

Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI

Sustainability Key Facts

Economic Sustainability

Did you know?

Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb were among the first European red meat products to be granted the coveted PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) status in recognition of their quality standards and unique regional taste.



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- **ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION** Scottish red meat (beef, lamb and pork) production contributed more than £2 billion to Scotland's economy in 2011 with beef production the single biggest contributor to Scottish farm output. (Source: Scottish Red Meat Profile 2012).
- **PIONEERING ASSURANCE SCHEMES** Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb are underpinned by six assurance schemes ensuring the highest welfare standards. Crucially these cover the entire lifespan of the animals from birth to slaughter. Under the schemes each farm is inspected annually and every abattoir three times a year. Over 90% of farmers and abattoirs in Scotland are members of the schemes, along with representatives from other parts of the industry including hauliers and auctioneers.
- **BRAND PREMIUM** The producers of Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI benefit from a market premium in recognition of the quality of the products and their PGI protected status. This premium helps to secure the economic sustainability of the sector along with the larger herd sizes found in Scotland compared with elsewhere in Europe.
- **RISING TO THE CHALLENGE** This premium also helps to compensate for the geographical challenges faced by Scottish producers. Due to its northern location Scotland has less sunlight than other regions. Scotland had 12% fewer hours of sunshine than the UK average in 2012 and 22% fewer than in the south of England (Source: Met Office). As a result production can be slower than in other parts of the European Union and therefore more expensive.



Key Facts



Environmental Sustainability

Did you know?

In Scotland the water sheep and cattle drink is not diverted from human use. The ample supply of rain creates a lush grassland which is ideal for the natural production of livestock.

- **ENCOURAGING BIODIVERSITY** Livestock production plays an important part in sustaining the diverse landscape for which Scotland is famed. Scotland's hill livestock farmers typically farm both cattle and sheep, a mixed grazing system which benefits landscape biodiversity. (Source: Scottish Natural Heritage).
- **BEEF BREEDS** A typical system of extensive beef production involves suckler cows (beef breeds farmed to produce beef rather than milk) farmed on low input grassland. This type of farming is critical to the maintenance of many hill and upland habitats.

- **EXTENSIVE GRASS-BASED SYSTEMS** Scotland's livestock production systems are based on free ranging livestock grazing at low stocking densities and eating grass and forage from land generally unsuitable for growing alternative food sources. This largely avoids the diversion of protein, suitable for human consumption, into the production of livestock. Permanent grass and rough grazing account for 71% of Scottish agricultural area (source: Scottish Government).
- **ABUNDANT WATER SUPPLY** In Scotland the water sheep and cattle drink is provided through natural rainfall. In Scotland the average rainfall is 1602.6mm (Source: Scottish Government from Met Office data 2012) compared with England at 1129.2 mm (Source: Met Office 2012) and West Scotland at 1910.7mm (Met Office 2012).
- **REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS** Through restructuring and farm efficiency improvements the Scottish red meat industry has succeeded in reducing its carbon emissions and waste. Carbon emissions in Scotland for agriculture and related land use reduced by 27% between 1990 and 2010 (Source: National Atmospheric Emission Inventory). The industry, supported by Quality Meat Scotland, continues to strive to further improve efficiency and reduce waste.
- **GRASSLAND'S ROLE IN CARBON CAPTURE** Hill and upland farms in Scotland play a substantial role in improving the environment through the removal of CO2 from the atmosphere. This capturing and storing of carbon is known as sequestration (Source: QMS R&D Report 2011/12).
- **WELFARE IS A PRIORITY** The industry works very closely with the Scottish SPCA (Scotland's animal welfare charity). Scottish SPCA inspectors regularly visit our farms and animal health is also a priority in Scottish livestock production.

Social Sustainability

Did you know?

80% of people working on Scottish farms are the business owners and their families (excluding casual and seasonal employees).

- **SOCIAL HERITAGE** Livestock production has played a key role in Scotland's social heritage for centuries. Cattle and sheep farming remains at the heart of rural communities throughout the country.
- **FARMING FAMILIES** Scottish livestock farms typically remain in the same family, for generations allowing farming skills to be passed down by family members. This includes invaluable knowledge of the terrain and conditions as well as animal care skills.
- **SUSTAINING JOBS** Around 50,000 Scottish jobs depend on the Scottish red meat industry. Many of these jobs sustain employment in fragile rural communities (Source: Scottish Red Meat Industry Profile 2012).
- **POPULATION** The population density in Scotland is low (estimated at 67 people/sq.km) in comparison to other European nations (eg 358.7 people/sq.km in Belgium) allowing ample space for extensive production. In some parts of rural Scotland (eg Caithness & Sutherland and Ross & Cromarty) population falls to 7.1 people/sq.km (Source: Eurostat).
- **UNDERSTANDING** Quality Meat Scotland works closely with the Royal Highland Education Trust to encourage better understanding by the general public of livestock farming and beef and lamb production. QMS has also been running a "Get Behind the Label" campaign to encourage consumers to better understand farming and what the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb labels stand for www.getbehindthelabel.com.