

## Meating Our Potential

### Harnessing the Full Value of Scotland's Sheep Sector

#### What is Meating Our Potential?

'Meating Our Potential' is a national partnership campaign between Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and the Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group (SRMRG) to support the growth of Scotland's livestock numbers and strengthen our domestic food system to fill the widening supply gap.

The ambition is clear – to amplify the value of the sheep sector to Scotland's economy and the rural communities at its heart, with more than 10,000 farms keeping sheep across Scotland, the equivalent of over half of all Scottish farms.



The campaign has already been met with strong support from policy makers to producers and now we need a reinforced vote of confidence from across the Scottish red meat sector to meet future UK demand, capitalise on export and economic opportunities, and strengthen our rural communities.

#### Why now?

Since 2024, the domestic UK market has been showing signs of major positive demand-shock for sheep meat, driven by a growing population, demographic change and consumer preferences toward healthier protein.

This presents a clear economic opportunity for Scotland's sheep sector:

- Add 4,300 tonnes of lamb to meet demand – 186,400 ewes at current lambing rates
- This growth could inject £77 million of output and £21 million of GVA into Scotland's economy
- As the European sheep flock falls and lamb production in England weakens, domestic and export opportunities strengthen
- Exports account for 39% of Scottish abattoir production of lamb – reaching a record high of over £60m in 2024/25

Rural communities are the beating heart of the sheep sector, underpinning its economic resilience and social fabric:

- Sheep farmers and crofters contribute to rural cohesion through year-round residence, participation in community life and the informal provision of services like emergency response
- Nearly 90% of sheep were in Less Favoured Areas in June 2025, proving just how crucial sheep farming is to more remote disadvantaged communities
- Such contributions help to counter the 'hollowing out' of rural communities, to keep rural schools, businesses and tourism activities thriving
- Sheep maintain biodiversity; reducing wildfire and flooding risk and supporting carbon sequestration through natural land management and livestock grazing

## Who is it for?

- Politicians and decision makers – to reaffirm commitments in relation to livestock numbers, strengthen and support the industry through policy
- Processors and retailers – to process more at home as well as sustain a high-quality local product to consumers
- Consumers – to continue recognising Scottish red meat as a nutritious product and back local producers

## Where can you learn more?

- **The Meating Our Potential Industry Hub:** Your go-to webpage for evidence, toolkits, support, practical resources and updates.  
**Scan the QR code to access it**
- **Campaign Videos and Insights:** Hear from producers, experts and industry leaders



## Get Involved

Whether you're a policymaker, producer, processor, retailer or advisor – we need your voice.

- ✓ Use the hub and explore the support available
- ✓ Attend key industry events and contribute to the conversation
- ✓ Talk to QMS and partners about what you need
- ✓ Share your story and spread the word



Use the hashtag #MeatingOurPotential on social media and follow @qmscotland

## Summary

The sheep sector remains a pervasive feature of rural Scotland, and with a reinforced vote of confidence from industry leaders and policy makers, the sector could capitalise on the economic opportunities present.

Doing so will ensure profitable and sustainable food production and in turn, deliver lasting value to the economy, environment and rural communities.

Together, we can Meat Our Potential

