

Joint News Release issued on behalf of:



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SCOTTISH FARMERS' MARKET PARTNERSHIP GETS UNDER WAY

The first meeting of the Scottish Farmers' Market Partnership (SFMP) was held today (3 March) at the Rural Centre, Ingliston and was addressed by Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and The Environment Richard Lochhead MSP.

Attending organisations and groups involved in farmers' markets in Scotland were invited to join a cross-sectoral Industry Steering Group (ISG). This group will oversee the SFMP project, deciding what shape the partnership will take moving forward as well as setting policy and priorities.

This aim of this new partnership is to promote, support and build capacity for farmers' markets in Scotland on a sustainable basis. An initial 3-year funding package of £120k has been awarded from Scottish Government, in collaboration with industry partners, through a number of sources including Scottish Government Core Grants, private sector contributions, and the SRDP. These funds will not only help to develop and grow farmers' markets around the country, but will ensure that efforts across groups are co-ordinated, and that opportunities to save costs through collaboration are maximised.

In addition, a further £97k has been made available to support the Farmers' Market sector with a Support Coordinator's post, access to marketing research services and funding to assist the sector to promote itself more effectively. The Support Coordinator will provide advice and support to individual farmers' markets at an operational level and deliver a communication and promotional strategy for the wider sector.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Richard Lochhead said:

“The popularity of farmers' markets has grown rapidly in recent years, in tandem with more Scots taking an interest in where their food comes from and a desire to buy local produce. They are an integral part of our work to boost Scotland's reputation as a land of food and drink.

“This group has the potential to help farmers' markets strengthen their position among Scottish consumers, and, together with the launch of the Eat Fresh, Eat Seasonal campaign, increase awareness of the many benefits of buying local.”

The meeting today gave everyone a chance to hear the outline of the project, the strategic development priorities, the marketing and promotion plan, and the information/communications plan. Attendees were given the opportunity to discuss, advise and feed in suggestions around these points.

Douglas Watson, National Development Officer for the SFMP said:

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“The project will comprise three core strands of activity: strategic development work; marketing and promotion; and communication, information and advice. The intention is to provide as much practical support as possible where resources allow, building on the positive, collaborative, and co-operative working practices that have been developed since the first farmers’ market in Scotland was held in Perth in 1999. The development and implementation of the SFMP project will provide a strong platform for the expansion and development of farmers' markets in Scotland for the future”

Notes to Editors

- Financial assistance for individual farmers’ markets will continue to be available outwith the project through SRDP, Leader and other grant providers.
- The project will be managed on a day-to-day basis by the Partnership Management Group (PMG) consisting of SAFM¹, SAOS², SAC³, SFQC⁴, NFUS⁵, FARMA⁶ all of whom are making significant contributions from their own resources. All members of the PMG will be represented on the ISG.
- Douglas Watson of SAOS has filled the National Development Officer’s role as an extension of his current role in farmers’ markets. If you require any further information on the Partnership, please contact Douglas Watson on T 01997 421753 or E douglas.watson@saos.co.uk

Ends

¹ Scottish Association of Farmers’ Markets

² Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society

³ Scottish Agricultural College

⁴ Scottish Food Quality Certification

⁵ National Farmers’ Union of Scotland

⁶ Farm Retail & Markets Association