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*For immediate use*

**Fochabers butcher first to start carving-up on craft butchery skills**

A young butcher from Lochaber has successfully completed the prestigious Craft Butcher Diploma of Scotland after the new partnership between Quality Meat Scotland and the Scottish Craft Butchers enabled him to overcome the financial barriers associated with further skills training.

Matthew Newlands, who works at A.J. Jamieson Butcher based in Fochabers, was delighted to be able to undertake the internationally recognised training and successfully complete the diploma.

The partnership between QMS and Scottish Craft Butchers was established in March 2021. QMS fund 50% of the training fees with the trainee or business picking up the other 50%. QMS contributed toward Matthew’s training, which was delivered by Craft Skills Scotland assessors, with butchery business owners signing off on the competency of trainees in required areas.

The diploma is internationally recognised as formal and comprehensive evidence of quality training and achievement in the Scottish Retail Meat Industry and is the next step from the Modern Apprenticeship in SVQ Meat and Poultry Skills at Level 3 (SCQF 6) or for experienced butchers requiring certification.

Matthew Newlands commented: “Completing the diploma has been great for developing my skills and knowledge. I have gained confidence and I’m excited about the future of our butchery business.

“I would encourage anyone looking to apply to do so, the award is well received by consumers and has helped promote our business.”

Gordon Newlands, qualified butcher and Brands Development Manager for QMS, said:

“We know how important it is to ensure that the next generation of butchers has the opportunity to access training to continue the tradition of our craftmanship, speciality and innovation.

“It’s fantastic to see the impact this new partnership has already made, and I look forward to seeing more members of the Scotch Butcher Club undertake this training opportunity.”

Gordon King, Executive Manager at Scottish Craft Butchers, echoed the sentiments and said:

“We want butchers – regardless of their location and economic status – to have the opportunity to further their career. Through this partnership with QMS, we’re able to relieve financial barriers associated with further skills training, helping more young and ambitious butchers to attain the prestigious Craft Butcher Diploma of Scotland.”

QMS will be supporting members of the [Scotch Butchers Club](https://www.facebook.com/scotchbutchersclub/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUYvT_4hhiwp-D9S86g4wpRysg66Q8KYIKTQxhsVNu19sG8IMTnxHTdfhlzyGK5jw61iwCCuWSTzynEQ7Jg0TzNQBU72pwaT0mF7xdBaPurv2WeWq7jP6YF4lWp68gw8ykF1w2Ag_hflSEzBc4Gwr2LqWaP5nj6_aCbaP8KmCpxylcnxHkigyndBXDDwLt1bXo&__tn__=kK-R) to undertake the training by funding 50% of the training fee to the value of £250.

To apply for funding towards the Craft Butcher Diploma, trainees can download the application form via the [www.scotchbutchers.com](http://www.scotchbutchers.com) and email the completed form to sbc@qmscotland.co.uk

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

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

Please note that the use of the word Scotch in the Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI 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 or follow QMS on Facebook or Twitter.