

Adam Quinney
Chairman
AHDB Beef & Lamb
Stoneleigh Park
WARWICKSHIRE
CV8 2TL

18th June 2018

Dear Mr Quinney

It is good to see that AHDB seeks to be proactive in communicating with customers preparing for the post-Brexit market in Beef, Lamb and Pork.

However, I do have some concerns regarding recent restructuring within AHDB Beef, Lamb and Pork where many talented individuals have left together with their expertise, prompting me to ask as to how many staff in senior and middle management positions have experience with red meat supply chains and the retailing of red meat?

As the President of the National Federation of Meat and Food Traders, an independent craft butcher, processor and levy payer I find myself obliged to also ask as to what I, my members and the independent meat trade gets back from AHDB Beef, Lamb and Pork in return for the levy we pay? On the face of it 'not very much' is a comment I hear more and more at meat related events as well as from non-QSM customers I serve with locally produced meat.

I note from published sources that pork sales increased during the period that the Pork Loin promotion ran in September 2017. This is good news and AHDB are to be congratulated.

However, one inevitably asks whether this was due to the promotion itself or the poor autumn weather in 2017 compared to 2016? Or because pork was much cheaper compared to beef and lamb at the time? How do results for the Pork Loin campaign compare with Sausage Week in previous years? The sausage is a quintessentially British product that utilises trim, so margins can be enhanced on the other cuts.

It is also worth remembering that boneless pork loins are imported from countries like Spain, Denmark and Belgium, causing one to question if there is a risk of promoting overseas pork? How do volumes of imported pork trim compare with quantities of imported pork loins? Is AHDB engaging with the independent butcher or just supermarkets and red meat exporters?

Whilst I understand that exports are very important in a post-Brexit Britain, I think there is danger of a gap forming in the supply chain and neglecting the home market. My members and I do not pay a levy either directly or as an on cost in carcass price to increase exports and force the price of our domestic product up so much that our own domestic customers buy less of it.

If tariffs come in or the exchange rate changes then the export market will become more challenging and the home market will become more important. The only trouble is on our present trajectory the home market will be depressed and farmers will suffer again with low prices from a market that will come back very slowly. We do not want a see-saw market as we have seen in the past with unsustainable prices for farmers or overpriced meat for consumers. AHDB need to help achieve this balance.

Finally, I am pleased to see AHDB planning more on marketing lamb the least intensive and most naturally fed meat. I would like to see more work on information with labelling so the customer understands more clearly what they are buying, the production methods as well as the health benefits of eating meat.

I hope you and the AHDB board will consider my observations and that there is an opportunity for us to discuss how we may work more closely together in the future while at the same time continuing to receive editorial and information from AHDB for publication in the NFMFT's Craft Butcher monthly magazine.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John Mettrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Mettrick BSc MB.FinstM

President

Cc Jane King

Laura Ryan

Mick Sloyan