



**Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) held at 10am at Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff on Thursday 10 July 2025**

**Present:** Cath Smith (Chair)  
Gareth Wynn Davies, John T Davies, Jack Evershed, Mike Humphreys, Vicki Spencer-Francis, Emlyn Roberts; Caroline Sanger-Davies, Dewi Hughes, Paul Savage, Hugh Hesketh-Evans

**By invitation:** Maria Richards (Welsh Government)  
Gareth Bevington (Welsh Government)

**Executive:** Jose Peralta, CEO  
Gareth Jones, Head of Finance and Corporate Governance  
Meilyr Ceredig – Head of Promotions and Operations  
John Richards, Producer and Processor Lead  
Jason Craig, Market Development Lead  
Pip Gill, Brand Engagement Lead  
Russ Thomas, Policy Development Lead  
Jo Horder, Secretariat

*For Item 10 – Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs;  
Gian Marco, Director of Rural Affairs, Welsh Government*

**1. Welcome and Chair's Comments**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Welsh Government for hosting.

The Chair thanked and congratulated the CEO and John T Davies for their recent interviews on S4C's Ffermio.

The Chair gave an update on the key events and meetings she had attended since the previous Board meeting -

12 May – Teams meeting with Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna CBE, Cardiff University, followed by a Welsh Government Update meeting,  
15 May – HCC Remuneration Committee,  
19 May – Ministerial Roundtable,  
21 May – NSA Welsh Sheep,  
9 June – Welsh Government update meeting,  
10 June – NFU Cymru Celebration of Welsh Food and Farming event, Cardiff;  
12 June – HCC Board Teams update,  
18 June – Ministerial Roundtable,  
19 June – Farming Connect Strategic Advisory Board,  
21 June – Ministerial Roundtable,

23 June – Ministerial Roundtable,  
24 June - BVA Dinner in Cardiff

2. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. **To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 8 May 2025**

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board.

5. **Matters arising**

The report was noted by the Board.

**Framework Agreement**

The Framework document had been finalised and sent for translation. It will be signed later in July and published on the Welsh Government website. Once signed, arrangements will be made for the Deputy First Minister to issue a remit letter for HCC.

Other ongoing matters arising were covered on the agenda.

6. **HCC Reports**

*a. Delivery Report and Forthcoming Events*

The report was taken as read by the Board. Key points highlighted were;

**Supply Chain – Market Development**

- A report had been produced regarding the Butchers Club, with new support activities proposed. These will be launched at the Royal Welsh Show;
- Annual pre and post campaign meetings were being held with retailers;
- A leading foodservice supplier in Italy had recently visited Wales as part of an inward mission organised by HCC.

A discussion was had regarding the Butchers Club and how this will be taken forward in a way that will be most beneficial and add value to butchers. It was agreed that a summary plan on key proposals in the longer term would be helpful for the Board.

**Action: Market Development Lead**

**Strategic Marketing and Connections**

- The Welsh Lamb Campaign will launch during the Royal Welsh Show week. A number of retailers will be taking part in the campaign in England and Wales. HCC will support them where product is available using AdMaxim and Sky AdSmart technologies;
- Two ambassadors had been secured to support campaigns, Jonathon 'Fox' Davies and Lauren Price, MBE;
- Social media work had been undertaken with influencer Adele Nicoll;
- A refreshed consumer website will be launched next week;
- New case studies are being pulled together to promote Pork Blasus. HCC is

supporting the YFC weaner competition and will carry out ongoing work with the winners.

### **Supply Chain – Producers and Processors**

- The activity of the Meat Minds group for 2024-25 had completed. Feedback on the initiative will be sought from participants. Selection is taking place for the 2025-26 group;
- One scholar had been selected for the HCC Scholarship;
- HCC had attended numerous meetings regarding Bluetongue;
- The Producer and Processor Lead had been appointed to the FSA Welsh Food Advisory Committee.

### **Sustainability and Future Policy**

- Work continued with partner levy bodies on projects such as Ramcompare. HCC had re-engaged in supporting Genetic Evaluations and CT Scanning with the caveat that, as well as assessment of production traits, further environmental traits are included;
- HCC is an associate advisory partner on DEFRA/UKRI funded Land Use Net Zero (LUNZ) HUB and a partner with Aberystwyth University and UWE on the LUNZ Grassland project;
- Discussions continued with contractors delivering on the AHDB Baseline project along with other potential suppliers to deliver on an expanded project in Wales. A funding request has been submitted to Welsh Government to support this project.
- Over 200 responses were received to the Water Baseline questionnaire. Data is being assessed to determine the carbon saving on Welsh farms from utilising their own farm resourced water over mains water;
- The results of the water baseline assessment will be included in a review of the Welsh Way with updated research findings.

Regarding the joint levy boards letter to EUDR, a meeting had recently taken place and an update will be provided in due course.

### **Action: Policy Development Lead**

#### **Communications**

- The final report for the ETRA HCC inquiry had been produced. The publication date is awaited. HCC will receive the report two days in advance of publication;
- HCC had provided evidence to the ETRA food processing inquiry;
- Ongoing discussion had taken place with Welsh Government on the development of Vision 2030.

#### *b. Royal Welsh briefing*

The Head of Promotions and Operations provided a verbal update on the key activities taking place on the HCC stand. This will include the HCC Breakfast on Monday morning with the Deputy First Minister in attendance, daily drop-in sessions regarding Vision 2030, various industry focused activities, and opportunities to meet with retailers and processors. The HCC trailer will be adjoining the stand and will provide consumer-facing activities and cooking demonstrations. A full briefing paper and itinerary will be provided before the show.

#### *c. Financial update*

The Head of Finance and Corporate Governance presented the above and highlighted the key points.

### Management Accounts March 2025

- Income realisation to period 12 shows a negative variance to original budget (March 2024) with sheep down by 22% against budget profile, whilst cattle is up by 4% against budget profile;
- The draft financial statements are almost complete. Audit Wales will begin their audit work in July. Full financial statements will be brought to the Audit and Risk in October and the Board in November.

### **Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance (Chair of A&R Committee)**

### Management Accounts May 2025

- Levy income was currently ahead of profile;
- Provisional forecast update projects a revised deficit position of £142k compared with £125k budget deficit.

The reports were noted by the Board.

## **7. Information Sharing**

### *a. Market Bulletin Summary*

The report was taken as read.

### *b. Butchers Club*

The report was taken as read.

### *c. Whole of Government Accounts Minor Body Exemption Return 2024-25*

The report was taken as read.

### *d. Meat Business Women – Food Business Charter*

The report was taken as read.

HCC has been confirmed as a supporting signatory to the Charter. The Chair expressed her thanks to HCC's Communications Senior Officer for her work on this.

## **8. HCC Committee**

### Audit and Risk Committee

### *a. To receive a verbal report of the meeting held on 19 June 2025*

The Committee Chair provided a verbal report and highlighted the key points.

- The Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed to take into account requirements within the Framework Agreement;
- External audit – Audit Wales had confirmed the audit plan for 2024-25. The Audit Enquiry letter was presented and approved by the Committee;
- Internal Audit – the IT Business Continuity & Incident Management and Health and Safety audit reports were presented. Good practice and areas for improvement were reported. Actions arising will be reported to the Committee in October. Azets were content with progress made on previous audit

- recommendations;
- Risk management – the Risk Assurance Framework was presented and key points highlighted. The Committee approved risk appetite amendments for Finance and Safety & Security from ‘Cautious’ to ‘Minimal’;
- Procurement Strategy and Policy - these documents had been reviewed and comprehensively updated to align with the requirements of the new legislative framework. They were approved by the Committee;
- Framework Agreement – this was discussed as stated in Item 5 above;
- Meeting frequency - for the next financial year the Committee will consider best practice advice to meet quarterly;
- Audit & Risk Committee Annual Effectiveness Review Report - the terms of reference stipulate that the Audit and Risk Committee will provide the Board and Accounting Officer with an Annual Report summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the year. The draft report will be reviewed by the Committee and presented to the Board in September.

**Action: Head of Finance and Corporate Governance (Chair of A&R Committee)**

Relevant reports from the meeting were presented and noted by the Board.

*b. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025*

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board.

Sustainable Innovation and Research Group

*c. To receive a verbal report of the meeting held on 15 May 2025*

The Group Chair provided a verbal report. Key points highlighted were;

- Group communication regarding industry issues was discussed and the HCC CEO outlined HCC’s strategy and approach to responding to requests for comments;
- All members provided an update on recent relevant activities and information in their areas / businesses;
- HCC provided an update on current R&D activity and projects;
- HCC CEO outlined ideas for the future of the red meat industry and the development of Vision 2030. There was a wide-ranging discussion on the challenges and how best to tackle them. The Group was very willing to feed into the Vision development.

The Group Chair reported that it was a very constructive meeting. Going forward it is an opportune time to review the Terms of Reference and membership of the Group to optimise support for the research and development aspects of the future Vision.

*d. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025*

The above was taken as read and approved by the Board.

**9. Corporate**

***a. Vision 2030 Progress update***

The CEO and Producer and Processor Lead presented the above.

The farmer survey will close at the end of July. The Board was thanked for their attendance at markets to assist with engagement on the survey. Further activity will take place to increase responses before the closing date, including daily events at the Royal Welsh Show.

A 'Call for industry Views' is being developed to give stakeholders the opportunity to respond on the main topics highlighted during the initial engagement phase. The draft will be shared with the Board for comment.

The CEO outlined key themes emerging from stakeholder engagement to date. The opportunity for the Board to have input to the Vision was discussed. The possibility of scheduling a session in September will be explored.

**Action: Chair / CEO**

**10. Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs**

The Chair thanked the Deputy First Minister for hosting the meeting and giving his time to attend.

The Deputy First Minister opened by thanking the Board for the opportunity to attend the meeting. Things had changed significantly since his last meeting with the Board, with many challenges arising. HCC's engagement with industry for Vision 2030 was a critical part of the discussions on these challenges, including the effects of climate change, decarbonisation targets, the impact of falling livestock numbers on the processing sector and the ability to maintain a critical mass regarding livestock numbers. He went on to say that it was important for HCC to be a levy board that the industry can trust and engage with, and there was good support for the ideas HCC is putting forward.

In response to points raised by the Board, the Deputy Minister discussed the principles of the new Sustainable Farming Scheme, which will have a strong emphasis on supporting the type of farming that works well in Wales. It will recognise the importance of small and medium size farms in sustaining local communities, whilst being honest about the challenges and the need to co-exist with nature and the environment. It will be genuinely accessible to all and provide a solid framework to work from.

The Scheme has a role to play in sustaining livestock numbers to protect landscapes and the viability of the producer and processing sectors, which will ultimately help to sustain rural communities. HCC and the Board also have a role to play, and Welsh Government will look to Vision 2030 for ideas on how this can be achieved. The resources available to HCC to help realise the Vision objectives will play an important part, and Welsh Government is keen to support and work with HCC to achieve the objectives.

On behalf of the Board, Jack Evershed provided some closing words and thanked the Deputy Minister for his support for HCC and for the possibility of grant funding being provided in future to deliver its remit. The Board welcomed the ongoing close working with Welsh Government in support of Vision 2030.

**11. Any Other Business**

A query was raised regarding a recent cyber incident affecting HCC. The Head of Finance and Governance updated the Board on the actions taken following this incident. It was noted that HCC is covered by cyber insurance.

Information was provided on two events taking place in 2025 which would be of interest to HCC; the European Grassland Federation symposium being held in Reading in September and the Eucarpia Fodder Crops and Amenity Grasses Section Conference being held in Aberystwyth, also in September.

**12. Dates of forthcoming meetings**

Board Meeting - Thursday 11 September 2025 at 10.00am

Board Meeting – Thursday 13 November 2025 at 10.00am

**Signed..... Chair of HCC**