New Release

12 June

*For immediate use*

**Improve your farm’s sustainability: join Quality Meat Scotland’s summer open days**

Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) is hosting two open days at award-winning farms for farmers and crofters to learn about practices aimed at improving profitability and efficiency while also reducing carbon emissions.

The first event will be held in July in the Lammermuir Hills, at the Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year – Windshiel Farm - run by the Baker family. Named as Sheep Farm of the Year at the inaugural Scottish Agriculture Awards in 2023 the second-generation farm strives for progression and innovation.

The Baker’s focus is on improving grass and soil quality to efficiently convert kilos of dry matter to kilos of meat, by increasing the use of herbal leys and sward diversity. An entirely outdoor livestock system operates using rotational grazing, deferred grazing, and forage crops. The organic farm is 1000ft above sea level at its peak and holds 900 ewes, 60 Aberdeen Angus cows, rare breed pigs which complement direct sales at a monthly farmers market, and a small flock of pedigree Dorset sheep.

On 11 July, with tea and coffee on arrival, attendees will take a deep dive through two workshops, with the day focussing on topics that have helped the Baker’s to achieve their reduced emissions goals:

* getting more from forage all year round
* increasing outputs using reduced inputs
* meeting livestock finishing specs using a forage-based system
* outdoor wintering
* use of a clean grazing strategy with a leader follower system
* breeding strategies – genetics, breed preferences and sire selection

Lunch will be provided and includes meat from Windshiel Farm.

Visitors will be given a farm tour to observe the sward diversity in the herbal leys with great examples of where on-farm practices are helping to reduce business inputs and emissions.

Following this, on 7 August the Hodge family will host the second open day which will explore how the family’s farming methods have adapted and allowed them to improve productivity and drive down emissions. The Hodges are based at Rulesmains Farm and were awarded the Scotch Beef Farm of the Year at the Scottish Agriculture Awards in 2023 for their unrivalled enthusiasm.

Emma Hodge, alongside parents Jill and Andrew, runs the mixed arable and pedigree cattle farm at Rulesmains and the family team has 110 pedigree Aberdeen-Angus, 30 commercial Angus, and a handful of pedigree Hereford cattle. Pedigree cattle are successfully shown, and bull sale prices regularly reach five figures. Commercial cattle are aimed to be finished at around 13 to 14 months of age.

The Hodge’s select cattle genetics which will ultimately create a profitable animal: one that fleshes easily, provides excellent carcase quality, and has sound breed character. Livestock health is also paramount, and the family has invested in a robust vaccination programme.

With tea and coffee on arrival and a lunch sponsored by the Aberdeen Angus Society, the day promises to be both informative and enjoyable. Highlights include a farm tour and workshops covering the following topics:

* investment in genetics using data to explore net weight gains
* health protocols (including colostrum intake, vaccination and nutrient analysis) for better animal performance
* nutrition for bloat reduction – led by Matt Palmer of Norvite
* calving at two years of age, and artificial insemination of heifers
* soil improvement and use of homegrown feeds
* silage analysis and precision feeding rations

QMS Industry Development Co-ordinator, Lesley Mitchell says:

“The aim of these events is for farmers and crofters to be more informed about the QMS ’Net Zero’ work, and to provide a network of people who can offer answers to questions surrounding this evolving and important industry subject. We warmly welcome those wishing to attend the open days and learn more about supporting the sustainability of their farms. Visitors can sign up via the below link. Limited spaces are available so sign up soon for a chance to attend.”

For more information about the open days and to book your place, please visit:

11th July, Windshiel Farm Open Day

[7th August, Rulesmains Farm Open Day](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/quality-meat-scotland-open-day-scottish-farms-delivering-for-net-zero-tickets-906627686817?aff=oddtdtcreator&_gl=1%2A1edocyd%2A_up%2AMQ..%2A_ga%2AMTg4MjM3OTQxMC4xNzE1NzY2OTQ0%2A_ga_TQVES5V6SH%2AMTcxNTc2Njk0NC4xLjAuMTcxNTc2Njk0NC4wLjAuMA..)

**ENDS**

Words count 669

**Notes to editors:**

QMS is the public body responsible for promoting the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb branded products abroad, and for promoting Scottish pork products under the Specially Selected Pork logo.

Please note that the use of the word Scotch in the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands is correct and should not be substituted for an alternative such as Scots or Scottish. The history of the use of the word Scotch in this way, traces back to the 18th century.

QMS also helps the Scottish red meat sector improve its sustainability, efficiency and profitability and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.

The quality assurance schemes run by QMS cover more than 90% of livestock farmed for red meat in Scotland. They offer consumers in the UK and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to some of the world’s strictest welfare standards.

Scotland’s beef, lamb and pork producers make an important contribution to the country’s economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing over £2 billion to the annual GDP of Scotland and supporting around 50,000 jobs (many in fragile rural areas) in the farming, agricultural supply and processing sectors.

For more information visit [www.qmscotland.co.uk](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk) or follow QMS on Facebook or Twitter.