

Meating Our Potential 2026

Harnessing the Full Value of Scotland's Red Meat 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 red meat sector to Scotland's economy and the rural communities at its heart. Such ambition comes at ripe timing – as consumers in Scotland and overseas have unwavering appetite for Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Prime Scottish Pork.

Originally launched in 2025, the campaign has already been met with strong support. It reached over 5m+ through media activity, received commitment from Scottish Government officials to not introduce policy to reduce livestock numbers, and secured 30 signatures from politicians, policymakers and industry on our pledge to feed our growing nation with locally produced, sustainable red meat. Now we need a reinforced vote of confidence in the red meat sector to meet future UK demand, capitalise on export and economic opportunities, and cement its vitality to Scottish society.

Why now?

Around £350 million in output and around £100 million of GVA could be injected into the Scottish economy by 2032 from the sheep and beef sector if the national herd and flock see supported growth.

This growth opportunity reflects falling UK cattle and sheep numbers combined with firm demand, driven by population growth and demographic change, which is set to raise the UK net import requirement by 2032. Allowing this to happen would offshore economic activity and jobs, and any associated emissions.

There's a significant economic opportunity for Scotland's red meat sector, which is currently worth £3.5bn in output and more than £1bn in GVA to the Scottish economy (2024):

- Red meat exports reached a record of £173 million in 2024/25, representing a 26% increase on the previous year, with volume up 10%
- Scotland's processing capacity is operating at around 75% – we have room to grow
- Consumer support for local - eight out of 10 Scots say they want supermarkets to prioritise stocking Scottish red meat over imported alternatives
- Seven out of 10 say they would be concerned if imported red meat became significantly more common on Scottish supermarket shelves (CensusWide, 2026)

The red meat sector is vital to Scotland's economy, environment, workforce, national diet and the social fabric of rural communities:

- Through grazing, Scottish livestock are natural land managers – maintaining biodiversity, reducing wildfire and flooding risk and supporting carbon sequestration.
- The red meat sector is integral to Scotland's food and drink manufacturing sector, which provides more than 47k jobs nationwide
- Farmers are critical to Scotland's remote disadvantaged areas, keeping businesses, schools, tourism activities and in turn, rural communities, thriving.



Who is it for?

- Politicians and decision makers – to strengthen and support the industry through policy and investment
- The whole Scottish red meat supply chain with special 2026 focus on processors and retailers – to sustain a high-quality product to consumers at home
- Consumers – to continue recognising the multiple goods of local red meat

Where can you learn more?

- **The Meating Our Potential Industry Hub:** Your go-to webpage for 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, auctioneer, retailer, other supplier 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

Scotland's red meat sector has had strong backing from industry and policymakers and now, a clear opportunity to grow and deliver greater value to the national economy. That backing now requires a reinforced vote of confidence and supply chain collaboration to unlock the sector's full potential. With clear economic opportunities, the sector is well placed to strengthen its contribution to Scotland's economy and wider food system to thrive for generations to come.

Together, we can Meat Our Potential

