News release   
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For Immediate Use

**Quality Meat Scotland highlights the economic potential of Scotland’s beef sector at SAMW conference**

Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) highlighted the economic potential of Scotland’s beef sector, current industry concerns and changes on cattle herd at the annual Scottish Association of Meat Wholesales (SAMW) conference and lunch on Friday 6 September 2024.

QMS Chief Executive, Sarah Millar and QMS Market Intelligence Manager, Iain Macdonald addressed the Scottish red meat processing industry at The Pavilion in Ingliston on the economic opportunities and challenges facing the Scottish beef herd.

**Iain Macdonald said:** “Our recently published [Red Meat Industry Profile report](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/quality-meat-scotland/documents/Publications/QMS-RMIP-2024.pdf) highlights continued strong appetite for beef in Scotland, with an 8% increase in consumer spending on red meat and a rise in red meat processing turnover for a fourth consecutive year by 1% to £975 million. This popularity and the foreseeable demand from a growing UK population is set against a further reduction in the suckler herd, with beef cow numbers down by 2.5% year-on-year in December 2023 and an annual fall in calf registrations of 2.7%, which will have a knock-on effect to prime beef output once these cattle reach slaughter age in 2025.

“We have developed a projections model which shows that if action was taken in three areas of performance – stabilising the beef herd against the long-term downwards trend, boosting productivity of the breeding herd and slowing the outflow of prime cattle to England and Wales – the projected decline based on existing trends could be reversed with potential to generate a significant boost to the Scottish economy.”

The growth scenario includes an extra £76.6 million of output and £17.5 million of GVA added to the Scottish economy through the prime beef sector in 2030 compared to 2023. In addition, output is £143.1 million higher and GVA £36.1 million higher in this growth model when compared against the 2030 baseline scenario. As well as beef production on Scotland’s farms and in its processing sector, this modelling accounts for the additional supply chain effects which help underpin the economic vitality and social fabric of Scotland’s rural communities.

**Sarah Millar said:** “We are proud to support this crucial conference, which brings together key players across Scotland’s red meat processing sector.

“Scotland’s iconic beef sector is at the heart of Scottish agriculture and food and drink manufacturing, adding economic value across almost every constituency. Our model highlights significant economic opportunities for the Scottish red meat sector which has a positive impact that ripples through our society.

“We must collectively rally to halt, reverse and improve current trajectories which show a further reduction in the number of Scottish-born cattle if underlying trends were to continue. QMS is working closely with key stakeholders from across the red meat supply chain on action to boost productivity and support the case for systemic change for the sector and those industries and communities which rely on its success.”

In addition, QMS shared the initial tranche of results from research it has been undertaking into farmer decision making, further exploring some of the ‘why’s’ behind recent changes in the beef herd.

These findings demonstrate that there is no one single reason across the country that is impacting on suckler herd decline, with a mix of concerns being profitability levels, an aging workforce, availability of labour and confidence in agricultural support payments. Additional factors included increased administrative costs and movements into other sectors such as sheep, dairy and arable farming.

The top factors influencing the cohort which stopped farming were availability of labour and input costs, and, for the cohort which decreased their herd size, profitability was ranked as the main reason.

Sarah Millar will also update the industry audience on QMS’s [five-year strategy](https://heyzine.com/flip-book/4ee0786293.html) to 2028 to make Scotland the choice for premium red meat

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**About QMS**   
Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) is the public body which helps Scotland’s £2.8 billion red meat sector maximise its positive role in our wealth, health and environment. This includes supporting productivity and profitability, sustainability and integrity, as well as around 50,000 jobs across the red meat supply chain including in some of our most rural areas.  
90% of Scotland’s cattle, sheep and pig livestock farmed for red meat are part of our internationally recognised and approved [assurance schemes](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=Bv3TOXP5JaaHF0OlHelHWm_u15W_eC90ZpCYNBr7e9ivJNIRUWgbwv5SNFu9_hnwfjquAse2j98BqlKFGXFEwpNGXkHSHR9n-JVG-W8wXur205mjBEKr5l2Ml0adeq-2DXBOMWPu2pUdHN847AV3KBnOzT2Hi3WC6mL9GfuGLK4GJ8o-GHbglWpgS1LCFaEW0g2), under the Scotch Beef UK geographical indicator (UKGI), Scotch Lamb UKGI and Specially Selected Pork brands. They give people at home and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to the highest of standards.   
The suite of assurance schemes extends across the supply chain including feeds, haulage, auction- market and processing. Together the six livestock and non-livestock schemes make sure Scotland’s red meat is among the worlds-best for quality, animal welfare standards, production and traceability.   
  
We are evidence-informed and work closely with partners across the supply chain to [track developments](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=1QAZ1owiClFksfPx-5WG3ZHk-2iLPpABBNuFwiqIgAV1t-68KlF7frR_6nLS6PTbW3qXxxg5qsEc5k8CBEog-y20GPmPqVAZmJ2l3FUQdw-vBZ5kmXUXO3v3pC40VrlDZ8WOXZfd7utM-SAEIZX5_OE1) in the beef, pork and lamb markets, sharing latest market prices, market developments and commentary with industry.   
  
QMS also:

* runs major marketing and advertising campaigns to promote the brands and drive demand
* supports product development and innovation for profitable supply chains
* works on projects which support environmentally friendly practice for a sustainable sector that plays a key part in protecting our planet
* educates young and aspiring people across classrooms, sports clubs and communities in Scotland on the health benefits of red meat and career opportunity in the sector

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.   
  
**Useful info**

* [QMS 5-year Strategy to 2028](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=fA7FQpMIKb9FXws6_L6XnVsEIKnKCm67C8D9Kuf2gkIHnoh9qsJvRBBe2KQxvU7DxGLRSJAhFcBUQrNYFngHMe1m69OIdlrXQCvMMlVNptngc-QfJTmxLrsLaiO91Q5Z77Xru-Nc_NRDaxSq95r3Ft-CfeUS_JR7haD8Z1HKjUfk0)
* [Red Meat Industry Profile 2024](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=zJxxmvWj-MBoS2CP7AT-FqJlhe5xnSYeSHLGAiCWKZdXBUB8nCxMhyBKyHwyfWRBWFGsnUXAh8q3cy-dF_CPy6Ui8cZgxj9XJUT-Q3-znSHHsARehhBUu4ZmsiXhiX6qI8FTxiDhuXe_4p4rLEGLy_lTyF8F5zopCNkBhYqUOQmzULNrtyRNqPzYTG22gG_0Gk0WY8F3ZMc2Six8vtzpVR8_tjWD74jAOBOKJCdZcxht0) – for key statistics across the red meat supply chain
* [QMS website](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=LeZOcl3mDCVA2wI8Mml4HVKskOX7eoW4x0xl4YZPdCV1PwD03E0idhu9GF0tB698gJMMemlYb2o1crPQbahJSb2UFd1BVnu7VOwyr-w0Z_Rjj_emPNk52WzhAz5HjfP_c89IFXldoREL3RKkmHtjLPI1)
* QMS social media - [Facebook](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=g-jSu70o92egRtiq0xtaxL-bzITpSztoSN2Hr-WClm3_JfCXG0-nAZJpyIszK05mdpr9PP-i87lEnW8Npi8AYWxVtQVG1bsrfeMyjBgMIAqshg-5_IeYvaQqerXPmfT3DP53npue1GiHeK33-NznsLoRjald62L5yz9WyZkfbiL80) / [Twitter](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=33hxCiDMt-50nyKxzV8fiLyl4gL97eiSmv4i4LMooJ-R_GVJANikHTl_qPsitRD3fUQK2JCwlIZRA_sjBJCk8YmJ9dZp8FjlqFBzbqepXrIrHnbDHAIjk1CRcQlDgYHoJHy5VH4jw5hSaNcmwymZhRI1) / [LinkedIn](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=q84lD_BjrLcb5qQQ8jKsij-qYy58orZ-GoDZ0eZienhjZpE3kQW1YjvtElQQaRwCW7lfrE7hQh2eehlkOsH6xF888FRgBdqc098bn1SUorp7s2wOwLm667VG0_8gKa_x4JpuAb2-73CXhwT7ELK-3HLzk5cwBOErrRz7pATBHwoACFVd5hAjRcN8p2NbDeuMtIPkOv0BZ9JJTehGtxdDEhQ1)
* [QMS Podcast](http://tracking.janecraigie.com/tracking/click?d=tWH6CH_6ot9Jeg9OPFugWFpl5LSeITVzCHNQ0zMA6VU5-IRIw4MnLKxC_61KUobDVrSmK_O8zqtTyCwc8WkbFErwjLYrCqsV6h33VdGoDpLko3Js0YkOCwWshcBPsVckBlZLbjs7HHUppNa8WSVGjQIoSkYQTxuCdUzCz2DjhyZ80)