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*For immediate use*

**Westminster told cross-border collaboration vital to red meat industry**

Following a series of valuable meetups with politicians at farms and Scotch stockists over the summer that outlined the current operating climate and the steps needed to support the sector going forward, representatives from QMS recently visited Westminster to continue the conversation around Scotland’s red meat industry.

Between 1st-2nd November, QMS Chair, Kate Rowell and Industry Strategy and Public Affairs Manager, Lucy Ozanne met with Ian Murray, Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland; John Lamont, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Scotland Office; Wendy Chamberlain, Liberal Democrat Chief Whip and member of the Scottish Affairs Committee; David Duguid, Conservative MP for Banff and Buchan and the team of Pete Wishart, SNP DEFRA spokesperson and chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee.

Discussions brought to light the integration of Scotland’s livestock and red meat industry with that of the English, Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts, highlighting that changes in the operation of one country’s supply chain can affect operations in another, and the subsequent need for strong communication and collaboration across borders.

The meetings also addressed the topical and ongoing challenges that the red meat sector is experiencing, and the support producers and processors needs to survive, substantiated by the increasingly key role that Scottish red meat plays in the UK’s food and drink export market. With the Scotch and Specially Selected Pork brands underpinned by world-class quality assurance standards and sustainable production methods, the exchanges further highlighted the positive work that QMS is doing to create opportunities for Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Specially Selected Pork on the international stage.

Reflecting on the trip, Ms Rowell said: “It is vitally important that we grasp every opportunity to get in front of key decision makers, to demonstrate the positive impact that the Scottish red meat supply chain plays in underpinning a vibrant economy, a healthy society and a in meeting our Net Zero targets. Working across the supply chain, it's important to ensure that we not only tell the positive story of Scottish red meat, but also highlight some of the key barriers businesses face within a changing regulatory environment, which is further harming confidence levels of businesses at a time when the cost of doing business has never been greater.

“I felt very proud to be able to talk up Scotland’s red meat sector and our incredibly resilient businesses across the supply chain at Westminster, and we left with the impression that we have taken another step in developing relationships that will enable future growth and success of the industry.”

**/ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

This press release was issued by Jane Craigie Marketing on behalf of Quality Meat Scotland. For additional press information, please contact Rose on 07493 876646 or rose@janecraigie.com.

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.