

Red Meat Development Programme





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Red Meat Development Programme (RMDP)

The red meat industry is the foundation of Wales' rural economy and its food and drink sector. It must deliver what the consumer wants – high quality meat produced to exceptional standards of welfare and sustainability.

Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) has developed the innovative Red Meat Development Programme (RMDP) to drive the Welsh red meat sector forward. This leading five-year Programme will assist the sector to prepare for a prosperous future at a time when uncertainty prevails.

Its purpose is to engage with all aspects of the supply chain, boosting farm productivity and profitability while ensuring that future red meat production meets the demands of an ever-changing and increasingly discerning consumer, both at home and abroad.

RMDP will consist of three strategically important projects that will focus on animal health, genetics and meat quality.

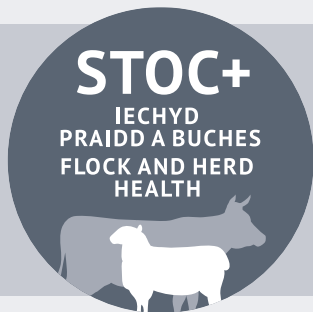
Within **Stoc+**, the animal health planning project, HCC will deliver – in conjunction with veterinary practitioners – an ambitious scheme which will demonstrate the long-term benefits of proactive flock and herd health planning.

The **Hill Ram Scheme** will seek to support the vitally important hill sheep sector through highlighting how using rams with known genetic performance can have a positive impact on the Welsh sheep flock.

Welsh Lamb Meat Quality is the third component. The supply chain project will look to assess and develop the eating quality of Welsh Lamb. This will focus on evaluating practices that can be implemented pre and post farmgate to secure and enhance Welsh Lamb's position as a premium product.

These elements within the RMDP will help the red meat industry to efficiently produce high quality products and drive improvements that will be crucial to the sector's future competitiveness, success and sustainability. Livestock farming in Wales makes a valuable contribution to the environment, and the projects will encourage the participants to focus on their potential to push this position to the next level and focus on their role in actively reducing greenhouse gas emissions even further.

The RMDP is supported by the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.



The **Stoc+** project aims to support farmers in Wales to work closely with their vets on pro-active animal health planning.

In an increasingly volatile market, producers should be looking to boost their business awareness in order to improve the competitiveness of the Welsh sector. This is the basis for Stoc+ which builds on the importance of animal health and welfare for enhancing production efficiency and the profitability of farming enterprises.

During the course of this work, HCC will bring together a representative cross-section of up to 500 commercial sheep and beef producers across Wales and encourage them to adopt a 'prevention is better than cure' approach to animal health. Participants will be made aware of the advantages of animal health plans and using them proactively to improve farm sustainability, help returns and business development and extend already high animal health and welfare standards.

Each participating farmer will receive practical, expert advice and specialist support for up to 3 years. In addition, they will benefit from a tailor-made Flock and Herd Health Plan and Action Plan, as well as access to veterinary review visits, professional guidance and support from local practitioners to work towards agreed targets.

Ultimately, enhancing animal health planning and boosting production efficiency will contribute towards meeting the demands of consumers and increasing their confidence in the industry's well-regarded end-products, PGI Welsh Lamb and PGI Welsh Beef.





CYNLLUN
HYRDDOD
MYNYDD
HILL RAM
SCHEME

Genetic improvement is a cost-effective, proven way of boosting animal production efficiency and HCC's **Hill Ram Scheme** will aim to demonstrate this in some of the harshest conditions in Wales.

Primarily, the Hill Ram Scheme will encourage hill farmers to take up performance recording, meaning that farmers participating in the project will be recording data such as parentage, lamb birth weights and growth rates in order to receive a genetic analysis of how individual sheep are performing within the flock.

Understanding, utilising and improving flock genetics will allow farmers to target growth and finishing, while not impacting the ewes' ability to survive in difficult conditions which will ultimately help hill farmers to meet modern market requirements

A core nucleus of 45 hill flocks will be recruited, including 7 Leader Flocks. These participating flocks create a diverse Hill Ram Scheme network, with varying flock sizes, hill breed types, geographic locations and systems.

Each participating flock will receive support in recording the genetic performance of their flocks – be that through either manual or EID recording. They will also receive guidance on analysing and interpreting genetic data to help inform their future flock planning decisions.



Participants will also receive training and marketing advice on how to promote and sell their rams. In the latter phase of the project a stand-alone Hill Ram Scheme sale will be established.

In Wales' stratified sheep system, hill ewes form a significant part of lowland flock production. Therefore, the identification of elite genetics in the hill flock will allow the benefits and improvements to cascade down through the whole Welsh sheep industry.



ANSAWDD
CIG OEN CYMRU
WELSH LAMB
MEAT QUALITY



PGI Welsh Lamb is a product that's recognised far and wide for premium quality and the **Welsh Lamb Meat Quality** project aims to strengthen this even further.

HCC works across the supply chain to sustain and elevate Welsh Lamb's position and reputation. In collaboration with all aspects of the supply chain – from producer, to processor and purchaser – it aims to establish a supply-chain model based on taste panels involving hundreds of consumers across the UK.

The project will seek to identify any eating quality variations from within the supply chain and evaluate how these impact on three key factors: tenderness, flavour and juiciness. Examples of these variations include genetics, systems and seasonality, to name just a few.

The consumer taste-testing panel findings will be used to establish an assessment of meat quality variation.

Eating quality guidelines will then be built and will seek to drive consistency by identifying and influencing key practices throughout the sheep meat production and processing pathways.

This work will also aim to enhance the commercial shelf-life of PGI Welsh Lamb. Extending its shelf-life would bring added returns to the supply chain and increase the product's market value and export potential. For the same reasons, reducing wastage will be another key consideration of this project in order to boost the profitability of the sector as a whole.

Work will also be undertaken into developing an in-depth understanding of consumer requirements and attitudes towards Welsh Lamb which will underpin this element of the Programme.



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