

Scottish Venison Report - ADMG AGM - March 2025

Much has been happening on the venison front in the last year, the headline being the progress made towards amalgamation of the quality mark Scottish Quality Wild Venison and the trade organization representing venison producers and processors, wild and farmed, public and private sector, Scottish Venison. It is expected that this merger will be completed by June and will streamline the organisation bringing representation of Scottish Venison and the quality mark under one banner. SAOS has again added extra capacity and support to all of what we do, and we are grateful for that. Here is a brief resumé of activity.

- We lobbied hard and successfully to have venison (wild and farmed) included in the Agriculture and Communities Bill (now Act).
- We've responded to the 'deer management for climate and nature' and 'good food nation plan' consultations.
- We have developed a new structure and funding streams and have brought new people onto our Executive Committee adding a new dynamism.
- We had a presence far superior to anything we've had before at the GWCT Scottish Game Fair at Scone Palace through sponsorship of the Cookery Theatre and will be back again this year for the same activity, once again supported by Ardgay Game and Perthshire Game, and much thanks to Tim Maddams for his part once again in pulling that together.
- We completed and delivered the carbon footprint report for the sector (wild deer and venison).
- We saw two new chills open under the local chills pilot project with development of a third now underway and held a knowledge transfer event at one of these with another to follow soon in North Argyll once we have set a date.
- We have been in continual dialogue with NatureScot and Scottish Government and responded to several written Parliamentary questions.
- We have worked with NatureScot, SAOS and LDNS in the setting up of a new pilot grant support scheme for chills and larders for low ground venison
- We've worked with NatureScot and SAOS on a major venison infrastructure mapping project that shows us every recorded/registered facility from estate larder to processing plant for venison in Scotland.
- Thank to Linzi there has been some really good press coverage particularly for venison in schools and continuing success of 'Hill to Grill' and are now in conversation with a view to future activity with the Soil Association Food for Life project.
- We pushed hard for a national venison subsidy, albeit that wasn't what has been delivered at the end of the day, but we continue to press for this type and level of support.
- We supported the first public staging of a two-day and one-day venison butchery course organised by the Findhorn Watershed Initiative and delivered by Craft Skills Scotland.

- We partnered an event before Christmas at the Scottish Parliament with SLE, ADMG and others.
- We have appointed a marketing specialist with excellent web and social media skills and who has worked with some big names in the food sector to undertake a complete overhaul of the Scottish Venison identity and website to make it more consumer facing and user-friendly to be ready for launch this summer.
- We sponsored the Scottish Wholesaler Awards dinner in February and have given significant exposure to major wholesale buyers of the value of SQWV accreditation

We are grateful to ADMG and its membership for their valuable contribution to our core funding, and to the Associate Processors who have signed up also. This is enabling Scottish Venison to continue to develop the venison sector for the benefit of all in the supply chain.

Briefly, looking ahead, what are our priorities?

- The new website will be launched and be a new 'shop window' for the product.
- We are focusing on developing public sector procurement opportunities such as schools and the health service, and how we can work with partners such as the Soil Association, Scotland Excel, the Scottish Wholesale Association, and the Highland Good Food Partnership.
- Education - both school dinners and home economics departments - are on the schedule.
- We will continue to press for support to improve capacity and infrastructure at producer and processor level, upland and lowland, and for marketing and promotion.