



Hybu Cig Cymru Meat Promotion Wales

Our Ref: GH/KH/Cons.

8 December 2021

Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Email: SeneddEconomy@senedd.wales

Dear Paul

Priorities for the Committee - Farming Organisations - Questions not reached

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Committee's meeting on 11 November 2021. I welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the Committee's priorities for the Sixth Senedd.

In response to the request for comments on whether enough is being done to promote the UK Geographical Indication (GI) Scheme, I would make the following comments.

Background

As a result of the UK leaving the EU, on the 01 January 2021 the EU Protected Food Name Scheme was replaced in the UK by a UK GI Scheme. As Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef are protected under the EU Protected Food Name (PFN) Scheme as products with PGI status, these changes relate to both Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef. PGI Welsh Lamb and PGI Welsh Beef are now protected by EU and UK legislation.

PGI status provides a guarantee of provenance and a mark of quality; reinforcing consumer confidence in the product and allowing it to be sold at a premium. Both domestic and global gains rely on effective premiumisation and the ability to

differentiate and promote branded products, as such HCC considers the status of PGI to be of enormous economic importance to the Welsh red meat industry.

Promotion

During 2021, HCC reviewed the Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef brand guidelines in light of the changes, and updated branding guidance was shared with the industry. A dual approach for Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef branding is being adopted, where:

- The EU PGI logo will continue being used (alongside the Welsh Lamb/ Welsh Beef trademark logo) on products being sold into the EU (and Northern Ireland).
- The UK GI logo will be used (alongside the Welsh Lamb/ Welsh Beef trademark logo) on products being sold within GB and into other international markets (beyond the EU).

The deadline for the UK GI logos introduction is January 2024, however HCC is encouraging businesses to adopt the new UK GI logos at their earliest opportunity.

Recognition of the new UK GI scheme and logos is therefore crucial. Recognition of the EU PFN scheme logos had been rising in the UK since the schemes' introduction in 1993, and the switch to new logos in the UK will obviously have a negative effect, reducing the logo awareness back to zero. HCC would therefore encourage Government to commit sufficient resources towards a promotion/ awareness campaign, to encourage sufficient promotion amongst the retail sector and consumers.

A market and promotion scheme (like the EU promotional scheme) could be introduced to raise awareness of the UK GI scheme and its products within the UK. Significant support was obtained by HCC in the past through European Union funds for promoting foods with PGI status - HCC benefited from two rounds of this funding, focused on marketing of Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef within the EU (including the UK). The EU scheme was funded 50% by the EU; and 50% by HCC.

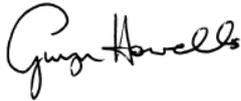
Enforcement

Resourcing the enforcement of the UK GI scheme is also important, to ensure it is fully robust. Historically, there has been a limited amount of enforcement action taken in regard to PFN product protection within the UK, partly as a result of a lack of bespoke enforcement legislation in this area, but also due to the lack of resourcing and understanding amongst enforcement authorities.

We would also urge the Government to maintain the EU's current robust approach to assessing new applications in the new UK GI scheme, as it is important that only products which demonstrate genuine quality credentials, linked to a defined geographical area, be awarded UK GI protection.

I am content to meet to discuss this further if needed.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwyn Howells". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gwyn Howells
Chief Executive