



News Release

JOINT COMMITMENT MADE TO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Scottish industry bodies speak ahead of World Environment Day

On the eve of World Environment Day (Saturday, 5 June), three of Scotland's leading agricultural organisations – NFU Scotland, Quality Meat Scotland and SAOS – have issued a joint statement that maps out a route for the Scottish industry to tackle climate change.

The organisations have launched a document, entitled “Producing More With Less – A Joint Industry Commitment on Climate Change”. This sets out their approach as an industry to the challenges and opportunities of climate change and aims to tackle the issue in a realistic and industry-led manner. Support has already been received from Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Richard Lochhead and Ian Marchant, Convener of Scotland's 2020 Climate Group.

Collectively, NFUS, SAOS and QMS believe that by providing quality food in a way that protects and enhances the environment upon which production depends, Scottish agriculture can effectively meet food security demands whilst maintaining the countryside and doing so with less environmental impact than ever before.

The thought-provoking document will be followed by a series of more sector-specific recommendations later in the year. These will outline how individual farmers or groups of producers can actively contribute to Scotland's improving record on emissions while aiding the efficiency and productivity of their farming business.

NFU Scotland's Chief Executive, James Withers said: “World Environment Day serves as a reminder that as an agricultural industry, we have a responsibility to play our part in mitigating the impact that climate change poses. Although a challenge, there is a realisation amongst farmers that this can be tackled in a positive manner.

“There is a real opportunity for us to produce more food but impact less; to preserve our vital role in guaranteeing food security, whilst reducing emissions. In the next steps we will take as a group, we want to remind farmers that in its simplest definition, an emission is a waste to a system; energy that has been lost and could have been utilised. Therefore, to reduce emissions is to reduce waste and improve efficiency. That is good news for farmers and good news in ensuring that our sector's record on emissions continues to improve in the future.

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‘Uel Morton, Chief Executive of Quality Meat Scotland said:

“The Scottish red meat industry is rising to the challenge of climate change and reducing its emissions through improvements in efficiency and productivity. The steps being taken by our industry – from producer through to processor – also have a direct impact on the bottom line for those who work in an industry that provides employment for 50,000 people. Our industry is also ensuring it is well placed to respond positively to the need to feed a rapidly growing and increasingly hungry global population.”

James Graham, Chief Executive of SAOS, added: “Co-operation is already contributing to climate change action by enabling substantial efficiency gains across farms and supply chains: machinery rings enable best utilisation of large machinery and are rolling out precision farming across multiples of farms; marketing co-ops are working closely with farmers and the rest of the supply chain to ensure tight production to specification and minimal waste; and the use of farm-based AD by groups of farmers is set to take off.”

Endorsing the initiative, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Richard Lochhead said:

“Scotland has the most ambitious climate change legislation in the world. To achieve the emission reductions we need the co-operation of all sectors of society and I am delighted that the agriculture industry has demonstrated its commitment to play a full and active role. The action plan explains what can be done to reduce our carbon footprint and maximise productivity. A win-win scenario that complements the Scottish Government led initiative *Farming for a Better Climate*.”

Ian Marchant, Convener of the 2020 Climate Group also welcomed the joint industry commitment, and said: "Agriculture and land use are crucially important in addressing climate change. It is good to see important stakeholders taking this step forward by making a joint commitment to action and declaring their intentions to act responsibly and constructively. It is this kind of commitment to constructive engagement and openness to fresh thinking that will be required across the board if we are to meet our obligations to reduce emissions by 42% by 2020."

Pictured, left to right, are: ‘Uel Morton, Chief Executive of Quality Meat Scotland; Chief Executive of SAOS, James Graham, and James Withers, NFU Scotland’s Chief Executive.

