

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Paul Davies MS
Chair
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

19 December 2022

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter of 28 November, regarding sheep meat and marketing standards in the Agriculture (Wales) Bill.

As you set out in your letter, the provisions in the Agriculture (Wales) Bill allowing the Welsh Ministers to make marketing standards regulations have their origin in Regulation (EU) 1308/2013, the CMO Regulation, now retained EU Law by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. The list contained in this regulation of agricultural products, for which specific marketing standards may be made, is the product of many years of discussions between the European institutions and industry. The mirroring of this list in Welsh legislation is not intended to reflect the importance of these products in comparison to others without particular marketing standards requirements.

Sheep meat is one of the key foodstuffs produced in Wales, being important to both our agricultural economy and our culture. Its labelling is governed by the Food Information to Consumers (FIC) Regulation 1169/2011, which also forms part of retained EU law. Article 26 and Annex XI of the FIC Regulation require there must be an indication of country of origin or place of provenance for sheep meat included in any labelling. This requirement is enforced by the Food (Information) Wales Regulations 2014 in relation to food business operators in Wales.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

You may have seen how clause 32(6) of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill does allow the Welsh Ministers to make amendments to Schedule 1 of the Bill, to add or remove products from the list. The list is deliberately non exhaustive to allow for future proofing of the agriculture sector and does not prevent other products being added.

In making any changes to marketing standards regulations, I would have to consider the impact of such changes on trade, both internationally and with the other UK nations. Were marketing standards to differ in Wales compared with the rest of the UK, we may see a situation where producers would have to comply with two sets of marketing standards rules. As such, any potential changes would have to be carefully considered to avoid creating barriers to trade and discussed in detail with the other governments of the UK.

The UK nations are currently working together on sheep carcass classification regulations to make standards more effective. The Welsh Government is collaborating with DEFRA and the Scottish Government to develop regulations which are designed to improve the efficiency of the market in sheep meat. While this will not affect the marketing standards of the end product sold to the consumer, it will mean farmers and processors can expect a consistent price based on the quality of their produce.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a light grey or blue ink on a white background.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd