



## **Animal Welfare and Wellbeing Charter Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)**

QMS is a Scottish Public Body with an overall strategy to support the development of a sustainable, professional, resilient and profitable Scottish red meat industry. Animal Welfare and Wellbeing are important factors in this strategy and the guiding principles in this Animal Welfare and Wellbeing Charter are embedded in all QMS Quality Assurance Schemes and activities.

QMS recognises the Scottish SPCA as its leading partner in matters relating to Animal Welfare and Wellbeing and this collaboration underlines our commitment to transparency and independence.



**The guiding principles of this Animal Welfare and Wellbeing Charter are as follows:**

### **Encouraging good Animal Welfare and Wellbeing practices**

95% of all animal incidents the Scottish SPCA deals with on-farm have come about through ignorance rather than deliberate malice. It is therefore essential to encourage good Animal Welfare and Wellbeing practices to prevent future cruelty to animals. This is why QMS Quality Assurance Schemes and activities must always promote good Animal Welfare and Wellbeing practices at all stages of production

### **Collaborative approach with no conflict of interest**

Animal Welfare and Wellbeing are a non-negotiable part of QMS Quality Assurance Schemes and activities. The independence and integrity of animal welfare charities collaborating with QMS should not be compromised by the need for a financial contribution from the industry.

### **Practical approach to Animal Welfare and Wellbeing**

QMS recognises that assessing Animal Welfare and Wellbeing is not a tick box exercise and must focus on management regimes, stockmanship and animal behaviour. QMS welcomes the fact that many Scottish SPCA inspectors have farming backgrounds and have undergone thorough training so fully understand the issues facing the farming industry.

### **No pointless duplication or replication**

There is no need to create a new specific Quality Scheme relating to Animal Welfare and Wellbeing, as these are already underpinning principles in existing QMS Quality Assurance Schemes. Rather than duplicate sets of standards, QMS believes in a collaborative approach to providing input into codes of practice for the management of Quality Assured cattle, sheep and pigs.

QMS is committed to reviewing its standards regularly to optimise Animal Welfare and Wellbeing and to collaborating with the Scottish SPCA to develop a practical and meaningful partnership agreement. Scottish SPCA representatives are invited to sit on its Standards Setting Committees and are therefore able to comment and propose amendments which will improve Animal Welfare and Wellbeing for the livestock covered by QMS Quality Assurance Schemes. QMS assessors work in partnership with Scottish SPCA inspectors where and whenever possible and practical.



## Commitments within QMS Quality Assurance schemes

QMS endorses the Scottish SPCA's desire to see healthy and well cared for animals and a commitment to Animal Welfare and Wellbeing operates at all stages of QMS whole chain assurance on a 'whole of life' basis. QMS is committed to ensuring that all farmed cattle, sheep and pigs in its Quality Assurance Schemes have the best possible quality of life and that handling of these animals in the live supply chain is based on the principles of "the Five Freedoms" at all times.

## The Five Freedoms

QMS recognises the following five freedoms as the very minimum principles on which Animal Welfare and Wellbeing should be based:

- **Freedom from hunger and malnutrition**
- **Freedom from discomfort**
- **Freedom from pain, injury or disease**
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour**
- **Freedom from fear and distress**

Animal welfare relates to the physical needs of animals and animal wellbeing relates to their feelings and attitudes such as fear and distress. QMS recognises that animal wellbeing is as important as animal welfare.

## Further information:

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