

Lesley Griffiths MS,
Minister for Environment, Energy & Rural Affairs,
Welsh Government

6th March 2024

Dear Minister,

I am writing to express our members' deep concerns about the Welsh government's Sustainable Farming Scheme proposals, which we believe will damage the economy, reduce tourism, impact biodiversity and discourage future investment in Wales.

We have three key members - Kepak, Dawn Dunbia and Pilgrims - who account for approximately 95% of the beef and sheep processed in Wales. Between them they employ around 3000 people and contribute over £500 million to the Welsh economy. If added value is considered, that figure would be nearer to £1bn.

Our members have invested heavily in processing plants supported by the Welsh government, but they are now seriously concerned about their future in Wales because of the proposals. By your government's own predictions, the new scheme would lead to a loss of 122,000 livestock units, which is equivalent to 90% of the beef processing in Wales.

Such a reduction will drastically reduce our domestic food security and make us more reliant on imported meat produced less sustainably in other parts of the world.

It is therefore important that the Welsh government, and indeed all governments around the world, consider the twin challenges of climate change and food production as two sides of the same coin, rather than viewing them in isolation.

The carbon footprint of Welsh livestock production has already seen a massive reduction due to improving efficiencies in production which has enabled a steady decline in livestock numbers over the years. Wales also has the near perfect combination of extensive pasture and rainfall to rear livestock. With the correct measures, such a livestock system can add to biodiversity and be part of the solution to both climate change and feeding a growing population.

But it is not just food security, jobs and GDP that are at stake. The tourism industry is vital to the Welsh economy and research highlighted by the hospitality sector tells us that 8 out of 10 visitors to Wales look forward to consuming Welsh produced food and are prepared to pay a premium for it. Internationally the Welsh meat brand is highly regarded, and meat exports not only bring value to the Welsh economy but serve to promote Wales as a holiday destination and a desirable place to visit.

The proposals suggested in the consultation will in our view damage the economy, tourism, biodiversity and discourage future investment in Wales. We also believe that, far from tackling climate change, if they encourage more meat imports, they will have a negative impact on future sustainability when viewed as a global challenge.

We would therefore urge the Welsh government to re-consider the drastic proposals set out in the consultation on the Sustainable Farming Scheme and recognise the severe financial, social and political impacts, as well as the unintended consequences of the policy.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Allen
Chief Executive Officer.

The British Meat Processors Association is the leading UK red meat trade body, working on behalf of businesses that supply over 80% of red meat to the country. Our members are responsible for supplying fresh meat and meat products to retailers, restaurants, and food service companies throughout the UK.

We work alongside Governments across the UK and other organisations to help develop a meat industry that is competitive, professional and supplies a sustainable, long-term and affordable supply of food to British customers. We also have a strong Associate membership of supporting and associated industries to core red meat processing.