

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Andrew RT Davies MS  
Chair  
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

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30 May 2025

Dear Andrew,

## Hybu Cig Cymru

Thank you for your letter following my Committee attendance on 7 May. As requested I have addressed your questions as set out below:-

**1. What is the current relationship between HCC and other levy boards in the UK, specifically the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and Quality Meat Scotland?**

HCC has a good relationship with its sister levy boards across the UK. Regular formal and informal communications exist resulting in the delivery of UK wide consumer focused campaigns, research and development projects as well as wider industry development.

A snapshot of the current formalised communications channels are provided at Annex A.

**2. How much collaboration takes place currently between the organisations? Please could you provide examples?**

HCC has been in regular collaboration between the organisations. Examples of collaboration projects over recent years are provided at Annex A.

**3. Has the Welsh Government and/or HCC explored avenues for the further sharing of resources and best practice (in non-competitive areas) between these organisations?**

- Due to its finite resources, HCC continually explores opportunities to maximise value for its levy-payers through collaboration with sister levy boards.
- Where better value for money can be secured in non-competitive activity there is an implicit understanding that collaboration should be sought with sister levy boards.

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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.

- As a Welsh Government owned, independently operated company, HCC are also able to maximise the value of activities, research, and event presence through collaboration within the wider Welsh public sector, sensitive to the unique needs of the industry in Wales within its devolved legislative and policy context.
  - PGI Welsh Lamb and PGI Welsh Beef holds a unique position over its English counterpart. Due to the designation of PGI status it is able to market itself clearly as 'Welsh' over its English counterpart which has to market itself as 'British' due to the lack of a PGI designation. This unique selling point dictates the need for separation at times in its promotion through a focused, Wales run, Wales owned, levy body.
4. **What are your views on how the relationship between these organisations should look in the future and will greater collaboration with other levy boards be reflected in the Welsh Government's new framework agreement with HCC?**
- HCC has built up a good relationship with the other levy boards and through continuing collaboration will continue to work together to amplify activity where relevant and , access funding to establish programmes which maximise value for money that benefit the whole supply chain.
  - My officials have been working closely with HCC to agree the revised updated Framework Agreement which provides clarity surrounding roles and responsibilities of HCC executive, board and Welsh Ministers and officials.
  - The Framework Agreement also states that HCC shall prepare an annual operational plan setting out the level of service to be achieved in key areas and the performance and output information to be collected to monitor progress.
  - The key performance indicators as set out in the Operational Plan 2025-2026 include engagement and collaboration activity with the other levy bodies, for example:-
    - **Red meat industry roadmap** - To progress, develop and communicate an industry-owned roadmap to net zero with other devolved levy bodies and wider industry

I hope you find this information helpful to assist you in the next steps of the inquiry into HCC.

Yours sincerely,



**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

### Current formalised communication channels

- Biannual meeting of the Chairs (LMC, QMS, HCC & AHDB).
- Quarterly meetings carried out between the levy boards (LMC, QMS, HCC & AHDB) at CEO level as well as CEO monthly virtual meetings, to discuss non-commercial opportunities to collaborate and discuss areas where strategic collaboration would benefit the industry.
- Regular meetings are also carried out between senior leadership team members and counterparts in sister levy boards (e.g. quarterly levy repatriation meetings).
- In addition, wider ad-hoc collaboration meetings are also in place (on a group and one-to-one level) dependent on the subject matter (e.g. communications campaigns through to research). For example, during key marcoms campaign periods (such as *'Love Lamb Week'* and *'Great British Beef Week'* – fortnightly meetings are in place).
- During periods of critical need (e.g. at the height of the pandemic when the hospitality industry was closed) levy boards urgently put into action a *'Make it Beef'* campaign with only a few weeks' notice and collaborated throughout to secure its successful delivery.

### Examples of collaboration projects over recent years

#### **Policy and sustainability**

- Carbon baselining: as part of HCC's commitment to the soil health environmental metric, there is collaboration with sector partners, AHDB and QMS. The aim being to deliver environment baselining to establish on-farm net carbon, taking account of carbon stored in soil, along with hedges and trees, as well as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sequestration.
- HCC continues collaboration with both AHDB and QMS on pre-competitive sustainability workstreams, and other UK sector partners, to help reinforce the sustainability message. This includes the recently published, industry-led, [Beef & Lamb Roadmap](#) – to a net zero brief.
- In addition, work continues on industry leading genetic improvement projects focusing on efficiency and environmental gain such as the [RamCompare](#) and Breeding Better programmes.
- [RamCompare](#) is a national sheep progeny testing initiative, jointly funded by HCC and AHDB. The project gathers valuable performance data from commercial lambs to drive genetic improvements in the sheep industry.
- [GrassCheck GB supporting UK grassland](#) productivity with on-farm support is dedicated to enhancing grassland and productivity across the UK through levy board and wider collaboration.
- Securing further return of investment through sharing research and data is also regularly explored. Examples include, purchasing of consumer data in conjunction with AHDB, in order to secure better value for money (e.g. Kantar WorldPanel information).

## Trade and export

- In the area of international trade and export, the HCC team has collaborated and attended trade stands shared with sister levy boards. A current example being work ongoing with AHDB to explore the possibility of a shared stand at Gulfood 2026. Such shared activity has been carried out in the past in trade events such as Gulfood 2023.
- At other international trade events (e.g. Foodex 2025, New York Fancy Food 2026) HCC secures preferential rates through attendance in collaboration with the Welsh Government's Food Division. Such an approach allows HCC to maximise the benefit of collaboration with either government or sister levy board partners.
- HCC create bespoke events in market utilising Welsh Government assets in the region to minimise cost, for example, utilising UK embassies to showcase our product instead of paying for a restaurant and utilising Welsh Government staff to help plan and coordinate activities.

## Brand and communications collaboration

HCC works with sister levy boards regularly on integrated UK national campaigns. Recent examples include:

- Collaboration on **beef** is best showcased yearly during Great British Beef Week. This year saw the farmer led campaign, Naturally delicious – [Great British Beef Week 2025](#), putting the faces behind British beef farming at the heart of the campaign. Collaborating with sister levy boards allowed a rebranding of the yearly campaign to 'Beef Week' in order to promote the PGI Welsh Beef brand in Wales.
- Collaboration on **lamb** is showcased best with HCC's yearly collaboration around Love Lamb Week in September each year. In 2024, the HCC team worked with its sister levy board to deliver the UK wide [Make it Lamb campaign](#). This saw a reach of almost two million users across social media in its collaboration over [all four UK red meat levy boards](#).
- In the area of **health and education**, HCC shares ideas, best practice and information with colleagues from AHDB, QMS and LMCNI. We are currently exploring how to work in collaboration for 'New Scientist Live' for 2025/26.
- When Food a Fact of Life, run by British Nutrition Foundation and funded by AHDB, have an education event in Wales, HCC works in partnership with our sister levy board – e.g. invited co-host participation.