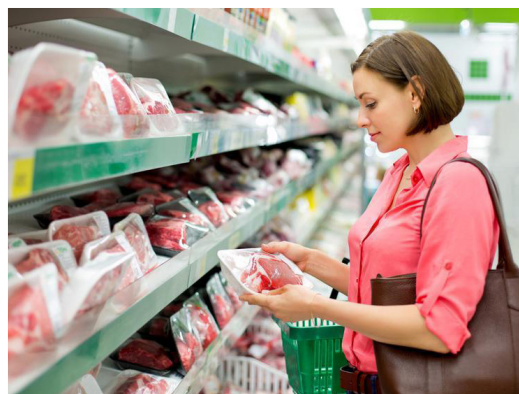


THE SMITHFIELD FORUM

Where Now For
The British Livestock Industry?



Introduction

“It is vital that this industry comes together and supports consumers to make informed choices. I hope this session will form the first step in creating a much-needed industry-wide, open and constructive discussion.”

HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO,
President, Royal Smithfield Club 2021-2022
Smithfield Forum Conference, 24th November 2021

I have watched The Smithfield Forum evolve over the last three years moving from concept to reality. More recently, I have had the pleasure of being involved in working with a strategy group creating the opportunity for the scientific community and the ruminant livestock sector from producer organisations, the processing industry and retailers from throughout the United Kingdom to unite in a project. This has resulted in a very successful Conference Briefing held in London last November.

The work completed by The Smithfield Forum on this occasion has united scientists and all elements of the ruminant livestock supply chain into activity which is strategically important. This united activity is something that I and colleagues from across the industry including senior politicians feel is going to be of increasing importance over the next few years. I am pleased to endorse this document and The Smithfield Forum’s activities to date and ask you to seriously consider its contents and your active support.

Lord Curry of Kirkharle,
Chairman of The Smithfield Forum Conference Briefing

“Having attended a number of The Smithfield Forum events, I am particularly impressed with the formation of the Strategy Group. This has brought together industry leaders from across the United Kingdom’s ruminant livestock supply chain with a range of scientists. They have been most effective in identifying and communicating key strategic issues. I recognise the value of The Forum to the Industry and am delighted to support its activities.”

Neil Parish MP,
Chairman of The EFRA Select Committee

History To the Formation of The Smithfield Forum

Since the end of World War Two in the 1940s, British Livestock farmers have responded to the country's needs with increased production, consolidation, intensification and production efficiency resulting in wider product choice, improved quality and better animal health and welfare; all this against the backdrop of increasingly competitive and demanding markets with major changes and consolidation in retail, distribution and globalisation across the supply chain.

In recent years, new demands and pressures have appeared in response to the very real concerns about the Nation's health and obesity, the deterioration of the natural environment and biodiversity, and the growing impact and threat of global warming.

These new challenges require livestock farmers to adopt yet again new methods of working and managing their business.

This pressure is being compounded by increasing demands that livestock farming should be reduced, or even stopped altogether, and replaced by alternative food sources - on the grounds that livestock farming is a major contributor to global warming and the destruction of the natural environment.

It is against this backdrop that the Smithfield Forum was launched in early 2019, following a meeting between senior industry leaders in the Autumn of 2018, with a focus on the red meat sector.

Following the January 2019 conference, attended by leaders from all sectors of the livestock industry, working parties were formed involving producer, processor and retailer groups resulting in an industry-wide plan with the following objectives:

- A joined-up approach from the entire industry in promoting the British Red Meat brand creating a point of difference for the United Kingdom
- To encourage the publishing of scientific work demonstrating the carbon/environmental footprint of UK Red Meat production as opposed to the global figures currently used
- To request the levy boards to carry out a piece of desktop research to identify what work, if any, has been completed to support the economic benefit of grazing livestock for environmental enhancement
- To encourage wider and more efficient promotion of Red Meat to the consumer focusing on the UK's leading position in animal welfare, production standards, healthy eating, environment, sustainability and eating quality; and communicate this message consistently to consumers wherever they are.

In early 2020, Covid 19 arrived and as a result a major conference on the impact of British Livestock on the environment, organised by the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) in conjunction with The Smithfield Forum, was cancelled. In addition, all other activity of the Forum and the retailer initiative were put on hold, with the whole industry concentrating on maintaining supplies to the consumer through the pandemic.

Throughout 2020, the work of the Forum continued in the background, ready for the return to 'normality'.

1. The Current Situation

Early in 2021, the Forum was approached by an international group of scientists to become the lead body in the UK for their efforts to counter the rapidly growing international movement to stop livestock farming.

The objectives of the Forum and that of the scientists have united on an agreed plan. This covers the key actions in communicating the true facts to the following four sectors, each with a specific objective:

a. That UK livestock farming and food production industries are united in their understanding and communication about the facts of British Livestock Farming and food production

b. That all sectors of the food distribution industries have a full understanding of all the facts about British livestock industry's positive impact on welfare and the environment and the importance of a balanced diet for customers' health

c. That British consumers have clear facts about British Livestock Farming including its impact on the environment, the high standards of British animal welfare, and the importance of a balanced diet for human health, so that they can take an informed decision on their food choices

d. That the true scientific facts are available to UK National and Regional governments at political and senior civil servant levels, to help form decision-making on environment, health and livestock farming.

The number and range of organisations involved from the livestock industry has grown steadily over the past year and now represents every sector covering:

- Dairy and meat producers and processors
- Farming unions
- Levy boards
- Scientific research, education, advisory bodies
- Food distribution industry



2. The Aims For The Forum

- a. To act as a neutral facilitator for senior representative members from all sectors of the British Livestock industry to create and manage an ongoing action plan for the whole industry to meet the challenges and opportunities as they evolve.
- b. To co-ordinate the implementation of the industry plans through the actions of the members of the Forum and involvement of specialist service providers.
- c. To manage an up-to-date information source on all matters identified by the Forum members as critical to the industry.

3. The Role of the Forum

The role is to create a facility to allow open unbiased discussions and decisions to be taken on those matters key to the whole industry rather than individual sectors. The Forum, led by the Forum Strategy Group - made up of key individuals from all sectors - will provide the opportunity for leaders to identify the key issues facing the industry as they evolve, identify solutions and create clear action plans for implementation by the industry.

Activities will include at least two meetings (by Zoom, face-to-face or hybrid) per year, and similarly for any sub-groups set up by the Strategy Group plus other meetings as a result of industry developments.

In addition, a hybrid briefing conference for all members of the Forum and invited industry representatives would be held at least once per year as decided by the Strategy Group.

To achieve this, there is a need for a small part-time secretariat/administration function to support the Forum Strategy Group and the part-time role of the Industry Strategy Director.

The Forum will consist of:

- a. A small part-time secretariat
- b. The Forum Strategy Group
- c. Forum sub-groups as required (eg Research, Science/technical, Information/data, Communications)
- d. The management of any external service providers requested by the Strategy Group



4. Membership and Subscriptions

a. Membership

The Forum is open to all organisations and companies involved in the British Livestock Industry including producers, processors, wholesale and retail distribution to consumers and food service, research, education and organisations representing each sector of the industry. Membership allows the organisation/company to nominate one representative to attend Forum activities and to stand for nomination to any of the working groups of the Forum.

b. Subscriptions

The membership year runs from April each year to March of the following year. All subscriptions are treated as donations to the Smithfield Charity, ringfenced for sole restricted use by the Forum.

c. Subscription Rates

Rates are set according to the turnover of the organisation/company

Turnover	Subscription
Less than £250,000	£250
£250 to £500,000	£500
£500 to £1 million	£750
£1 million to £5 million	£1,000
£5 million to 100 million	£1,500
£100 million to £500 million	£2,500
Over £500 million	£5,000

Organisations and individuals who have supported the Forum and without whom it would not have possible to reach this stage.



Contact: John Dracup, Royal Smithfield Club Industry Strategy Director,

E: john@royalsmithfieldclub.co.uk

M: 07508 577503