



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Lesley Griffiths MS,
Minister for Environment, Energy & Rural Affairs,
Welsh Government.

Via email

02/09/2020

Re: Extending Welsh Lamb Shelf Life

Dear Minister,

I am writing to highlight concerns regarding Welsh Government actions to improve the shelf life of Welsh Lamb. Whilst the HCC announced a lengthening in the average shelf-life of PGI Welsh Lamb in May 2020, more movement is required in this area to ensure that the Welsh meat sector can compete with other countries that do have a longer shelf life for their food produce.

Previously, shelf-life figures ranged from around 21 to 28 days, but figures collated from Welsh processors show a 16% improvement over the year, to an average of 33 days. However, New Zealand Lamb has set the global standard with a shelf life of over 60 days for vacuum packed chilled lamb and up to 110 days for CO2 gas flushed lamb. As you will no doubt be aware, successfully achieving a long shelf life depends on having clean and hygienic practices throughout the supply chain, as well as good temperature control once the animal has been slaughtered to keep microbial contamination and subsequent microbial growth to a minimum. One should also note that the lamb industry in New Zealand has adopted best practices in carefully monitoring hygienic dressing, effective moisture and temperature control, as well as good vacuum and CO2 packaging techniques.

By bolstering Welsh Government support to improve hygiene and temperature control during the supply chain, you would be sending a powerful signal of support for this quintessential Welsh product which has Protected Geographical Indication status. We must stand ready to support this fantastic and sustainable product, contributing to the estimated £690 million Welsh red-meat industry. With this in mind, I would be grateful if you could write in response to this letter by providing:

- A commitment to providing better channels of funding and training support so as to improve hygiene and temperature control throughout the Welsh red-meat supply chain.
- A time limited commitment to improve the shelf life of Welsh lamb, so that this delicious, nutritious, and versatile product can be internationally competitive.

I look forward to your reply on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS

Shadow Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs/
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