



SCOTTISH AGRICULTURE AT THE HEART OF THE NATION

Our positive contribution to food, climate change, environment and economy



At NFU Scotland, we promote the hugely positive impact that Scottish farmers and crofters have on diet, food production, climate change, the environment, renewable energy and the economy.

Given the recent media attention on these areas, and the misinformation often provided by other parties, the following bullet points summarise NFU Scotland's position on these.

These messages may be useful should you be asked for comment or be discussing any of these subject areas with fellow members, industry stakeholders, politicians, colleagues, consumers or the media.

The intention is for NFU Scotland to create a leaflet to distribute to consumers at events being scheduled for later this spring.

In Detail

- Scottish farmers and crofters are amongst the greenest, most climate-friendly in the world.
- As well as producing fresh, tasty, local food, Scottish farmers and crofters preserve the landscape, improve biodiversity, plant trees, restore peat, improve water and soil quality, and generate renewable energy.
- Let's get the figures correct! The Committee on Climate Change figures show that UK agriculture is responsible for just nine per cent of total UK emissions, with cattle and sheep responsible for just three per cent. (Source: AHDB).
- Scottish agriculture has already reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by almost 30 per cent (Source: Scottish Government).
- The figures on where most of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions come from shows that 26 per cent is generated by transport; 25 per cent by energy; 17 per cent by business and 14 per cent in the home.
- The greenhouse gas footprint of beef produced in the UK is 60 per cent LOWER than the average for the rest of the world (Source: NFU).
- Scotland's landscape and climate are unique! Much of Scotland's farmland is unploughable and unsuitable for crops, but ideal to grow grass and our climate means we are rarely short of water. That grass – which we can't eat - is converted by Scotland's cattle and sheep into some of the tastiest, nutrient-rich beef, milk and lamb in the world.
- Grazing cattle and sheep on our hills and uplands has a positive impact on biodiversity, conservation and Scotland's iconic scenery which boosts our tourism industry.
- More than 90 per cent of the nutritional needs of beef cows and sheep are met by grass, hay or silage making it the greenest, most sustainable way of farming (Source: AHDB).
- And where you have livestock, you have manure! This is a vital and valuable organic resource for soil health, growing healthy plants and reducing reliance on synthetic fertilisers.

- Thank you for the support. Consumer analyst Kantar calculated that, in the last year, 98 percent of UK households purchased red meat and 99.8 percent purchased a dairy product.
- The great news for Scottish consumers is that the recommended daily intake of red meat is 70 grams per day and the average Scottish intake of red meat, at 56 grams, is still well within the recommended levels (Source: QMS).
- As well as fantastic meat, eggs, milk and cereals, Scotland grows a delicious range of fruits, potatoes and veg and we would encourage you to always look for local products with low food miles.
- Since 2014, at least 10 trees have been planted for every person living in Scotland. For many farmers and crofters, forestry is an important part of their business and in 2018/19, 11,210 hectares of woodland were created in Scotland - 84 per cent of the UK total.
- Thanks to farmers, Scotland is on target to deliver all its electricity requirement from renewable sources this year. The largest proportion of Scotland's renewable energy is generated from schemes located on Scottish farms and estates, significantly improving Scotland's carbon footprint.
- Public support of Scottish farming is growing - 83 per cent of Scots believe farming is an essential public service. A further 86 per cent see farming as critical to the success of the Scottish economy.
- Agriculture supports 75,000 businesses and 360,000 jobs in a food and drink industry that turns over £14 billion a year. (Source: Scotland Food and Drink).
- Food and Drink is Scotland's largest manufacturing sector and is bigger now than the oil and gas industry. (Source: Scottish Government).
- Farmers and crofters continuing to produce meat, milk, cereals, fruit and veg to world-leading standards are critical to our food and drink sector reaching its target value of £30 billion by 2030.

