

# Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland



## Strategic Plan 2021-2024

**LMC**  
Livestock & Meat Commission



# Chairman's Foreword

On behalf of the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) I would like to welcome you to read our three year Strategic Plan for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2024. As Chairman of the LMC Board it gives me great privilege to help set the strategic direction for the organisation as we emerge from the devastation caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic and as our industry adapts to the realities of the United Kingdom's Exit from the European Union and the detailed conditions of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement which was finalised in December 2020.

The last three year Strategic Plan for LMC covered the period from 01 April 2018 to 31 March 2021 and that was a highly important time for our beef and sheep industry and the services which LMC provided were utilised to the full during this period. LMC commissioned a wide range of research reports to help inform our industry and government decision makers with important insights into the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, future options for supporting suckler beef and sheep production and the impact of WTO trading on the Northern Ireland beef and sheep industry. A notable highlight was how this work really brought together beef and sheep value chain stakeholders on a common platform working for agreed outcomes and approaches. Our 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan seeks to build on the very positive stakeholder engagement with LMC which has been evident in my time as Chairman.

As a relatively small organisation LMC really does punch above its weight in terms of the range of activities it delivers to support positive outcomes for both industry and government stakeholders. During the term of this new Strategic Plan the NIBL FQAS will celebrate 30 years of ownership, management and development by LMC; the Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat processing industry is likely to exceed annual turnover of £1.5 billion; sustainability will become a much more centre stage issue; communication, transparency and accountability will be key focal points and the use of technology and digital ways of doing things will continue to gather pace.

What is clear is that neither LMC nor the industry within which we deliver our services can afford to stand still and let change happen around us. Our sector is known for its resilience, adaptation, professionalism, leadership and customer focus and I have no doubt that the sector will plan and respond to the many challenges and opportunities that it will face in the three years of this Strategic Plan.

From an LMC perspective our small team of dedicated professional staff will continue to develop, lead and deliver a broad range of essential market information, industry development, education, assurance and consumer promotion services that are tailored to the needs of our stakeholders. We have designed our new three year Strategy around LMC's on-going concern as an NDPB sponsored by DAERA.

**Gerard McGivern, LMC Chairman**

# LMC's Statutory Duties and Priorities

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) is a Non-Departmental Public Body, established by Statute (The Livestock Marketing Commission Act (Northern Ireland) 1967) to assist the development of the livestock and livestock products industries. LMC's sponsor body is the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)<sup>1</sup>.

LMC has the general duty of examining and recommending improvements in the marketing of livestock and livestock products and the particular functions outlined below.

The specific functions of LMC as set out in the 1967 Act are:

- Examining the structure of the livestock industry and the livestock products industry;
- Encouraging the making of better arrangements for the movement and marketing of livestock and livestock products;
- Advising DAERA on the classification and grading of carcasses of livestock;
- Advising DAERA on the characteristics that livestock should possess in order to be readily marketable;
- Disseminating information in the livestock industry and livestock products industry about prices for livestock (whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere) and livestock products and about the trends of those prices and the requirements of markets for livestock and livestock products;
- Conducting market research, or causing such research to be conducted, into the requirements of markets (whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere) for livestock and livestock products;
- Improving and expanding trade in livestock produced in Northern Ireland and in livestock products so produced;

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<sup>1</sup> Details of foundation legislation can be found on our website: [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com).

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- Giving advice and information to DAERA on the efficient layout and operation of the livestock auction markets and slaughterhouses;
- Carrying out such functions in relation to the livestock and livestock products industries as DAERA may specify in a direction to the Commission.

The plan sets out LMC's strategic objectives for the next three years (2021-2024) and succeeds the last Strategic Plan, which covered the period 2018-2021. Each strategic outcome in the plan is linked with associated business outcomes, activities and targets which are detailed in LMC's annual Business Plans. This Strategic Plan is prepared in accordance with the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) for LMC.

**LMC's strategic and business outcomes currently contribute to the delivery of DAERA's vision of 'Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.'**

LMC's strategic direction is aligned with that of DAERA and the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government 2021, specifically:

- **We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment**
- **Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral.**

## Background to the industry

The Northern Ireland Red Meat Industry employs 5,000 staff and supports over 22,000 jobs in cattle and sheep farming in Northern Ireland. The industry is heavily embedded in the UK retail market but approximately 20 per cent of beef and 30 per cent of lamb is exported outside the UK. The majority of beef and lamb exports are destined for mainland Europe with a small but growing trade to third countries in Asia and North America.

In 2018 the total gross turnover of the Northern Ireland food and drinks processing sector was estimated to be worth £5,162 million. Beef and sheep meat, and milk and milk products continue to be the largest subsectors in terms of gross turnover; accounting for almost one half of total gross turnover in both 2017 and 2018. *(Source: DAERA Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2018, published July 2020).*

The sector consists of approximately 19,500 beef and sheep farms and 2,600 dairy farms as of June 2019 as well as ancillary businesses in the supply chain for example meat processing plants and livestock markets. *(Source: DAERA Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture, 2019).*

Farms classed as Less Favoured Areas (LFA) farms occupy 70 per cent of farmed land in Northern Ireland and livestock farming predominates. The term LFA is used to describe those Areas parts which, because of their relatively poor agricultural conditions, have been so designated under EU legislation. *(Source: DAERA Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture, 2019).*

The Livestock and Meat Commission is Northern Ireland's industry body for assisting the development of the **£1.4bn** beef and sheep meat industry.

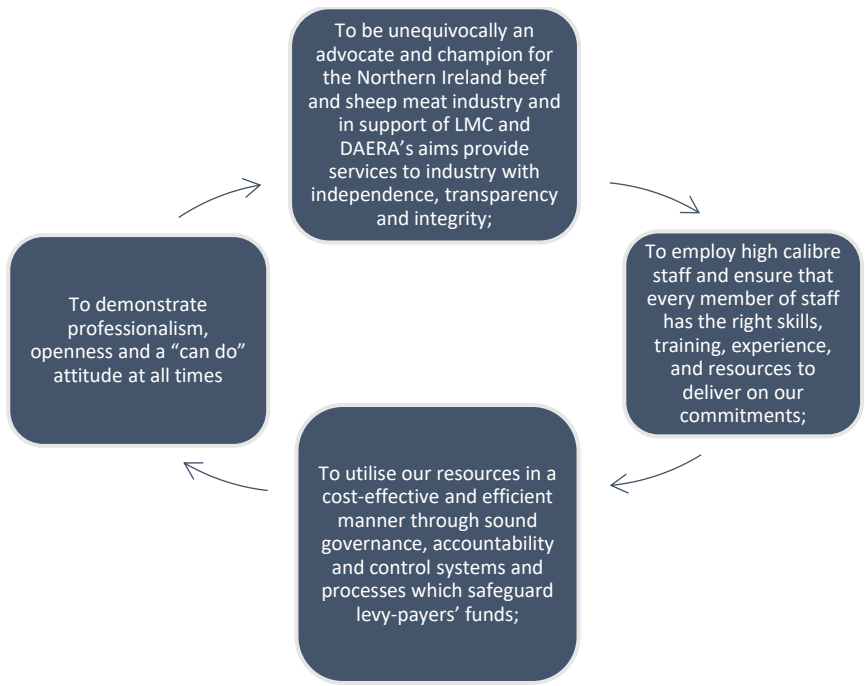
- LMC Chief Executive,  
Ian Stevenson

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# Mission and Vision



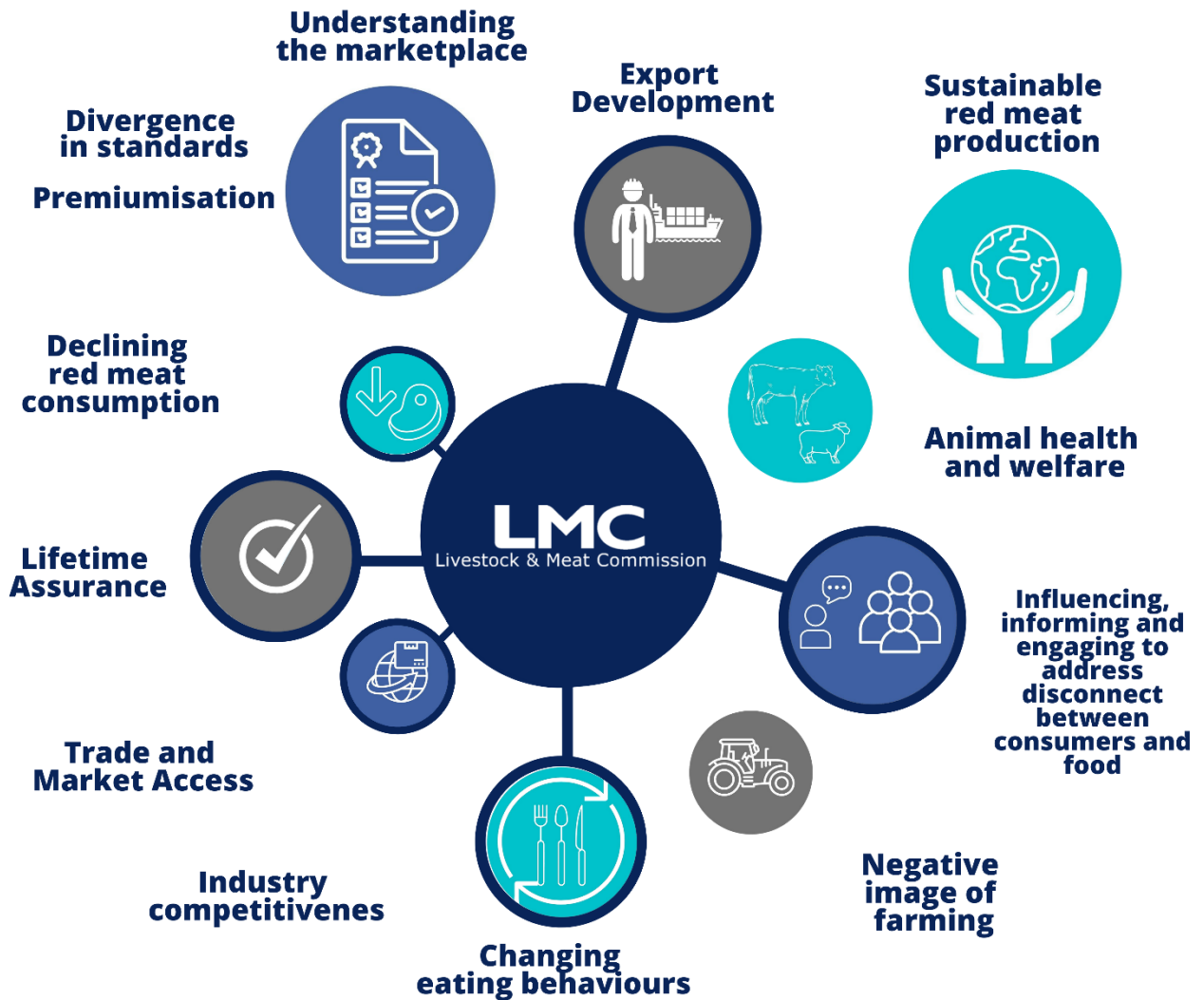
# Our Values



# Our Aim

**To be the beef and sheep meat industry's organisation that people choose to come to based on our knowledge, facts and impartial information**

# Factors influencing future strategy



- The strategic direction of travel of our Sponsor Department DAERA is an important influence in setting LMC's key objectives.
- In developing our strategy, LMC has undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders who represent the main funding sources for LMC. During the course of a typical year staff and Board members will represent LMC in over 250 separate stakeholder meetings, seminars, conferences, clinics, workshops, exhibitions and other networking events. Despite the Covid-19 constraints in 2020-21 on hosting physical meetings and events LMC staff

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continued to take part in the same number of remote and virtual engagements.

- These stakeholder engagements, many of which are hosted and facilitated by LMC, are vital avenues for LMC to get a timely and clear understanding of the key challenges and opportunities that the red meat industry (and wider agri-food industry) is experiencing (or is likely to experience) and where LMC should be prioritising its work in support of its stakeholders. On an annual basis all LMC staff participate in employee engagement meetings and business development workshops. A number of actions arising from those workshops have been identified that will help to deliver improved outcomes for both LMC and stakeholders.
- A key feature from stakeholder consultations was the positive nature of engagement and the value that they placed on work currently carried out by the organisation. A high level stakeholder engagement workshop was hosted by the LMC Board on Zoom during February 2021 to inform and engage with key stakeholders groups about LMC deliverables / achievements from the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan and to canvass opinions on the strategic priorities for the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan development. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Ulster Farmers Union (UFU), Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association (NIMEA), Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA), National Beef Association (NBA), National Sheep Association (NSA) and DAERA. Stakeholders attending the workshop were supportive of LMC's work and the core areas of focus where LMC currently specialises its programmes of activity and expenditure in Market Information, Industry Development, Education & Consumer Promotion and the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBLFQAS).
- LMC also hosted a meeting with Northern Ireland Farm Groups (an umbrella group for NBA, NIAPA and Farmers For Action) during February 2021 to discuss its views on beef and sheep sector issues and LMC's work in support of the industry. LMC constantly reviews its specific work packages in the aforementioned core areas in line with priorities identified by its funding stakeholders and sponsor department and a number of common strategic factors emerged from these stakeholder engagements which will help LMC to design appropriate annual business plans and budgeted activities in keeping with our statutory functions.
- LMC Strategy for the 2021 to 2024 period will be informed by the following strategic priorities which emanated from stakeholder engagement and each of these priorities are addressed in more detail below:



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- I. Actively participating in climate change mitigation:** The future of the ruminant livestock sector continues to be a key point of focus in the global climate change discussion. We know from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) correspondence with Minister Poots MLA regarding the UK balanced pathway approach to Net Zero carbon by 2050 that a 35% reduction in UK meat and milk consumption is envisaged as a key element in that strategy. The CCC view is that as part of Northern Ireland's fair contribution to a Net Zero UK that a significant percentage of agricultural land needs to be released for other measures such as tree planting, hedgerow enhancement, energy cropping, peat land rewetting etc. This is a very challenging issue for the beef and lamb industry which wants to play its part in helping to address climate change and feed a growing population demand for nutrient dense protein but wants to do it through productive farming methods that convert sustainable resources of grassland and water and which are recognised for actively sequestering carbon in soils through good farming and land management practices.

The United Nations Food Systems Summit and the Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) are both taking place in the first year of this Strategic Plan period and LMC will be working through its international partnerships in ERBS, the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) and the International Meat Secretariat (IMS) to help industry to engage in these important UN discussions and promote the climate positive benefits of ruminant livestock production. Locally LMC will reinvigorate its involvement in the important work of the Greenhouse Gas Implementation Partnership (GHGIP) and through Chairmanship of the Red Meat Sub-Group, LMC will play an active role in coordinating the beef and lamb sector's contribution to the next 5 year plan for the Partnership's work.

- II. Sustainable red meat production / Green Growth:** The social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat industry continues to feature heavily in discussions with industry representatives, customers of industry, within government and within wider societal conversations. The Origin Green approach to sustainability which has been successfully developed and rolled out in the Republic of Ireland is often held up as an exemplar for other countries to follow. Within Northern Ireland there has been a significant amount of work in the sustainability space with initiatives such as the Greenhouse Gas Implementation Partnership, Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland, Food Futures, Business Development Groups, the Northern Ireland Sheep Programme, the Better Farm Beef Challenge, Food Fortress etc. but there continues to be a real challenge of joining this important work up within Northern Ireland and making it available in a space that is usable by industry. Major customers of industry are actively engaging in multi-stakeholder platforms such as the UK Cattle Sustainability Platform (UKCSP) and the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS) and are very eager to work with industry to drive the sustainability

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agenda within red meat supply chains and to meet the needs of consumers and stakeholders with a reputation built on science and trust.

LMC has been very active in the sustainability space in recent years and during this Strategic Plan the Industry Development Team within LMC will be leading and influencing key developments such as the verification of our industry's grass fed beef credentials, the further development of NIBL FQAS to encompass key sustainability parameters and participation in a wide range of domestic and international sustainability initiatives and platforms. LMC also welcomes the development of a Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland, which is being led by the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister and DAERA and LMC will work closely with industry stakeholders to help inform the development and roll-out of that strategy during the term of this Strategic Plan.

- III. **EU Exit (Brexit) and the impact of this on the future of the local red meat industry:** With the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) having been concluded in December 2020 the Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat Industry has been working hard to adapt to the new requirements and conditions of trade in livestock and livestock products. The Northern Ireland industry recognises the significant opportunity that unfettered access to the Great Britain (GB) market and EU Single market presents to the industry but it also recognises the challenges and additional costs that come with importing certain raw materials from GB. One of the key issues arising from the stakeholder workshops was the need for significant capital investment in the farming and processing sector to modernise facilities, improve productivity, embrace new technologies and innovation and get better equipped to service new customers in export markets. LMC will work with stakeholders to help identify the key areas where investment is needed and will also examine the needs in the context of levelling the playing field with support available to competitor businesses in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland's red meat companies will need to invest significantly in their facilities to embrace new technologies and innovations, in order to remain competitive on an international stage. Farmers will need to invest in the technologies required to reduce the levels of ammonia produced on their farms, to improve productivity and to meet the challenges presented by climate change. The enhanced uptake of improved genetics is another priority for both the beef and lamb sectors, as both industries look to the future
- IV. **Trade and market access / Export development:** Having access for the broadest range of beef and sheep meat products to the full range of possible markets across the world remains a key priority for the NI beef and sheep industry. The legacy of BSE continues to limit the extent of NI beef and lamb access to other third country markets and working in partnership with Industry, other UK Levy Bodies, Government Departments and Agencies good progress has been made in recent years through the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP) to progress this agenda. There is however much more

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work to do in getting new / or better access to markets where both incomes and meat import demand are growing, particularly in the Asian region. LMC will continue to invest in and help direct the work of UKECP during the term of this Strategic Plan. LMC's involvement in export development work during the last Strategic Plan was largely foundational work to help open up new market access, to acquire market intelligence on export markets and to support the marketing efforts of export businesses by operating the NIBL FQAS and communicating key messages about the industry and its products through social media and other consumer engagement channels. With Northern Ireland businesses now having a different (and perhaps more favourable) positioning in their ability to service EU markets, relative to GB based businesses, it is important that local industry is well supported and visible at EU trade shows such as SIAL and Anuga. LMC will engage with industry and Invest NI during the term of this Strategic Plan to investigate collaborative ways to better support businesses in their important export market endeavours.

- V. Industry competitiveness:** One of the key projects which LMC initiated in the final year of the 2018 -2021 Strategic Plan was to investigate and submit a report to DAERA on future policy options to support the suckler beef and sheep sectors in Northern Ireland. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Northern Ireland beef and sheep farms were sustained economically by Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 instruments which supported farm incomes, farm investment and farm business development. Now that industry is operating outside the CAP the Northern Ireland Assembly has a great opportunity to design new Agricultural and Environmental Policy that can be specifically tailored to supporting the resilience, productivity, environmental protection and market orientation of the beef and sheep meat industry in Northern Ireland. Increasing the rate of genetic improvement in Northern Ireland's beef, sheep and dairy sectors remains a key objective of industry and government stakeholders. LMC will continue to participate in industry conversations and where appropriate will support relevant projects to promote and enhance the competitive position of the industry. A key part of industry competitiveness is a clear understanding of the markets within which the industry operates. LMC's Market Information Team will continue to collate, analyse and disseminate market insights on the Northern Irish, GB, EU and international markets during the course of this Strategic Plan period.
- VI. Influencing, informing and engaging to address disconnect between consumers and food:** One of the positive developments arising from the Covid-19 pandemic has been a renewal of consumers' love affair with food and their learning how to prepare and cook tasty and quality meals at home. The closure of food service and catering events for most of the 12 months prior to this Strategic Plan period has had a hugely disruptive impact on consumer behaviour which prior to the pandemic had been one of annual growth in the percentage of daily calorie intakes which were coming from food-to-go, quick serve and table serve restaurants. During the long periods of

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societal lockdown and restrictions on daily activities we know that social media and other digital platforms played a hugely important part in the daily lives of people as they sought information and ideas on how to cope with lockdown and recreate typical out of home experiences in the home environment. LMC actively engaged on social media with consumers through a series of mini campaigns (such as Steakhouse Saturdays) to help people to try and recreate the restaurant dining experience at home. Social media is becoming an ever more important channel for communication and advertising activities and through the period of this Strategic Plan

LMC will seek to actively engage with consumers to build on their renewed interest in our NIBL FQAS beef and lamb, its provenance, quality attributes and health and sustainability credentials. As society starts to return to normal after Covid-19 a key focus needs to be on transparency in the origin of meat in food service outlets and the encouragement of more domestic sourcing of beef and lamb in food service and public procurement contracts.

- VII. Changing eating behaviours and declining red meat consumption:** Independent consumer research undertaken for LMC ahead of the development and roll out in October 2020 of the ‘Truth About Beef’ advertising campaign has shown that 90% of consumers in Northern Ireland continue to eat meat as part of their diets. The research also showed that 26% of Northern Irish consumers were planning to consume less red meat in the future and that 26% of consumers believed that it was the ethical thing to do to eat less red meat. We also know from the research that consumers who do eat red meat enjoy the sensory experience of good quality beef and lamb and that they want to be able feel good about eating it from the perspective of their health and the protection of the environment. LMC’s Truth About Beef advertising campaign has been specifically designed to address the challenges raised in the consumer research and feedback on the campaign to date (which has had a high level of reach on TV, Radio, Outdoor and Social Media) has been very positive from all stakeholder communities.

As this Strategic Plan starts to roll out in 2021 a key focus of LMC’s Education and Consumer Promotion activity will be to build on the Truth About Beef campaign with more detailed insight video interviews involving the chef ambassador who is central to the campaign, more recipe ideas and expansion of the campaign reach to include lamb. Growth in alternative meat products and negative campaigns such as ‘Veganuary’ will have an impact on the meat intake levels of some consumers but beef and lamb can ably retain its position as the premium protein of choice by consumers for everyday and special occasion meals with consistent messaging and promotion by LMC and industry partners.

- VIII. Animal health and welfare:** A key element in driving productivity improvement and enhancing sustainability in beef and lamb supply chains is to reduce the negative impacts of animal disease and sub-optimal animal

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welfare. Good progress has been made in recent years to reduce the prevalence of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) in the local cattle population which in turn results in lower mortality and antibiotic use on affected farms. LMC's Industry Development Manager participates on the Board of Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (AHWNI) and LMC will continue to work strategically with AHWNI on key initiatives to reduce the impact of production diseases on livestock farms. Bovine TB continues to be one of the most concerning diseases impacting the beef and dairy cattle sectors in Northern Ireland not just in terms of the cost to government and industry but in terms of the industry's participation in certain export markets and also the mental health pressures which livestock removal places on farm families. LMC will work with stakeholders to promote good biosecurity and veterinary informed animal health planning at farm level.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) continues to be one of the major global challenges and like Climate Change the solution to this challenge will come from the cumulative effects of local initiatives by countries around the world to use antibiotics responsibly within both animal and human populations. At Northern Ireland level LMC has been a driving force behind the responsible use of medicines on NIBL FQAS farms and during the term of this Strategic Plan LMC will be supporting the roll out of easy to use on-line tools to record medicines use at farm level and to make it easier for farmers and their vets to undertake meaningful reviews of antibiotic usage on member farms.




- IX. Lifetime Assurance:** NIBL FQAS has an important mutual recognition relationship with other UK Beef and Lamb Assurance Schemes operated in Scotland by Quality Meat Scotland, Wales by Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers and England by Red Tractor Assurance. Red Tractor Assurance operates a number of Assurance Schemes at UK level including Dairy, Pigs, Poultry and Produce and a key part of the mutual recognition relationship is that NIBL FQAS beef and lamb can be marketed in the UK bearing the Red Tractor logo. LMC has been working closely with the other UK schemes on a common framework agreement and work on this will continue during the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan. One of the key issues for NIBL FQAS during this period will be to push on with the journey in Northern Ireland towards Lifetime Farm Quality Assurance for beef animals which will become a core part of the Red Tractor Scheme Standards once the development of the Livestock Information Project in Great Britain is completed. This will be a significant project for LMC to deliver in Northern Ireland particularly with a large number of small and very small part time beef and sheep producers currently not participating in Farm Quality Assurance.
- X. Divergence in standards / Premiumisation:** Now that the UK has left the European Union the Beef and Sheep Industry in Northern Ireland has been working hard to keep their business and customer trade flows functioning under the new provisions of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland within the EU-UK TCA. A lot of industry conversation has been in the

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important area of standards and in particular what the approach will be in Great Britain to consideration of new standards that are implemented by the European Union. It is also a key consideration of industry what standards with regard to imported produce the UK will seek to uphold as part of any new Trade Deals it is seeking to negotiate with countries such as the USA, Australia and New Zealand. These are key issues for industry as the premiumisation of every cut of beef and lamb that is placed on the market is central to the financial sustainability of beef and lamb supply chains in Northern Ireland. The UK food service sector prior to Covid-19 was on an upward growth curve and it was evident during 2020 when much of the food service sector was closed, during periods of lockdown, that less beef and lamb was imported to the UK particularly from third countries. It is particularly important that a focus is placed on premiumisation within the entire food service sector going forward and that the cheaper end of the food service market doesn't simply return as a ready-made outlet for cheaper imported product of lower standards than beef and lamb produced in the UK.

## Strategic Outcomes 2021-2024

Based on our engagement with stakeholders, the ongoing implementation of our core areas of work and, the strategic direction of travel of DAERA, LMC has identified six key strategic outcomes upon which this three-year strategy is based.

	SO1	<p><b>The industry is equipped with the tools to encourage its sustainable and commercial development</b></p>
	SO2	<p><b>A better-informed industry and general public</b></p>
	SO3	<p><b>Advising and influencing the policy making process</b></p>

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	SO4	Facilitating industry relationships with impartiality and integrity
	SO5	To be a relevant customer focused organisation that stakeholders understand and meets their agreed requirements
	SO6	To have in place an effective, efficient and sustainable organisation

## Strategy for Achieving Outcomes

For LMC to successfully implement this strategy, we will develop annual business plans that focus on delivering positive outcomes for our stakeholders. Each year we will undertake detailed engagements with our stakeholders to establish the challenges and opportunities they are facing, and in conjunction with our Sponsor Department, we will develop business plans that prioritise our work areas to deliver positive outcomes for stakeholders in the year ahead.

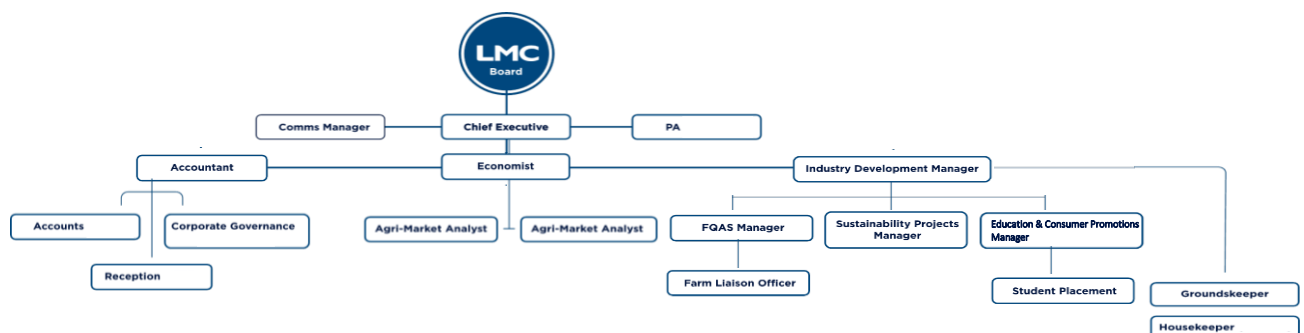
Achieving these positive outcomes will also be dependent on a number of other foundational factors:

**Human Resources:** LMC has a small staff complement of 18 full and part-time personnel. Implementing the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan will require a significant programme of LMC activity going forward. Depending on the needs of stakeholders, the evolution of LMC activities and affordability, LMC will review its staff resources during the period of the Strategic Plan. No plan can be successfully delivered without excellent people of the right quantity in the right place and with the right training and skill sets. LMC will continue to invest in the training needs of its staff throughout the period of the Strategic Plan. Annual staff appraisals and personal development plans will be carried out, with personal objectives and training linked to delivery of the strategic outcomes of LMC in this Strategic Plan. Regular engagement between the Board and staff members will be scheduled throughout the period of the plan.

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**Working Arrangements:** The Covid-19 pandemic has markedly changed how LMC and its stakeholders carried out their activities and engagement to manage the risk of disease and mitigate spread of the infection. During the last year of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, LMC staff were mostly based at home with suitable technology with minimal numbers of staff safely working at the office in Lisburn on designated days who were unable to carry out their roles effectively from home. Travel and face-to-face meetings, conferences and events were almost reduced to zero during this period. NIBL FQAS farm inspections and School Cookery Demonstrations were possible to undertake with suitable Covid-19 protocols in place but there were disruptions to this activity during periods of strict lockdown. Despite the sudden changes to working arrangements LMC was able to deliver a full programme of activity in support of LMC Business and Strategic Outcomes. Looking forward into this Strategic Plan period LMC is envisaging a new hybrid working environment where some staff will work partly from home and partly in the office, where some meetings will be face-to-face and some will continue on digital platforms and where there is likely to be less travel involved in conducting LMC business. LMC will continue to review its working arrangements and policies during the course of the 2021-2024 period.

**LMC Organisational Structure:**



**Procurement:** The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) for LMC sets out the rules under which works, goods and services are to be authorised and procured by LMC. Procurement is undertaken by LMC in accordance with LMC Procurement Policy and with reference to DoF Procurement Guidance Notes. Procurement is a complex matter and LMC will continue to invest in appropriate training for staff involved in the procurement process. During the course of this Strategic Plan, LMC will continue to review its procurement practices in particular



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cross sectional procurement of similar goods or services and longer-term procurement of items. LMC will also keep a close watching brief on the Public Sector Collaborative Arrangements to see if any opportunities exist for LMC participation.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** LMC has been making considerable efforts to improve the image, profile and understanding of the organisation amongst its stakeholders. Good progress has been made in communicating with stakeholders but there are always opportunities to do more. To ensure stakeholders have a good understanding of the varied work LMC undertakes on behalf of the industry it is essential that Board members and staff continue to proactively engage and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders about LMC and its work. Whilst LMC's primary focus is on service delivery, some additional resource will be invested during the period to implement our communications objective to raise LMC's profile and its activities on behalf of the industry. LMC will continue to foster more direct engagement with its stakeholder groups regarding LMC services and work areas.

**Governance:** As a Public Body funded almost entirely by statutory levy and farm assurance income collected from private sector farmers and processors, LMC will continue to be subject to scrutiny by stakeholders during the term of this Strategic Plan. LMC must be able to demonstrate on an on-going basis that the activities it undertakes on behalf of stakeholders are done efficiently and effectively and add value to the income it receives from them and ultimately benefits them. Good working relationships between LMC and its Sponsor Department are also essential to the successful delivery of the outcomes in this Strategic Plan and we look forward to efficient and effective engagement and oversight with our Corporate Sponsorship Team in DAERA. A number of key issues regarding organisational governance will come to fruition during the course of this Strategic Plan period. The LMC Board will be subject to significant change in its membership with the Chairman and four Board members due to complete their terms on the Board in May 2022. The existing UK and EU approved state aid scheme which provides cover for LMC's expenditure on programmes is due to expire on 31 March 2022 and a new successor scheme will need to be finalised and approved during the first year of this Strategic Plan.

**Property:** Since the fire which destroyed LMC's office building at Lissue House in 2016 the organisation has operated from rented office premises at Lissue Walk in Lisburn. The initial 5 year lease for these rental premises is due to expire in the first year of this Strategic Plan and LMC will be reviewing and finalising a business case for its future office needs during the early period of this Strategic Plan. The Lissue House site remains under LMC's ownership and management and during the period of this Strategic Plan the organisation has no plans to redevelop the site and will continue to work closely with the Strategic Investment Board to consider the best options for future management and potential disposal of the site.

## Review of LMC's Performance

The Associated Business Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators, which follow on from the Strategic Outcomes set out above will feature in annual LMC Business Plans. These Business Plans will be produced by LMC for approval by DAERA, for each business year of the Strategic Plan.

LMC Annual Reports will be approved by DAERA and the Minister and will be audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. These will show LMC's level of achievement of performance against the Strategic Outcomes. These Annual Reports will be laid with the Northern Ireland Assembly and will be made available for public viewing on the LMC website. LMC reviews progress against strategic and business outcomes on an ongoing basis and each quarter will produce a business monitor to record progress.

## Forecast of Income and Expenditure

Detailed budgets will be prepared annually in conjunction with LMC Business Plans. The number of cattle and sheep slaughtered within Northern Ireland on an annual basis is the current main determining factor in LMC income.

LMC income is difficult to predict for the three year term of this Strategic Plan due to the fluctuations in patterns of livestock slaughterings and the cross border import and export movement of livestock for direct slaughter and further keep. LMC will prepare annual budgets using its forecasting methodologies and will present annual business plans (with balanced income and expenditure budgets) for approval by DAERA.

The financial reserves that were generated from historic LMC activities have been utilised over the last 5 years to supplement annual levy income for delivering important projects and services to stakeholders and are now at an optimal business contingency basis.

Levy rates have not been revised since 2003 and to deliver the full extent of projects and services needed to address all of the strategic factors in this plan it is anticipated that a consultation to increase levy rates will be needed during the course of this Strategic Plan. LMC's levy rates in 2021 are approximately 35 to 37.5% of those collected by equivalent levy bodies operating in Scotland, England and Wales.

FQAS participation fees will be kept under annual review throughout the period of this Strategic Plan. The funding model for FQAS is unique within the UK context as it is the only region where the scheme is jointly funded by farmer membership fees and by processor membership and throughput fees.

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**LMC HAS A SMALL STAFF COMPLEMENT OF 18 ROLES ANNUAL BUDGET OF £2.3M.**

**FQAS IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST PROGRAMME AT £1.2M.**

**THE LEVY PROGRAMME IS £1M AND ALL OTHER LMC ACTIVITY IS FUNDED BY THIS BUDGET.**

**£100K IS FOR RECOVERABLE SERVICES FOR HOSTING AND FACILITATING NIFCC OPERATIONS.**

## Alternative Formats

This document is available in a range of formats on request.

## Glossary of Abbreviations:

AHDB:	Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
AMR:	Antimicrobial Resistance
Anuga:	Global Trade Fair for Food and Beverages in Cologne Germany
Brexit:	UK Exit from the European Union
BSE:	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
BVD:	Bovine Viral Diarrhoea
CAP:	European Union Common Agricultural Policy
CCC:	UK Climate Change Committee
COP26:	The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties
Covid-19:	A Contagious Coronavirus Disease Identified in 2019
CPD:	Central Procurement Directorate
DAERA:	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
ERBS:	European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability
EU:	European Union
EU-UK TCA:	Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part
GHGIP:	Greenhouse Gas Implementation Partnership
GRSB:	Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef
LFA:	Less Favoured Areas
NBA:	National Beef Association (NI Branch)
NIAPA:	Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association
NIFCC:	Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification
NIMEA:	Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association
NSA:	National Sheep Association (NI Region)
NIBL FQAS:	Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme
LMC:	Livestock & Meat Commission for Northern Ireland
MSFM:	Management Statement & Financial Memorandum
QMS:	Quality Meat Scotland
SIAL:	Global Trade Fair for Food and Beverages in Paris France
UFU:	Ulster Farmers Union
UKECP:	United Kingdom Export Certification Partnership
UKCSP:	United Kingdom Cattle Sustainability Platform
UN:	United Nations
WLBP:	Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers