

Rebecca Evans AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd  
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref OAQ(4)0390(NR)

Russell George AM  
Assembly Member for Montgomeryshire  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

26 December 2015

*Dear Russell,*

I undertook to write to you about the current grading system in Welsh abattoirs.

Classification is an important part of providing feedback to producers about the quality of animals which the producers can use to improve their farm business performance. It sets the standards understood throughout the farming and food industry.

I am aware of the limitations of the subjective system used presently and that there is a case to replace it with an automated system. A move to an objective automated evaluation system would represent a major change in approach. In order to achieve the necessary level of objectivity, consistency and transparency of carcase grading, the same system would need to be used across all participating abattoirs in Wales.

Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) has undertaken preliminary work to scope an alternative automated system for lamb that is based on measuring meat yield. HCC proposes to develop this further with the industry as part of its work to deliver the industry's 'Twenty Twenty Vision – the Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Red Meat Industry'.

HCC submitted a proposal for funding through Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in October that has been accepted and HCC has now been invited to submit a full application for funding that would enable them to develop those proposals further to create a Red Meat Strategic Initiative. This would include a pilot to implement and monitor an alternative automated carcase evaluation method and to develop a suitable, centralised framework for a payment system based on meat yield.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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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.

Depending on the exact timing of the funding windows, it is estimated that trial work in abattoirs would commence in 2017 pending agreement of funding proposals and the drawing up of more detailed plans with the industry.

I trust that this has clarified the position.

*Yours,  
Rebecca*

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