

Quality Meat Scotland
Minutes of the 88th Meeting of the Board
24th April 2025
Dalmahoy Hotel, Edinburgh

Present:

K. Rowell (Chair)
A. Irvine
A. Ivory
A. McGowan
C. Ruxton
E. Buckby – Virtual
G. Wallace
I. Bentley
J. Duncan Grant
N. Jeffrey
P. Brown
S. Jarron

In Attendance:

S. Millar (Chief Executive)
D. Phillips (Standards Officer)
P. Byrne (Accountant) – For agenda item no. 3 to and including agenda item no.9

Minutes:

K. McCormack

Apologies:

Detail	Action
<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Kate Rowell welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.</p>	
<p>Discussion with NFUS</p> <p>Kate Rowell welcomed NFUS to the meeting which our Strategic Management Team were in attendance for. Introductions were made around the room. The following NFUS attendees were present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ John Davidson, CEO ▪ Andrew Connon, President ▪ Duncan Macallister, Vice President ▪ Lucy McGillivray, Policy Manager - Livestock & LFA ▪ Lisa Hislop, Supply Chain Policy Manager <p>Sarah Millar gave an introduction to QMS and presented our 5 year strategy detailing the journey over the past few years including our new team structure and committee structure. Sarah gave an overview of each department.</p> <p>Andrew Connon along with John Davidson gave an overview of the priorities for NFUS for the Scottish farming industry over the next few years and how NFUS and QMS can work together.</p>	

<p>NFUS commented on the positive change over the past couple of years on QMS's Communications and Marketing activity.</p>	
<p>Additions to the Agenda</p> <p>There were no additions to the agenda.</p>	
<p>Declaration of interests in any agenda item</p> <p>The following Board members declared an interest as being Quality Assurance members and levy payers however these did not conflict with any agenda item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Niall Jeffrey ▪ Kate Rowell ▪ Adrian Ivory ▪ Emma Buckby ▪ Jilly Duncan Grant <p>Ian Bentley declared an interest as being on the Board of Scotbeef Ltd.</p> <p>Scott Jarron declared an interest as being on the Board of Wishaw Abattoir.</p> <p>Andy McGowan declared an interest due to him being a member on the Board of SAOS who established FIA.</p> <p>Andy also declared an interest due to him being Managing Director of Wholesome Pigs Scotland and Director at Scot EID.</p>	
<p>Minutes of Board Meeting on the 20th February 2025</p> <p>The minutes from the meeting on the 20th February were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p>Commercial in Confidence – Update on Action Points</p> <p>The Board reviewed the actions from the previous meeting.</p>	
<p>Chairs Report</p> <p>Kate Rowell highlighted key information to the Board from her Chair's report and updated them on key activities since the last meeting in February which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting with Chairs & CE's of AHDB/ HCC/ LMC ▪ NFU Conference, London ▪ Monitor Farm Succession Play ▪ Chair of FSS ▪ Cabinet Secretary and Minister of Agriculture along with John Gilliland ▪ Kirsteen Sullivan MP at David Stein Butchers Bathgate ▪ Rachael Hamilton MSP at Cowbog Farm Kelso 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural Affairs & Islands Committee at Holyrood ▪ FAST Meeting ▪ Farming roundtable ▪ ARIOB ▪ Farmers Guardian Column 	
<p>Chief Executives Report</p> <p>Sarah Millar highlighted key information to the Board from her report updating them on activities since the last meeting in February.</p> <p>Sarah presented the overview of risks table which had been included in her report following an action at the Oversight of Risk training which the Board attended last year. The table details the main risks identified in the period from the last board meeting, and their mitigations. The Board thought this information was a good addition to the report.</p> <p>The Board had a discussion on biosecurity that was touched on during the discussion with NFUS.</p> <p>The job ad for the Executive Assistant's maternity cover is now live. We have brought this forward so that we can have someone covering the Office Assistant while they are helping with finance. This will then allow for a good handover period before Kirsty McCormack goes off on maternity in September.</p>	
<p>Financial Report 12 Months to 31st March 2025</p> <p>Paul Byrne presented the financial report for the 2024/ 2025 financial year to the 31st March 2025.</p>	
<p>Review of Reserves Policy</p> <p>The Reserves policy will be reviewed and discussed at Board meetings in September and February. It will be on the agenda at the meetings in April, June and November however will only be for discussion if required.</p> <p>The Board agreed there was nothing for discussion/ no changes to be made.</p>	
<p>Board Succession</p> <p>The Board approved each proposal.</p> <p>Kate confirmed she has two meetings in the diary for June with Scottish Government regarding Board recruitment.</p> <p>The following actions were noted:</p> <p>The Board are to think about what committees they could join either short and long term and get in touch with Kate Rowell.</p>	

<p>If the Board know anyone who will cover the skills gaps that we are looking for, please encourage them to apply to become a QMS Board member.</p> <p>Sarah to speak with Comms and Marketing at the possibility of doing a leaflet on the benefits of being a QMS Board member for the RHS.</p> <p>Sarah and Kate are to review Board members on committees and bring a proposal to the June Board meeting. This may include bringing in a co-opted expert to a committee however they would not be able to Chair.</p> <p>Kate thanked Heather Curran in our sponsor team for her work on Board recruitment and for making it a priority.</p>	<p>Board</p> <p>Board</p> <p>Sarah</p> <p>Sarah/ Kate</p>
<p>Strategic Indicators Update</p> <p>Sarah Millar presented the Board with an update to the strategic indicators which gave a result for each one as of the 31st March 2025 highlighting positive, negative, or baseline.</p> <p>The full text in 2.4 was not showing in the paper, Kirsty McCormack will update this.</p>	<p>Kirsty</p>
<p>Final Update Report & Implementation Plans 2024/ 2025</p> <p>Sarah Millar presented a video which captured the highlights for QMS in the 24/ 25 year.</p> <p>The Strategic Management Team highlighted some of their key activities throughout the year:</p> <p><u>Corporate Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful office move. Staff enjoy the new office space at Regus. ▪ 24/25 Audit – pre work started in January for the audit to start in May. We are getting a new lead auditor. Last year’s lead auditor will still be there to help. ▪ All 3 audits this year received ‘substantial assurance’ which is the highest level of audit. 	

<p><u>Business Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Food & Drink Event (IFE) London March– successful show. <p><u>Marketing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing processes audit received substantial audit. This was the first audit for Emma in QMS. <p><u>Communications & External Affairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full comms team now registered CIPR. <p>Holly McLennan advised that she will get a note of Scotch Ambassador events out to Board and will ask for Board involvement if required.</p> <p>Gordon Wallace highlighted the World Butchers Challenge event which QMS help sponsor.</p> <p>The event saw 5 butchers from Scotland, one of which was from Scott Brothers. Scott Jarron confirmed that his butcher who was involved in the event said it was a great experience and got a lot from it as she gained a lot of experience and knowledge.</p>	Holly
<p>Game Changer Projects</p> <p>Tom Gibson and Emma Heath presented a paper with an update on the Game changer projects.</p>	
<p>QMS Committee Meeting Updates</p>	
<p>Audit & Risk Management Committee - 5th March</p> <p>Ann Irvine gave an update from the Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting which took place on the 5th March.</p> <p><u>Internal Audit report – Market Intelligence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the report on the Market Intelligence audit which took place in November 2024. Overall assessment score given was substantial assurance which is the highest assurance. One recommendation was made regarding making sure that Market Intelligence procedures are formally documented. No operational effectiveness matters (OEM) were identified. Two points of good practice were identified. <p>Finalise External Audit Plan for 2024/25 Financial Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the audit plan for the 24/25 financial year Confirmed the sign off date as the 26th June as that is when the accounts will come to the Board for approving. Sarah Millar will then sign the accounts and send them electronically the day of the Board meeting. 	

<p><u>Discussion on Consumer Duty Guidance for Public Bodies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had a discussion on consumer guidance for public bodies. <p><u>Board Succession Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed this and agreed for Sarah to bring the proposal to the April Board. <p><u>Discussion Points from Oversight of Risk Training 6th November 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There were a few actions taken which were to be brought to the Audit & Risk Committee for discussion. <p>Papers for review by the Board</p> <p><u>Risk register</u> The Board reviewed and approved the risk register.</p> <p><u>Scheme of Delegation including appendices</u> The Board reviewed and approved the Scheme of Delegation and all appendices.</p> <p><u>Review list of QMS Policies and Procedures</u> The Board reviewed the list of QMS Policies and Procedures which was for information purposes. No additions.</p> <p><u>Annual Summary of FOI requests 2024</u> The Board reviewed the report which was for information purposes highlighting that there were 10 FOI requests.</p> <p><u>Review Health and Safety Report 2024</u> The Board reviewed the report which was for information purposes.</p> <p><u>Annual GDPR Report 2024</u> The Board reviewed the report which was for information purposes.</p> <p>Sarah Millar highlighted that the Scottish Government Framework document will be reviewed this year.</p>	
<p>Appeals Panel – 13th March 2025</p> <p>Sarah Millar gave an update from the Appeals Panel Committee meeting which took place on the 13th March 2024.</p> <p>She highlighted the main points from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good successful meeting. ▪ Emma Heath and Andrew Prise attended as observers. ▪ The panel reviewed a mock case which included video footage. ▪ They discussed different options and what the learnings were. processes and outcomes of learnings will all be documented. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair is going to produce a draft recommendation to tell us what the outcome is. ▪ Future meetings will all have mock cases. 	
<p>Brands Integrity Advisory Group – 25th March 2025</p> <p>Peter Brown gave an update from the Brands Integrity Advisory Group Meeting which took place on the 25th March 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ C&S standards timelines ▪ Pigs Standards & Welfare Codes ▪ QA Contract & Tender ▪ BIAG Terms of Reference ▪ Business Continuity plan ▪ Derogation Processes 	
<p>Cattle Number Update</p> <p>Holly McLennan gave a presentation which gave a detailed update on cattle numbers.</p>	
<p>UK Farm Assurance Review Update</p> <p>Sarah Millar gave an update on the UK Farm Assurance review report.</p> <p>There was an action for the spreadsheet that gathered QMS''s comments towards the UKFAR and that was reviewed by the Brands Integrity Group, to be shared with the Board for information. Kirsty McCormack to get an updated version from Kathryn Kerr.</p>	
<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p>	
<p>There being no further business, the meeting was closed.</p> <p>The next Board meeting date is Thursday 26th June 2025 which is being held in the SARDC Boardroom at The Rural Centre.</p> <p>There will be a meeting and dinner on Wednesday 25th June. Venue TBC</p>	