We want to find out if price will be a driving factor of choice because we know we are running into a major recession. We also want to understand if there has been a perception change towards the consumption of red meat and if it will continue post COVID-19.

How did QMS maintain communication with other stakeholders during COVID-19?

The past few months have seen many members of the red meat supply chain pivot their operations to meet new, and different, demand so it was a priority for QMS to ensure that all stakeholders were supported to ensure continuation and most importantly feedback to the consumer and inspire them to choose locally produced Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork.

Now we are moving out of lockdown and adapting to the 'new normal', QMS' main objective is to continue strong communication with stakeholders in order to build a robust red meat industry.

How can farmers and stakeholders help the marketing and communications team promote Scotch produce?

Follow our Scotch Kitchen social channels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and share content. The support of the whole industry can make a huge difference to our work and will help drive consumer awareness of the Scottish red meat industry's exceptional credentials. +

"QMS is in the process of conducting consumer research that will evaluate the importance of local versus cheaper imports."



Farm Kid Diaries and Positive Podcasts

During lockdown, the team at QMS shared Scotland's cherished red meat sector to the wider public, since May the podcasts have been technical subjects aimed at producers.

For families struggling with home schooling, QMS' Farm Kid Diaries brought some fun lessons and important messaging about our nation's farms, while the QMS Podcast has delivered vital, timely insights to the farming and red meat trade.

The Farm Kid Diaries series has clocked up over 120,000 views and hears from Scottish farm children about their family farms, covering how they grow and rear their produce.

Logan Cameron, aged 9, from near Huntly sent in a series of highlight informative lessons in beef production, silage-making, farm recycling and arable cropping, and has included a plug for Scotch Beef PGI and 'local tatties' in one of his films. He says: "When I'm older, I want to farm and play Rugby for Scotland, and I want to be like Daddie Weir."

The appeal of the Farm Kid Diaries' videos was the variety of topics and the life observed through the eyes of the under-16s, connecting children to the land through social media.

Lesley Mason's son Fergus sent a video from their small holding in the Scottish Borders, she said, "Fergus was very keen to be involved in the farm kid diaries and it gave him something to focus on during lockdown. Despite living on a small holding, Fergus takes any opportunity he can to help our neighbours with larger units and learn the importance of our red meat industry."

"I think it's important to take any opportunity to engage with urban children and their parents, who often have no connection to farming, on how delicious and nutritious Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI are and how it is produced in Scotland."

"I think, as farmers, we must take every opportunity to engage urban children and their parents, who often have no connection to farming, on how delicious and nutritious Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI are and how it is produced in Scotland."

The weekly QMS podcast, started during the pandemic, is now in its second series. The 1,000+ podcast listeners have heard from QMS staff and interviewees including Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, Lanarkshire farmer, Michael Shannon and Neil Wilson, Executive Director at The Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland; all have highlighted the Scottish red meat industry's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Lesley Cameron, Director of Marketing and Communications at QMS said: "We launched the podcast series to communicate what the team has been working on behind the scenes to help continue to promote, support and protect the Scotch brands - Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork."

"It's also been vital for explaining how we have been working with the Scottish Government, and the whole of the meat trade - the marts, butchers and the retailers - to keep the trade flowing, despite the market challenges."

The number of podcast downloads and video views continue to increase weekly, highlighting the appeal that these digital insights have given into the Scottish red meat sector to all ages and interests. +

To listen to the podcast visit www.qmscotland.co.uk or search 'Quality Meat Scotland Podcast' on Buzzsprout, Spotify or Apple Podcasts.



Logan



Fergus



Ellie

Millie

Finding Common Ground

A chance meeting and a common goal to meet the collaborative and environmental expectations of consumers sparked a partnership between two farmers living nearly four hours apart.



Alex Brewster with his two children
Katherine (9) & Forbes (5)

On any ordinary day, you will probably find Alex Brewster examining cowpats and root depth on his farm, Rotmell, located in Highland Perthshire near Dunkeld. Describing himself as an environmentalist as well as a farmer, the farm is home to 700 ewes and 160 Aberdeen Angus cows plus heifers and 4,000 organic laying hens, as well as additional contract farming operations, which Alex runs with his wife and a young team. With a short grazing season, Rotmell is all categorised as a less favoured area (LFA), with around 40 hectares of improved pasture, 200 hectares of rough grazing and the rest hill.

+ Key Learnings

Costings: calculate the actual cost of grazing an animal each day/week/month. If you know how much you're feeding and how much they are consuming, it's a simple way to work out costs.

Have open honest conversations and find a common ground: Seek opportunities to connect, share knowledge and collaborate.

Understand what the consumer wants and adapt your enterprise to suit the end user: Your weakness might be another farmer's strength. Working together you can produce a product to suit the market.

More than 160 miles south of Alex, Robert Fleming, a former AgriScot Beef Farm of the Year winner, farms at Castle Sinniness near Glenluce. With a long grazing season, Robert runs 160 Angus sucklers, 50 pedigree Roussin sheep and has recently ventured into Saddleback X pigs with an additional 350 cattle on contract grazing over 240-hectares of grassland.

"We're very much in contrast," explains Robert. "Alex has a high, very dry hill and a long and hard winter, whereas, by the coast, we have a very mild season and grow a lot of grass, but it is expensive to put that good quality grass to use when housing a cow.

"Robert produces an awful lot of grass and the combination just seemed to make sense at 11.30pm, after a couple of beers! Over six months later we sent him down some steers and it went from there. Within a year he put cows up to me. It's joint venture and a relationship built on trust," said Alex.

In Perthshire, Alex manages Robert's cows along with his own through to calving. Alex then tags them, before sending both of their calves back down to Glenluce in November minus any retained breeding heifers, with the cows remaining on the hill at Rotmell.

These calves have a month of grazing in Glenluce before being wintered either inside due to weather or on brassicas, turnips, or spare bales. They are then turned back out to grass on 1st February.

Collaborations of this kind are not common. As Robert explains: "I've some experience in collaborative farming but for Alex this was his first time. From my side, the general perception is that it's complicated; that, maybe, you don't have enough control of your own livestock. I think farmers find it particularly difficult to broker the actual cost of grazing an animal. They're perfectly aware of the cost to buy a field if a neighbour was to put it up for sale, but have no idea what it is actually going to cost them if they were to contract graze an animal per day, per month, per week, so it is fear of the unknown.

"We work it out on kilograms of dry matter consumed, and through calculation of the weight of the animal, we know what the stock balance is. If you know how much you're feeding them, and how much they're consuming, it is a simple way to charge it out."

Both farmers stressed that it is not just the financial implications that need to be considered when entering such a partnership.

"We need more opportunities for farmers to connect, share knowledge and collaborate on a deeper level."



Robert Fleming from
Castle Sinniness, near Glenluce



L to R: Rory MacDonald of MacDonald Brothers Butchers,
Pitlochry & Aberfeldy, Alex Brewster & Munur Kara
of Dunkeld Butchers Shop



"You need to be able to have an open and honest conversation, an understanding of what you both need from the agreement to make it happen and, most importantly, you have to find common ground," says Robert. "Discuss what resources you can offer each other, whether it is management skills, access to better land or a big dry hill, and then find where the balance is."

Alex and Robert both agree that strong partnerships are built by an honest and practical understanding of your own business and by being open to alternative methods of production.

"Both of us know the strengths of our own systems and we understand our weaknesses," said Alex. "Robert and I both realise that, collectively, we are not in control of the national beef market - and we never will be. But together, we've been able to build a relationship with butcher shops, such as Macdonald Brothers in Pitlochry and MACDUFF Beef in Wishaw, with Andrew Duff assisting us with accessing higher-end butchers in London who want a product with a real difference."

Alex and Robert both have a common goal to try and improve the farms they have - not just the livestock. Both farmers are constantly working on their soils and climate impact to produce a product that they know the consumer wants.

"The story and business model that Robert and I are creating is about speaking to the consumers - speaking to the end user. We're utilising social media channels to do this and we're starting to get relatively good at it. Ultimately, I don't see the supermarket or the processor as my consumer - it's the person sitting down at the table eating red meat that I want to produce a great product for," explained Alex.

"We're building up a product to take to market - 100% grass-fed Angus Scotch Beef. Neither of us are all that interested in producing a fat stock show winner, but we are extremely interested in producing consistency in a product that the consumer fundamentally enjoys."

Both hope that more opportunities will become available to other farmers to connect and collaborate throughout the agricultural industry.

"We need more opportunities for farmers to connect, share knowledge and collaborate on a deeper level. It can be really hard to find someone 4.5 hours north of you to work with unless you're sitting beside them at a meal and it happens to come up in conversation," said Robert. 🌱

Farm Facts

Rotmell, near Dunkeld, Perthshire

Run by Alex Brewster and family

700 ewes and **160** Aberdeen Angus cows plus heifers and **4,000** organic laying hens

40 hectares of improved pasture, **200** hectares of rough grazing and the rest hill

Castle Sinniness, near Glenluce, Dumfries & Galloway

Farmed by Robert Fleming

160 Angus sucklers, **50** pedigree Roussin sheep and has recently ventured into Saddleback X pigs

350 cattle on contract grazing over **240** hectares of grassland

The Market Makers

Scottish livestock marts play a vital role for livestock producers – from price transparency and setting a value for livestock specification, to providing a social and networking base where farmers and industry representatives catch up, do business and understand market dynamics.

Since 1926 the Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland (IAAS) has had a long and proud history representing the interests of livestock markets, valuers and auctioneers across Scotland. However, this year they have faced their biggest challenge since the foot-and-mouth outbreak in 2001.

With the COVID-19 pandemic IAAS have faced a lot of changes over the last five months with auction markets across Scotland imposing strict restrictions to comply with the Government's rulings.

But, despite the challenges, Scotland's auction markets have continued to function and provide a service to their customers, albeit in a very different way, says IAAS Executive Director Neil Wilson.

Neil says, "Auction marts have been seen to be one of the favourites to stop live sales and close doors to the footfall of farmers and other industry representatives who visit, but COVID-19 has highlighted the professionalism within the auction markets, and the need for them to stay open."

"We know that a lot of farmers will be disappointed that they have had to drop their livestock and go home again, without seeing them sold, but on the whole, buyers and sellers have rallied behind us, and the marts have operated better than expected with the transparent livestock selling system that has been put in place."

During the pandemic, sellers have only been authorised to deliver their stock and leave, while buyers have had to register prior to any sale and maintain a safe social distance. Recent updates now allow one seller per consignment access to the sales ring to see their livestock sold.

Farm to farm trading has continued, with pedigree sales staged online or privately through auctioneers.

During the 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak, live markets were suspended and farmgate prices were set by processors; and the consequence was that price did not recover again until live markets resumed.

"Farmers have recognised the importance of marts. They saw what happened during foot-and-mouth disease, so they have been keen to sell and buy through the live ring, and our auctioneers have continued to do a fantastic job to make sure they get the best price possible," Neil adds.

+ Key Learnings

- Build relationships with other stakeholders within the industry and utilise the strengths and opportunities of those bodies.
- Value Scotch and Scotland's unique assurance scheme as it carries a premium and broadens market scope.
- Auction markets continue to lie deep within rural and farming communities with a big desire for live sales to resume in the normal fashion ASAP.

The restrictions are set to stay in place for quite some time, but the marts have shown strong leadership, which has been acknowledged by the Scottish Government and are now using some of the IAAS guidelines as a template to give other sectors the confidence to start making changes and get back into business."

Working Together

One of the main areas the IAAS has focused on is making sure there is common ground amongst their members and the activities and actions going on in the wider agricultural community.

"The IAAS members have a unique position in the chain and, I believe, we have the advantage of being able to have a voice on issues and policies that some other stakeholder bodies might not be able to. Our members are in constant communication with farmers and representatives within agriculture and we want to be able to help bridge the gaps and ensure vital information is getting across from farm right through to fork."



Neil Wilson, IAAS Executive Director

"Scotch always carries a premium and broadens the market scope for farmers – making stock appealing to more buyers and as a result, maximising the price."

Neil highlights that the auction system is also important in setting a value for specifications of cattle and sheep from all localities, stating that butchers have always been great supporters of auction marts and during COVID-19, marts have seen increased demand from these buyers.

"There is healthy competition and respect between these buyers and our levy payers have options on how to market their stock and we believe that the fairest and most transparent way to achieve the best value for stock is to market it through the live ring."

Looking ahead

As long as farmers and buyers wish to see the animal before they make a purchase, the live market system continues to provide a tried and tested way of gathering livestock for sale and arriving at a price in an open and transparent way on which the trade can be made.

During the last five months of the pandemic, local marts and the rest of the red meat chain, have had to adapt and ensure that the supply of quality produce destined for food outlets remain uninterrupted ensuring that cashflows to producers were maintained.

Neil continues: "Our IAAS members are proud to sell some of the best quality livestock in the world, produced to the highest welfare standards. Being members of the QMS assurance scheme enables us to play our part in the Scotch assured brand and helps to promote the whole of life assurance scheme that exists. Our markets also sell to buyers outside of Scotland and they also value our high assurance standards as part of their onward chain."

"I think our industry as a whole has responded to the pandemic in a professional and robust way. We have seen industry bodies, such as QMS take to social, providing Scotch recipes, educating the public with their Farm Kid Diaries and launching a podcast to keep the industry up to date on market trends, and how Scotch brands are being promoted."

"Scotch always carries a premium and broadens the market scope for farmers – making stock appealing to more buyers and as a result, maximising the price."

Moving towards the end of the year, weekly sales of prime and store stock will continue and, marts will also make every effort to conduct their annual breeding and store sheep sales, which will be followed immediately by their breeding cattle sales. In Scotland, the seasonal sales on the islands including Islay, Skye, Uist and Tiree are crucial for crofters and the IAAS are currently working closely with the government to establish a plan for the running of these sales.

"There is no confirmed procedure regarding these sales," comments Neil.

"The majority, if not all of the sales will go ahead, but they are not going to be like the good old days and will be held in a very different format to ensure public safety. We are working closely with the government on a weekly basis and the policy is changing each week. We have provided a lot of data and we are limited with what we can do, especially if the social distancing rule remains."

He adds; "To put the situation into perspective, United Auctions main ring would usually hold between 400-500 people, with the current social distancing measures in place, they are only allowed 59 people in the ring, so the challenges are there, and we need to be creative about how we tackle them."

But despite these challenges, the IAAS believes there will be some positive changes that will come from the current pandemic, with advances in technology being put in place in some auction marts, as well as the recognition that IAAS members have remained as key workers.

Neil concludes: "The foundations of the livestock market lie deep within the rural and farming communities and there is clearly a big desire to get people back into the marts as soon as we can. We will continue to work alongside the government and the red meat chain to ensure that this can be done in the quickest time possible, which is safe to both our customers and our members."✚

IAAS: At A Glance

200	26	2.7M
individual members	Quality Assured marts throughout Scotland	head of livestock sold in 2019
Total throughput of livestock in 2019 worth		£482M

Meat Processors Response to COVID-19 impact



Faced with the overnight loss of 25% of Scottish meat sales and a serious imbalance of demand for product across the rest of the red meat market, the country's meat processors and wholesalers remained determined and resilient towards both the economic and public health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the start of lockdown all restaurant and catering establishments were placed in total shutdown. The impact on the businesses which centred on supplying quality red meat into those sectors was initially devastating. However, a rapid switch to on-line and home delivery sales ensured businesses were able to survive the early market turmoil.

Businesses that service the retail supply chain also faced a daunting challenge as consumers had no option but to eat at home and cook for themselves. Demand for product became heavily focused on mince and diced beef, with higher value cuts being ignored. The loss of fifth quarter and export sales added further financial pressures.

Right from day one, however, processing plants maintained sufficient levels of throughput to ensure retail demand was met, even though social distancing measures meant plants were operating at significantly reduced capacity to accommodate safe spacing for their workforce. Plant operators also had to adjust production volumes to accommodate a reduction in staffing

levels, as some employees remained at home to care for children or vulnerable partners.

Close cooperation with other industry partners across the UK, including QMS, and an open channel of communication to Scottish Government ministers and their officials was crucial to maintaining output. Regular meetings were also held with officials at Food Standards Scotland to ensure emerging advice and changing regulations were clearly communicated to, and followed by, all plant operators.

With the country now beginning to emerge from lockdown the task of rebuilding sales and hopefully starting to clear produce held in chills, is underway. But it is far too early for anyone within the processing industry to drop their guard or relax their focus on the careful management of in-plant safety.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the industry is anywhere near to "business as usual", given that red meat processing facilities, which have required significant levels of investment over the years, are still operating at well below their most effective capacity.

The restoration of restaurant and catering sales is also going to be a slow process, driven as much by the return of public confidence as by the physical reopening of non-essential workplaces and eating outlets. Fifth quarter sales remain massively affected which leaves our members with continued carcase balance issues. The industry will not return to normal working and output levels until phase 4 of the lockdown is implemented and the economy at large returns to normal.

SAMW's members are upbeat, however, about what they have achieved so far, and optimistic about the future as each day brings a new opening and restored demand for product. One positive to come from this pandemic is that the food industry as a whole is witnessing a greater understanding and appreciation of local food by the consumer which bodes well for future demand and sales. That can only be a positive sign for high quality premium products like Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork.✚

Pelvic Scoring for Productivity

Difficult calvings bring layers of economic loss for beef farmers and genetics play an important part in calving ease. Pelvic size in cattle is a highly heritable trait and selecting heifers that have a larger pelvic area can rapidly reduce calving problems and the associated costs by £6.50 per cow in the herd.

While most farmers would expect the biggest, heaviest heifers to have the largest pelvic areas, these animals can in fact have smaller pelvises compared to smaller heifers in the herd.

"You could have the biggest heifer with the smallest pelvis, or, you could have the smallest heifer with the biggest pelvis," says Cattle Breeding Specialist Steven Rolfe.

Pelvic measuring is a simple process which can be carried out using pelvic scoring callipers or by a manual rectal inspection of the heifer to determine the shape, size and any abnormalities in the pelvis.

Steven adds: "I carry out pelvic measuring by a manual rectal inspection. I use the ultrasound scanner to check the ovaries and uterine track at the same time.

"A good pelvis will have a symmetrical opening, slightly smaller than a football, which allows for the foetus to move through the pelvic wall with minimal issues."

By carrying out the process, which costs approximately £3.50 per animal, farmers could save up to £6.50 per cow in the herd by eliminating the likelihood of a forced caesarean, highlights Robert Ramsay, Beef and Sheep Specialist at SAC Consulting, who has been carrying out trial work on the cost benefits to introducing pelvic measuring.

"Pelvic measuring is just one tool in the toolbox which can help improve calving ease. By using the tool and considering other factors such as the genetic merits of the heifer's mother, heifer body condition, nutrition, stockmanship, age and genetics, farmers can improve the overall breeding practices on-farm," says Robert.

In the last three years there has been a large increase in the number of farmers pelvic scoring heifers as part of their selection of breeding replacements, including recent host Monitor Farmers, Iain Green and daughter Laura Beattie who farm Corskie near Garmouth in Morayshire.

Excluding heifers with smaller pelvic sizes prior to breeding can help avoid traumatic deliveries, increased vet costs and, in severe cases, cow and/or calf mortality as well as the often-hidden interruption to cow fertility, ultimately improving the productivity and profitability of beef farms.

"Initially we pelvic measured a batch of commercial heifers as a trial during the Monitor Farm Programme to see if there was any correlation in pelvic size and ease of calving," says Iain, who has now made pelvic scoring in heifer replacements a regular management tool at Corskie.

During the trial 31 heifers were pelvic measured by vet Mark Pearson from Moray Coast Vet Group, approximately two months before bulling, at 15-18 months of age, and then put to same bull. The measurements were noted, and no heifers were removed from the batch based on their pelvic measurements.

Iain adds: "Most of the heifers were selected due, in part, to their reasonably large pelvic measurements, and, most of them, did very well at calving with only five of the 31 needing any assistance.

"However, there was one heifer in the mix with a particularly small pelvis who I left in because she just looked such a cracker, and unfortunately she was one of just two heifers who needed a caesarean. Her calf was a good size but not that large, the other caesarean heifer had a very large calf."

The trial proved successful at Corskie and has led to Iain and Laura now carrying out pelvic measuring on all the heifers selected as potential replacements.

Laura adds: "After carrying out the trial, we have found pelvic scoring to be a useful tool to eliminate heifers which are more likely to have problem calving.

"We now remove all heifers with small pelvic measurements from those initially selected for breeding and, instead, they are finished to slaughter on-farm. We hope that this will help decrease the number of difficult calving within the herd and amongst the first-time calvers." ✚



✚ Key Learnings

- Pelvic size in cattle is a highly heritable trait.
- Pelvic measuring is a simple process which can be carried out using pelvic scoring callipers or by a manual rectal inspection of the animal to determine the shape, size and any abnormalities in the pelvis.
- By carrying out the process, which costs approximately £3.50 per animal, farmers could save up to £6.50 per head during calving season.

Series 2, Episode 3 - Pelvic scoring improving efficiency of suckler cow systems

The podcast series is available through Apple Podcast, Buzzsprout, and Spotify, as well as via the Quality Meat Scotland website.



Integration & Technology: A Winning Combination

The attention to detail, sense of fun and passion for their beef finishing farm is apparent when you look at the Kingan family's Facebook page.

Keen ambassadors for producing quality Scotch Beef, the use of precision technology and the transparency of their production system, it is not surprising that they became AgriScot's Scotch Beef Farmers of the Year in 2019.

Farming in Dumfries & Galloway, Alistair and Suzi Kingan believe that feeding back information to the supply chain on how cattle have performed and how much profit they've delivered benefits everyone. They are keen advocates of supply chain integration and the use of technology to monitor and maximise performance.

"We feedback how much we've made, or lost, the animals' daily live weight gains and costs of production. People think we're nuts because we feedback everything," says Alistair Kingan.

Providing such an open book acts as a "bargaining tool", which, they say, makes it easier to justify a purchase price for store cattle, which they then take through to finish. It also encourages private sellers to produce an animal that suits requirements. Having accurate performance data is key to it all. By using cattle EID and farm management software, Alistair knows exactly how each animal has performed. This information is then communicated to producers so they can adjust management or breeding accordingly.

This line of communication continues up the supply chain with Alistair in close contact with Stoddart's who take his finished beasts. "I speak to Stoddart's once a week and talk about when they need cattle, do we need to send more or less and they feedback on the markets they're selling in to," he explains.

Consistency

The whole process is about producing an animal the market wants and being as efficient as possible to optimise any margins, even when markets are challenging. Open conversations with store producers mean that the quality of the cattle bought for finishing has improved. This, together with improving rations and including Maxammon treated barley has helped lower finishing times by two months.

Alistair explains: "The only thing we're in control of is what we buy them for and how long they're on farm, so we need to manage that."

The aim is to produce animals that meet requirements and are like "peas in a pod". This is achieved by buying well, batching animals carefully and adopting overall good animal husbandry and attention to detail.

"It's consistency from start to finish," Alistair says. "We batch in weights; less than 400kg, 400-450kg, 450-500kg and over 500kg. If they're over 500kg they stay in. If they're under 500kg they go out to grass in the spring and come back inside in June/July."

Cattle stay in the same group from housing until finish which minimises stress and avoids any growth setbacks. Animals are weighed five to six times a year allowing the team to forecast when animals will be ready for slaughter and work out whether it's cost effective to keep them longer or sell them.

Grassland management

The Kingan's end consumers are looking for cattle that are grass-fed, so the family work hard to maximise grassland performance. All of the farm is soil mapped to allow targeted fertiliser application.

"We do a lot of reseeded and keep plenty of grass in front of them. Everything is precision farmed and we apply variable rate P, K and lime. Grass is a crop for us," Alistair adds.

"The aim is to produce animals that meet requirements and are like 'peas in a pod'. This is achieved by buying well, batching animals carefully and adopting overall good animal husbandry and attention to detail."

In the future, the aim is to introduce rotational grazing to further increase grassland performance and stocking rates. Alistair and wife Suzi are particularly keen on being as self-sufficient in feed as possible; not only to help the farm's green credentials, but also to fit with growing consumer needs for traceability.

"Everything we feed we grow ourselves, apart from straw and a bit of barley. That's incredibly important," says Suzi. All grain is sourced from the same farms within 10 miles of the farm.

Being as self-sufficient as possible and having a firm handle on performance no doubt put this farm in good stead to face future challenges. However, like all of the sector, low beef prices put the business under pressure. For Alistair, this highlights the value of farm diversification.

He adds: "We've got the best team in place that are fighting for Kingan Farms. Our cattle are performing the best they ever have. The price is the main issue."+

+ Key Learnings

- Feeding back information to the supply chain on how cattle have performed and how much profit they've delivered benefits everyone.
- Consistency is key from start to finish - e.g. batching cattle based on weights and minimising change within groups to reduce stress and growth setbacks.
- Value the consumer's desire for grass-fed produce.



Image: Alistair and Suzi Kingan and Alistair's parents Margaret and Russell awarded AgriScot's Scotch Beef Farmers of the Year in 2019

Farm Facts

Kingan Farms, Lochhill Farm, New Abbey, Dumfries & Galloway.

Run by Alistair and Suzi Kingan and Alistair's parents Margaret and Russell.

1,180 acres - including 271 acres x 2 grass for silage, 467 acres of cereals.

Finish about **1,400** head of cattle annually.

Buy stock at **8-12** months and finish at **17-24** month.

Predominately Charolais and other continentals, plus Aberdeen Angus and some other native breeds.

Average carcase weight of **380kg**, grading Rs and Us.

Agricultural contracting business, two **200KW** biomass boilers, rental properties and holiday lets.

Performance Highlights

1kg/day - average daily live weight gain on grazed grass alone.

2.5 head/acre - up from 1.5-2 head/acre prior to regular reseeded and targeted fertiliser application.

55.75% killing out percentage (mostly steers).

2 months taken off finish time over last two years thanks to performance tracking and ration change.

Forage Focus Reaps Rewards

Managing a low input, forage-focused system that has recording at its heart is the name of the game for the AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farmer of the Year, Kevin Stewart.

Introducing Highlander genetics to his Kelso farm has proved a revelation for Kevin Stewart who is keen to extend the benefits to fellow farmers by producing breeding stock that will thrive on forage.

Since introducing the New Zealand composite breed around 12 years ago, Kevin has seen improvements in stock hardiness and lamb weights.

It also leads to a more enjoyable farming system. “We don’t lay a finger on them. They just get on with it and look after themselves,” he says. “It’s about having the correct breed for the farm and the Highlander suits our farm.

They’ve been bred to lamb outside in relatively harsh conditions. And sometimes we have lots of grass and sometimes not a lot and they respond well to the peaks and troughs.”

In recent years, Kevin has seen an uplift in demand from farmers looking to drive business efficiencies and sustainability by moving to a low input, forage focused system. It’s this market that he’s been keen to tap into.

Although the use of figures to make informed management decision has always been at the heart of the business, recently Kevin has taken this a step further by performance recording his top Highlander ewes, which lamb outside.

This is aided by EID, with lambs tagged within 24 hours of birth and any issues recorded on a handheld device in the field. This goes alongside the usual growth rate and back fat scan information. The aim is to use this information to select the best easy care, forage converting ewes to produce breeding rams for sale.

Kevin explains: “The sheep have to be able to reproduce successfully and go on to grow successfully on a range of forages and produce kilos at weaning. And be in a position to be marketed off forage relatively quickly.”

+ Key Learnings

- Performance recording and breed selection can help make informed management decisions to suit your system.
- Routinely weighing stock allows for accurate selection and improves overall efficiency.
- Creating a sustainable low input high output system will help cope with any challenges ahead (e.g. Brexit).



Farm Facts: Sharpitlaw Farm, Kelso

490ha.

1,450 ewes - mostly Highlander along with Aberblack, Abermax and Suffolk.

1,200 lambs finished every year and around 180 ram lambs sold as breeding tups.

Produce own Highlander replacements.

Lamb outside in April. Ewes housed by mid-January.

Prime lambs sold deadweight through Farmstock. Aiming for 19kg R3IL carcase. The business is a breeding partner with a breeding company whose aim is to supply forage reared rams.



Forage

The farm's management strategy hinges around forage. The aim is to avoid concentrate use and instead rely on managing quality grazing leys and producing top spec silage.

Prime lambs remain the mainstay of the business, with lambs finished on red clover aftermaths and perennial ryegrass, white clover, plantain and chicory mixes. Some lambs also move onto turnips which are grown on neighbouring arable farms. Ewes also rely on forage.

"We don't really use concentrates. We use a small amount of feed blocks as we house our ewes, and we feed blocks to smooth the move from inside to outside," Kevin explains. "Silage is the mainstay of our winter feed and we try and grow the best quality silage we can. It's one of the things that's helped us in the last few years, in

that ewes emerge fit and healthy and ready to lamb in peak condition."

Weighing

In recent years, Kevin has focused on improving ewe condition to help boost lamb survivability. The use of a Racewell handler weigh system and auto drafter allows ewes to be easily split into weight groups at weaning. They will then be managed according to body condition with leaner animals moving on to the best quality pasture. Weights will then be routinely checked, and ewes moved between groups where appropriate. This strategy has resulted in better, more consistent scanning results.

Kevin adds: "You can't change anything without monitoring. That's part of what gives you a buzz - if it's better than last year. And if it's worse - why?"

The weigh set-up also allows lamb growth rates to be routinely monitored which helps selection and overall efficiencies.

Kevin says: "We weigh them a lot because we can. And when we finish them, we monitor them fairly regularly and look at their daily live weight gains. If the daily live weight gain drops, we'll slaughter them and focus on the high performers."

Ultimately, the aim is to create a sustainable system that's able to cope with the challenges ahead, namely Brexit.

"We produce stock from forage. That's what we do. And we try and do it with as little cost as possible," he says. "The nature of the sheep we produce will help us face whatever we have to face."+

"We produce stock from forage. That's what we do. And we try and do it with as little cost as possible," he says. "The nature of the sheep we produce will help us face whatever we have to."

Performance Highlights

0.90 lamb survival - up from 0.73. This equates to 17 more live lambs per 100 scanned.

+8-10% increase in scanning percentage over four years: increasing from 180% to 194%

+25% more stock carried on grassland where rotational grazing has been implemented.

0 - a proportion of ewes will never receive a wormer drench in a year thanks to routine FEC.



Extra Guarantee of Provenance

The advantages of adding value to farm produce are well enough recognised now but they weren't when **Tom Mitchell** remodelled his pig enterprise back in 1997.

Pigs had been part of the business mix since 1905 but the Mitchell's reached a crossroads as the millennium loomed. Nobody who was farming then will easily forget the way a relentlessly strong UK currency sucked in imports and hampered exports.

Pigs, unsupported by subsidy then as they still are, took the brunt of the pain and many producers took the decision to either get out or increase numbers to reduce overheads per pig. Tom Mitchell and his sister, Camilla, took a different route and it is one which has served them well. They dramatically reduced sow numbers from 160 to 50 but decided to keep all the value in the business by butchering and curing as many finished pigs as they could.

By 1999 they had set up Puddledub Pork and Fifeshire Bacon Co and set about acquiring all the skills needed to become processors, food service providers and retailers. It was a considerable undertaking and not without risk. It has flourished over the intervening 21 years, to the extent that the Puddledub brand is well-recognised throughout the country and synonymous in consumer's minds with quality pork and bacon.



The Puddledub name is so appropriate that it sounds as if it has been dreamt up by a highly paid advertising agency but is in fact nothing more complicated than the name of the neighbouring hamlet. As a fourth-generation farmer, Tom is not only proud of his neighbourhood but understands the need to farm within its limitations.

"I seriously considered running some sows outside so that we could become free range but after the winter we have just had, our land rising steeply in places and imperfectly drained, we decided it is just not the right site for outdoor pigs. The arable land does, however, provide about 60 percent of our feed requirements.

"So, the herd's 100 sows and their progeny are all housed, some on straw and some on slats, in a range of buildings which has been developed over the years. "After years working across the business, my sister Camilla is now full-time in the pig unit. It would be hard to find anyone as devoted to high animal welfare and that shows. She has put a fantastic effort into improving performance and we are now achieving 27 pigs per sow."

The pig enterprise is producing around 45 finished pigs per week from hybrid Landrace/Large White sows put to a Duroc boar. The type has changed over the last two years, resulting in a backfat reduction of 2 millimetres. "The one thing we have not compromised on, however, is flavour. It is our real selling point and we have a good story to tell. New customers sometimes ask if our pigs are free range and organic. When I tell them they are neither and explain the good reasons why they are not, they are mostly convinced. The pigs are given the best life possible here," said Tom.



Puddledub also has its own butchers' shop on Kirkcaldy High St, run by Dave Gold



+ Key Learnings

- Selling produce with the "Specially Selected Pork" label helps add an extra guarantee of provenance.
- Identifying key markets and catering for their needs carefully will allow you to build strong brand recognition.
- Don't be afraid to acquire new skills, scale back your business and/or go down a new route.

One significant change is that since last year pigs are now produced under the Quality Meat Scotland Pig Assurance Scheme. Tom said: "There is an interesting story behind this. Back in the 1990s I was on the NFUS pig committee under Maitland Mackie. That was when the first quality assurance scheme for any type of livestock was developed and I was so keen on the idea that I signed up quickly and became member number eight.

"The problem was that under the protocols, castration of male pigs was not allowed and when we started marketing our own bacon, I was worried about boar taint and couldn't risk it. It meant we had to reluctantly leave the scheme although we kept to most of the protocols including regular vet visits."

The plan now is to introduce the "Specially Selected Pork" logo on to packaging as an extra guarantee of provenance.

Pigs are selected to produce an 81kg deadweight carcass. Around 30 each week are taken through to James Chapman's abattoir at Shotts in North Lanarkshire with carcasses brought back for cutting. The balance, around 30 finished pigs each fortnight, go to curer and processor Robertson's of Ardrossan, through marketing group Scotlean.

It is once the carcasses come back to the butchery, that the Puddledub business's added value strategy really comes into its own. In the early years the main avenue for sales was through farmers' markets which were in themselves a new phenomenon. This was where the Puddledub reputation for good service and flavoursome produce was consolidated and the Mitchells have, until the COVID-19 shutdown, attended nine markets from Forfar down to Glasgow Partick.



"After years working across the business, my sister Camilla is now full-time in the pig unit. It would be hard to find anyone as devoted to high animal welfare and that shows."

This often involves attending more than one market in a day posing a considerable logistical challenge in terms of staffing and vehicles. Tom said: "The farmers markets were good for us, but they have tailed off over the last few years. I am not sure how well they will come back after the present crisis is over."

In any event, the emphasis has now moved onto selling over permanent retail counters. The first move was to take on concession at Dobbie's at Duloch on the outskirts of Dunfermline. Tom describes this as an easy way to reach customers and he offers them not only pork and bacon but also beef and lamb.

Puddledub also has its own butchers shop on Kirkcaldy High St which is becoming ever busier, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. Along with most independent butchers in Scotland it has seen near unprecedented demand for meat from a trusted source.

There have been other sides to the pandemic though. Puddledub's food service business obviously stopped abruptly with lockdown as did its hog roast outside catering offer.

There have been compensations though with on-line ordering and home deliveries taking off. Speaking in the first week in June, Tom said: "I had actually been considering whether the online shop was worth it but it was crazily busy over the 10 weeks of lockdown. We had to take on an extra three part-time staff to help with packaging. Some of the customers will have been people who we would have seen at farmers markets, but many have just been searching the internet.

"Our home delivery service throughout Fife was also very busy and we refined it every week to match demand. It will be interesting to see whether demand holds up once we are back to normal," he added.

"Normal" is of course still good and keeps around 20 people in employment. This includes Tom's wife Claire a retired physiotherapist, his sister Camilla, five full-time butchers at the farm, two full-time butchers and three part-time assistants in the Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy shops, a team of packers and van drivers and not least those working in the pig unit.

Tom and Claire's son Pete meanwhile has his own "Farmer's Son" food business in Glenrothes.

The Puddledub story is an inspirational one of a family identifying markets and then serving them carefully. All told it would be hard to beat the Mitchell's record of adding value to the progeny of a 100-sow herd. +

Second Year Success

The second year of a campaign by the British levy bodies has succeeded in reaching 17 million people, helping to bring a more balanced perspective to public discussion around the health properties of red meat.

The collective initiative funded by QMS, AHDB and HCC, has undertaken a range of activity over the last 12 months to help counter misinformation in the media on the role of red meat in the diet, providing reassurance and evidence-based information to consumers regarding the important health benefits beef, lamb and pork provide.

A notable highlight was the programme's consumer social media campaign, which saw reality TV star and entrepreneur Spencer Matthews cooking up wholesome, balanced meals for his three-quarters-of-a-million Instagram followers, while commenting on the health credentials of the beef, lamb

and pork used in the dishes he prepared. Spencer's lamb and pesto pizza, mini beef tacos and Thai green

pork medallion curry recipe videos inspired an audience of 3.3 million online users, and were seen over 5.2 million times.

The campaign's positive messaging continued to reach large social media audiences with its Blue Monday influencer programme, reminding followers that beef, lamb and pork naturally contain essential minerals and vitamins such as iron, vitamin B12, B6, niacin (B3), riboflavin (B2) and pantothenic acid (B5), all of which can help reduce tiredness and fatigue. Well-respected media medics, including Love Island's Dr Alex George and nutritionist Dr Priya Tew, took to Instagram to inform their 1.7 million combined followers about these tiredness-busting properties, with their content viewed over 510k times.

QMS, AHDB and HCC have also continued to collaborate successfully with micro-influencers, working with BritMums to reach smaller but even more engaged social audiences - specifically mothers of children and teens - to promote healthy recipes featuring beef, lamb or pork.

The content has reached over 1 million online users across Facebook, Instagram and blog sites, with 98% of engaged users agreeing they would be likely to try the recipes at home as a result of the posts.



The programme also launched the Food Advisory Board this year, a panel of leading experts in nutrition, agriculture and environmental science, drawing on their industry-leading expertise in order to support the promotion of a balanced diet. 🌱



Dr Priya Tew



Dr Alex George

INFORMED 1.7 MILLION COMBINED FOLLOWERS ABOUT THE TIREDNESS-BUSTING PROPERTIES OF RED MEAT WITH THEIR CONTENT VIEWED OVER 510K TIMES

Health Related Promotional activity funded by the red meat levy bodies



Reached over
17 million
people



Strategy Shake-Up and Rebrand for Scotch Butchers Club

The Scotch Butchers Club is set to undergo several changes later this year, including a whole rebrand, following an internal strategic review.

The butcher industry quality assurance scheme is led by QMS, who have been working hard behind the scenes to develop a suite of brand new benefits for members.

Scotch Butchers Club members undergo regular audits to ensure that the meat being prepared is sourced from trusted Scottish farms that follow the highest quality production and animal welfare standards.

In return, they are registered to use the three QMS brands on their meat – Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially Selected Pork – which reassure customers that the products they are buying are of the utmost quality.

Some other current Scotch Butchers Club membership benefits include a membership certificate and vinyl, four bespoke butcher campaign point of sale packs per year, a monthly newsletter, access to consumer research and sales data and a listing on The Scotch Kitchen website.

The new changes to the Club will position butchers as the ‘Champions of Scotch’ promoting their skill, craftsmanship and knowledge to consumers via new social media channels and website.

To achieve this the Club will benefit from a whole new look and it will offer members a host of new and enhanced benefits, including:

- Brand guidelines providing instructions on brand usage for members
- A new, dedicated website where members can access promotional material, photography, research and insights
- ‘Meat Club’ webinars with guest speakers and practical demos
- A knowledge transfer mentoring programme
- Future of Meat quarterly global insights
- A virtual master butcher competition
- Dedicated recipe and inspiration hub and literature including guides to cuts and cooking instructions
- Improved social media presence including butchers ‘how to’ videos and industry Facebook and WhatsApp groups

Butchers can enjoy all of this and more by applying to join the Scotch Butchers Club for £75per year or, alternatively, they can apply to join QMS’s brands licensing scheme which will allow them to use the Scotch brand logos in store.

Gordon Newlands, Quality Meat Scotland’s Brands Development Manager, said: “In recent months many of our Scotch Butchers Club members have been working harder than ever, offering deliveries and collections to help keep our nation fed during lockdown.

“We hope that the changes to the Club help demonstrate just how valued butchers are, they really are the champions of our Scotch brands, working hard to tirelessly provide customers with high quality Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork as well as sharing cooking advice and recipe ideas. The Clubs new offering will ensure butchers across Scotland have all the support they require to continue playing a key role in their local communities as well as all the information and knowledge required to supply the best quality Scotch red meat.

We also look forward to a close working relationship with Scottish Craft Butchers as we provide our complimentary services to butchers throughout Scotland. We are confident that the exciting changes, which come into effect later this year, will be welcomed.”+



For more information on Scotch Beef
Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork,
or to find out more about the Scotch
Butchers Club, visit www.scotchkitchen.com

VIRTUAL Highland 2020



 **12 VIDEOS**
OVER 130K VIEWS



**Winners of Young Farmer's
Cook Off competition**

227 VOTES Murray
and
Penny Stephen



**OVER 70
PEOPLE**



**SUBMITTED THEIR ANSWERS
TO THE ROYAL HIGHLAND
SHOW QUIZ**

**INDUSTRY
ADDRESS**



From **Alan Clarke**, QMS Chief Executive and **Kate Rowell**, QMS Chair,
Roseanna Cunningham MSP
Q&A with **Fergus Ewing MSP**



qmscotland.co.uk



Exploring the Red Meat Journey

Due to Scottish pupils not attending school since mid-March due to COVID-19, the QMS Health and Education team's work has drastically changed.

Throughout the Summer term Alix Ritchie and Jennifer Robertson, both Health and Education Managers with QMS, would regularly be found either in a classroom delivering a cookery demonstration or at an education event such as one of the Royal Highland Education Trust's (RHET) Food and Farming days.



However, the pandemic has allowed the team to change focus and commission an education toolkit - a digital learning resource called 'Farming Foodsteps' which will allow teachers, pupils and parents to explore the Scottish red meat supply chain using a suite of digital resources.

The teaching resource will provide teachers with lesson plans, interactive games, discussion topics, videos and worksheets to assist with factual delivery of the topics.



The resource is split into different lessons - livestock farming, product, sustainability and the environment, health and cooking - and takes a sequential approach to allow pupils to learn about the journey the meat makes from farm to fork.

The new resource will be launched when schools return in August 2020 and, in the meantime, anyone looking for education resources connected to food and farming should visit to the new RHET Education Portal which has an abundance of resources, including QMS's current provision. +

Would You like to be a Red Meat Educator?

The QMS Health and Education team are looking for ambassadors with a background in farming, butchery, cooking and more, to bolster their network of red meat educators.

If you would be interested in sharing your passion and knowledge about red meat production to pupils and members of the public, please contact: education@qmscotland.co.uk for more information.

www.rhet.org.uk/teachers/resource-portal/

Final Word From the Chair

As we progress through the latter phases out of lockdown, and things start to feel a bit more familiar, work will continue on farms across Scotland this summer, as it always does.

As we all know, farming is a long-term business and one well used to facing obstacles and overcoming challenges. Here at QMS we are working with all our partners across the industry to make sure lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis lead to a successful restart and recovery for the red meat sector.

Brexit also remains a concern, and the team are working hard to keep everyone involved up to date with potential changes to import and export regulations, tariff and non-tariff barriers, and the possible complexity of life outside the EU.

Our Industry Development activities have continued virtually throughout lockdown, but everyone is looking forward to the time when we can all meet up on farm and share experiences in person. The lack of social interaction is, I'm sure, affecting us all, and the team are ready to get meetings up and running as soon as it is safe to do so. Trade Shows and inward missions for potential overseas customers were a growing part of our work pre COVID-19, and we will begin working hard to regain these markets at the first possible opportunity.

The importance of informing consumers about the health benefits of red meat, and educating everyone, especially children, about our sustainable production systems has never been more important. Social media activity has been vital over the lockdown period, but we will be back into schools as quickly as possible.

The QMS Quality Assurance Schemes have continued, with virtual audits ensuring we can stand behind the integrity of our production systems.

By working together, I have every confidence that the red meat industry in Scotland will emerge from this crisis stronger and more resilient. Thank you for your invaluable contribution and take care. +



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Scotch Lamb Leg Steak Satay Skewers

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