

Senedd Cymru

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig

Ymchwiliad: Prosesu Bwyd

Cyf: FP02

Ymateb gan: British Meat Processors Association (BMPA)

-

Welsh Parliament

Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Inquiry: Food Processing

Ref: FP02

Evidence from: British Meat Processors Association (BMPA)





The British Meat Processors Association is the leading UK red meat trade body, working on behalf of businesses that supply over 80% 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 the Government and other organisations to help develop a meat industry that is competitive, professional and provides 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.

We have three key members in Wales - 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.

The reductions and the forecast reductions in livestock numbers in Wales 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 current trajectory 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.

The Vision document and Net zero

“To support these environmental sustainability goals, the Welsh Government will undertake research to better understand the carbon impact of the food chain and supply systems in Wales. Critical to this will be developing our understanding of how food and drink manufacturers and their supply chains contribute to the carbon budget and identifying new technologies that can reduce the carbon impact throughout the food system in Wales. The outcomes of the research will enable the Welsh Government to develop a specific action plan which sets out appropriate steps for reducing carbon emissions across the industry. This action plan will provide direction to reduce the carbon impact of manufacturing and processing through process efficiency, energy usage and waste reduction and will link to other Welsh Government initiatives.”

It is our view that rather than following the actions stated above the drive to net zero has mainly focused on reducing livestock numbers.

Nick Allen

Chief Executive