New Release

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*For immediate use*

**French visitors given insight into Scottish farming**

More than 40 high-level executives from France’s agricultural, agro-industrial and agro-food sectors gained an insight into Scotland’s agricultural and meat processing systems on a visit to a Tayside farm.

The chief executives, presidents and others are members of Club DEMETER, an organisation of key decision-makers. Their trip to Over Finlarg Farm at Tealing near Dundee was organised by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), the public body which promotes Scotland’s red meat sector.

Gordon Newlands, Brand Development Manager at QMS, explained: “When we discovered that Club DEMETER members were keen to come to Scotland to find out more about the country’s agriculture we suggested they visit the award-winning Over Finlarg farm run by Robert and Hazel McNee.”

The visit had three elements. The first comprised a farm tour conducted by Robert and Hazel Mcnee and led by Beth Alexander, Monitor Farm Manager, QMS. The second focused on ‘The future of wool’ and was conducted by the Chair of British Wool, Jim Robertson of Becks Farm, Langholm.

Gordon said: “In the third element I explained about our processing sector, how we carry out processing in Scotland and how it differs from France. The morning ended with a lunch on the farm for the delegates centred around Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb.”

He believes the visit proved a fantastic opportunity to showcase Scotland’s farming systems and Over Finlarg Farm was the ideal location.

This latest delegation was one of an increasing number of inward missions. It came after another venture earlier this summer when a party of French chefs visited Scotland. Their itinerary included a visit to Edinburgh Cook School and a trip to the home of Aberdeen Angus in Ballindalloch. That proved to be very positive and QMS is now working with those chefs to promote Scotch Beef in France.

Gordon added: “It's important we facilitate these visits because the export market is strong. We need to use every opportunity to share the knowledge and expertise of our farming community and others. Putting Scotland’s products on a global stage is the important service we deliver to our farmers and processors.”

Among other events lined up over the next few months is a trip by a group of Italian butchers. The 30-strong delegation will visit shops and processors. It is hoped the outcome will be increased sales in Italy.

“Market development is always about networking,” said Gordon. “If we engage with key contacts in international markets, we have an opportunity to develop new business and drive value throughout our Scottish supply chain.”

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Words count:418

**Notes to editors:**

**About QMS**

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.

**About Over Finlarg**

After buying Over Finlarg Farm in 2011, Robert and Hazel McNee have made several improvements to the 740-acre unit, from new farm buildings to fencing, lime spreading and drainage work. At the same time, they have established a herd of 200 suckler cows and a flock of 1100 breeding sheep.

Half of the farm is ploughable but is mainly used for grazing, apart from producing 75 acres of cereals and 25 acres of turnips. The couple also rent a further 40 acres of grass from a neighbouring farmer, as well as a 400-acre heather hill.

Around 600 North Country Cheviot Lairg-type ewes run alongside 200 Blackfaces, 60 Texels and 40 traditional and crossing type Bluefaced Leicesters, with an additional 200 home-bred Texel cross and Mule ewe hoggs tupped to the Beltex to sell as hoggs with lambs at foot.

The beef suckler cow herd includes pedigree Limousins, Luings, Simmentals and Charolais, with 60 Limousins run under the Westhall prefix and 120 pedigree Luings kept in the Finlarg herd.

Around 25 bulls are sold for breeding each year, with Luings having sold to a top of 18,000gns for Finlarg Warrior at Castle Douglas in 2019, and Limousins to 11,500gns at Stirling.