

Paper from the Agri-Food Partnership

**Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, National Assembly for Wales
Meeting 22 November 2000.**

Agri-Food Partnership - Lamb and Beef Strategy Group

Introduction

An action plan for the development of the Lamb and Beef sector in Wales was published in March 1999 following the work of the Agri-Food Partnership's Lamb and Beef Task force under the chairmanship of John Lloyd Jones. Since then, actions have been taken according to the plan, led by the WDA and key partner organisations, in particular Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions.

The Lamb and Beef Strategy group of the Agri-food Partnership oversees the delivery of the plan. In September 2000, a new Chairman, farmer Richard Howells from Port Talbot, was appointed for the group.

The attached table provides information on the progress made in terms of the delivery of the action plans to date, and gives an overview of the work currently in progress.

Action point	Lead Responsibility / Partners	Progress made	Work in progress
Lamb and Beef Strategy			

1- Develop extensive image for Welsh Lamb and Beef	Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions/ WDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EU Product protection applied for. ● Publicity material, TV advertising, Consumer and Trade exhibitions attended, where Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef are both promoted as extensively produced products. ● Sial trade fair was a success in terms enquiries. The success of the show with regard to new orders achieved is being monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EU product protection - NAW are engaged in the arbitration progress ● Further consumer / trade events planned for the Winter , the winter fair being priority for the domestic market
2. Develop export markets	WLBP / WDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Progress made during the last year on exports of Welsh Lamb and Beef. (40% increase (from a low base) of export of Welsh lamb, plus the first introduction of Welsh Beef into Europe since the export ban. ● New export deal achieved in Jersey and the other Channel Islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further activity this year will focus on the development of the Scandinavian and southern European market for Lamb. ● Further work will be undertaken to consolidate and build on the success of the Welsh beef brand in Europe.

3. Stronger marketing arrangements	WDA / MLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grants provided from WDA and MLC for WLBP's marketing and promotions activity. ● WDA Grants awarded to WLBP 's last year to value in excess of £500K £370,000 is being made available for core funding in this financial year. ● WDA has also grant-aided individual companies and organisations to market the Welsh brand: Welsh Lamb Direct, Brecon Beacons Lamb, Sweet Ithon Lamb. ● Welsh Mountain Sheep Society has had an encouraging start to its project and sales have exceeded original forecasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WDA / WLBP are executing current year's plan for marketing and promotional activity, including exhibition activity, developing existing and new market channels. ● Ongoing marketing activity is needed to hold these current levels
4. Develop niche markets	WDA / Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support has been provided directly to three niche groups to help their development: Welsh Lamb Direct, Brecon Beacons Lamb and Sweet Ithon Lamb. Further discussions taking place with groups throughout the country interested in taking advantage of structural funding. ● Welsh mountain Sheep society has developed its market further into safeway ● The Veal from the Carmarthen site in conjunction with Serval in France had a very good 	<p>Agri-Food Development Assistance provided to two projects aimed at developing niche market products..</p> <p>Initial feedback on the feasibility of the Veal project will be available in December.</p>

		<p>response in SIAL ongoing links within the food chain are being investigated to ensure maximum effectiveness is reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food Centre Wales, has successfully completed its technical development project into The Welsh Sausage with the product being launched in November in Sainsburys. The other smaller outlets will be gaining support to progress the product into the hospitality sector TOW being a key player in this ● Taste of Wales scheme now has over 350 members. The scheme has as one of its aims, the promotion of the use of local food (including locally produced lamb and beef) 	
<p>5. Build a bigger stake for farmer in supply chain</p>	<p>WDA / Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feasibility study conducted to the setting up of an all-Wales farmer- owned marketing co-operative. ● Subsequent prospectus developed to encourage farmers to take a shareholding in a new company – ‘The Welsh Meat Company plc’ ● Although fewer than 1000 farmers applied for shares originally, the board has identified a way forward in two possible Joint Venture initiatives with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further work to develop the Welsh Meat Company will be undertaken. ● The company has progressed with the Joint venture proposals to which key players in the food chain have expressed an interest. ● A site has been proposed to be built in the Business park Horeb specifically looking at added value projects

		<p>processing sector in Wales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other collaborative activities supported (as stated above) 	
<p>6. Develop added value processing</p>	<p>WDA /Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key account management system of the WDA is available for all key processing companies within the sector in Wales. ● Business development assistance provided to 7 key sector companies during the current financial year. Issues include new product development, capital investment and marketing support. ● Agri-Food Assistance grants have been awarded to 7 private sector companies aimed at adding value to Welsh produce. Jointly, the two projects will result in business worth a targeted £2.5m to the Welsh primary produce sector, and potentially 50-70 jobs further down the line. ● Agri-Food Assistance has been provided to Food Centre Wales, Horeb on two added-value projects in the red meat sector, and to the other centres of expertise on more general training and expertise development. The projects will result in the building up of skills within the sector to enable new product development to take place within a larger proportion of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further project assistance being discussed with companies. ● A fast-track objective 1 bid to enable companies to access European funding for added-value projects has been submitted. The submission has three elements, including a Processing and Marketing Grant scheme and an SME Food Processing grant scheme. ● An initial base-line audit of Welsh companies in the sector is being carried out to ascertain the companies that have the management potential to develop. ● The welsh lamb sausage can be further developed into a pre-packed range with all indicators showing a market of more than 50 times the size of its current position – Market Channels programme is pursuing this project ● A programme of technical excellence run by UWIC will encourage the use of IT in meat processing plants and increase effectiveness

		<p>Welsh meat companies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Agri-Food Services directory has being printed to enable front line advisers to have easier access to the support mechanisms available to the businesses within the sector that they are supporting. 	<p>and efficiencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An investigation into the capacity issues of slaughtering in Wales is underway commissioned by the WDA on behalf of Lamb and Beef strategy group. • A Welsh meat industry compendium is being compiled to ensure information is accessible and key performance indicators can be measured.
7. Livestock market development	WDA / National Assembly for Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Assembly for Wales and WDA have held initial meetings with Livestock Auctioneers representatives in Wales to discuss their future direction and to have initial dialogue as to the support mechanisms required. • Two grants to the Livestock Auction sector have been awarded – aimed at improving the service provided to, and IT linkages with farmers. 	MDS grant application has been submitted that, in conjunction with the MLC will provide quality pricing systems in Livestock marts

8. Farm and Supply Chain Certification	WDA / National Assembly for Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Branding exercise for Welsh Food and Drink progressing. Initial reporting sessions held late May / early June. 3 brand positioning proposals have been market tested. ● European funding in place to develop an underpinning Farm and Supply Chain Certification system for Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on the certification system now gathering pace to develop a Welsh position and its place with respect to the British certification development. ● Changes in Beef labelling EU legislation being closely tracked to ensure any further implications to the industry are reacted to accordingly ●
9. Farm Development	WDA / National Assembly for Wales / Partners on the Farm Development Strategy Group	<p>Priorities for the Farm Development Strategy group have now been set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of the Demonstration farm network to enable new technology transfer to be accelerated. ● Development of a Business and IT training programme for the Welsh Agricultural industry ● Development of a skills and education programme for the Agri-Food Sector ● Developing a long-term vision of the farming industry in Wales. ● Improve the access by farmers to existing business support networks. <p>Current activities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further development work being undertaken on the Farming Connect model

- Proposal for Farming Connect are being advanced. This will pick up in many of the issues being looked at by the Farm Development Strategy group, and lead to a co-ordinated farmer-focused service for Wales, including general and sector specific business and technical advice, capital grants among other services and products.