

MEP supports his local butcher



ALYN SMITH MEP BACKS LOCAL BUTCHERS AS HORSEMEAT SCANDAL CONTINUES

Leading MEP Alyn Smith is to demonstrate his support for buying local and eating Scottish – by lending a hand at his local butchers.

Alyn, who is on the European Parliament's powerful Agriculture Committee, was working behind the counter this morning at the Mathieson shop in Ratcliffe Terrace in Edinburgh.

The move is being supported by both the NFU Scotland and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS).



Alyn's aim is to demonstrate his backing for Scotland's independent butchers and Scottish farmers as the horse meat scandal continues to grow.

With many Scottish consumers now deeply worried about the transparency of supply chains, shoppers are choosing to return to their local butchers, who they often know and trust.

Speaking ahead of the visit, SNP Euro MP Alyn said:- "I'm really looking forward to doing this and to talking directly to customers about the fantastic quality of our Scottish meat.

"I fear the horse meat scandal hasn't gone away yet. Obviously I welcome the fact that people are now turning back to their local Scottish butcher, but this whole sorry affair has highlighted the need for nothing less than a food revolution.

“Consumers need to connect more closely with retailers and producers – and, of course, by supporting their local meat traders, that’s exactly what they are doing.”

He continued: “People also need to know about the processes which lead to their fridges being stocked.

“There must also be stronger vigilance to protect against those who would abuse the system for personal gain, and a fairer deal for those who produce our food in the first place. Buy local, and you’ll help with all these things.”

Alyn added: “People want to know where their food comes from. Scottish farmers are renowned for producing top quality produce, so they are in a strong position to benefit from this trend.

“Local butchers often have a long, established relationship with the farmers and know every step sausages, mince or steak take before they reach our plates.”

Robert Wilson, the owner of Mathieson, said: “All produce in the shop is 100 per cent traceable.

“The cattle come from the market in Newtown St Boswells in the Scottish Borders, and I tend to buy from the same farm most weeks. I am a livestock agent so I feed a lot of lambs myself and pigs always come from the same source.

“I buy two or three or pigs from the same supplier every week – they are slaughtered in Shotts Abattoir and delivered here one day afterwards. We make our own sausages in this shop.

“Steak mince comes from our cattle, and lamb mince and pork mince is also prepared on these premises. The same procedure applies to our steak cuts.”

Jim McLaren, chairman of Quality Meat Scotland, emphasised the benefits of a short and trusted supply chain.

“The beef industry in Scotland is in a strong position having devoted a great deal of time and effort to ensuring the Scotch Beef brand has one of the most robust quality assurance schemes in the world.

“Our traceability is second to none and our total commitment over the past few decades to ensuring the Scotch Beef label is underpinned by some of the most rigorous standards in the world.

“This puts our industry in a position of strength and allows consumers to have 100 per cent confidence in the brand.”

NFU Scotland President Nigel Miller also supported Alyn’s call for shoppers to use and support their local butchers.

“Scottish farmers put their faith in the public and that faith has been repaid in spades by the support shown in the past few weeks.

“The Scottish red meat industry has a great story to tell that goes all the way from the farm gate to the dinner plate. Local butchers are a vital part of the chain and have always been available to reassure and inform shoppers on the quality and provenance of the meat on their counter.

“It is great to see that customer service being rewarded and increased sales of 20 to 40 per cent through local butchers is good news for Scottish farmers and good news for the high street.”





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