

SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



SCOTTISH
CRAFT BUTCHERS

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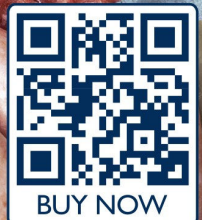
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JUNE 2026

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Summer message from Scottish Craft Butchers President

As we move into what promises to be a busy and exciting summer for our industry, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their continued support and commitment to Scottish Craft Butchers.

Over the past few weeks, we have enjoyed a successful programme of regional meetings across Glasgow, Peebles, Elgin and Perth. These gatherings provide an invaluable opportunity to connect with members, share ideas and discuss the opportunities and challenges facing our businesses. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Colin Hewitson and also to Steve Dunn from Insight 6 for their engaging and thought-provoking presentations at all four meetings. Their expertise and practical insights were extremely well received and provided plenty of useful takeaways for members.



I would also like to congratulate the winners from our recent product evaluations. Well done to D G Lindsay Butchers of Perth on being crowned Scottish Beef Sausage Champion. Our thanks go to Scobie & Junor for their valued sponsorship of this prestigious award.

Congratulations also to Thomas Burns & Son of Bo'ness for winning the Diamond Award for Speciality Burger, kindly sponsored by Colin Hewitson. The standard of entries was exceptional, making this a tremendous achievement.

A massive congratulations must also go to Kinnaird Butchers of Larbert, who secured the Diamond Award for Ribeye Steak, kindly sponsored by John Scott Meat. Recognition such as this reflects the skill, craftsmanship and dedication that exist throughout our membership.

I would also like to thank all our sponsors for their continued support of Scottish Craft Butchers. Quite simply, we could not deliver these awards and competitions without their invaluable backing, and we are extremely grateful for their commitment to our industry.

Summer presents fantastic opportunities for independent retail butchers to showcase and promote the quality local produce that sets us apart. With a huge summer of sport ahead, including the World Cup football and the Commonwealth Games, there will be many occasions for families and communities to come together around great food. I hope members will make full use of the Scottish Craft Butchers Summer Marketing Toolkit to help maximise these opportunities through in-store screens, scale messaging and social media activity.

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of visiting members in Orkney. It was wonderful to meet so many of you face to face, see your businesses firsthand and hear about the excellent work being carried out across the islands. Thank you all for your warm hospitality, great conversations and generous welcome. Having experienced the island community for myself, I can certainly understand why our Executive Manager, Gordon King, enjoys his regular visits to work with apprentices there. As always, thank you for everything you do to promote and protect the reputation of Scotland's craft butchery sector. I wish you all a successful and prosperous summer season.

Laura Black

DATES FOR THE DIARY 2025/26

More details call the office 01738 637472 or email bruce@craftbutchers.co.uk

Dalziel Centenary Harrogate Show : June 14th, 2026

Great Yorkshire Showground, Railway Road, Harrogate, HG2 8NZ.

National Hot Dog Day: 15th July 2026

International Bacon Day: 5th August 2026

SCB Golf Day: 5th August 2026

Glasgow Golf Club, Gailes Links, Irvine, KA11 5AE.

SCB Clay Pigeon Shoot: 26th August 2026

Bisley at Braidwood, Braidwood, Midlem, Selkirk, TD7 4QD

SCB Product Evaluations: 6th August 2026

BLACK PUDDING, BEEF BURGER AND 30 MINUTE READY MEAL

National Bacon Butty Day: 23rd August 2026

National Burger Day: 27th August 2026

Love Lamb Week: 1st—7th Sept 2026

SCB Regional Meetings: 21st - 24th Sept 2026

VENUES AND SPEAKERS TBC

SCB AGM & Training Awards : 15th November 2026

BALHOUSIE CASTLE, BLACK WATCH MUSEUM, PERTH

3 NOT TO MISS THIS YEAR...

Make the most of these market leading events for the meat industry in 2026:



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the deadline**



3rd September 2026



26th October - 1st November 2026



20th November 2026

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Visit the websites for more information:

meatmanagement.com

uksausageweek.com

womeninmeatawards.com

**If you need help or guidance on our events contact the events team on
01908 613323 or email events@yandellmedia.com**

GARY RAEBURN – FLYING THE FLAG FOR SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERY AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

When Gary Raeburn of Forbes Raeburn the family butcher in Huntly won Scottish Butcher Wars at the Meat Trades Fair last year, it automatically qualified him to compete in the next two years' World Butcher Wars events.

The first one took place in Royal Ascot, London just two months later, where Gary truly had a day to remember. He marked twenty years of competitive butchery by winning World Butcher Wars and being crowned World Champion Butcher. This was undoubtedly Gary's proudest moment and greatest achievement in his butchery career taking home the World Champion Butchers title and trophy back home to his family's shop in Huntly.

That day will live with Gary and his family forever and will definitely be hard to beat.

However this past month Gary got the greatest honour of his butchery career by going all the way to Sydney, Australia to represent Scottish Craft Butchery at Meat Stock where Butcher Wars was born!

Gary went to this World Butcher Wars event not focused on the competition aspect of it as he knew before he even went. It's a totally different set up over in Australia with the way they do things. With more attention paid to the display set up and the theatre of it rather than the butchery itself. He went for the experience and just proud to be representing Scotland with the aim of putting on a real show of proper Scottish Craft Butchery with a display full of traditional and modern Scottish cuts with everything being used and no waste, showing how we do things in Scotland. He took to the Meat Stock main stage complete with the kilt and bagpipes making sure his display had plenty of Scottish touches including thistles, tartan, sgian dubh, clan crests, haggis, mealie and black pudding all put together on Saltire flag-based display board.

The theme of the display was "The Flying Scotsman, Gary Raeburn, proud to be flying the flag for Scottish Craft Butchery" which went down an absolute treat with the large enthusiastic "Aussie Audience" that turned out in their hundreds to watch. From the moment Gary marched himself onto the stage with the pipes to the moment he finished they cheered him on creating an unbelievable electric atmosphere.

Gary was delighted with how the display turned out and the reaction and comments received from the crowd and fellow butchers.



It's fair to say they are a big fan of the Scots over in Oz!!

Gary had a great few days at Meat Stock and thoroughly enjoyed the butcher shop tours that followed, he said it was totally worth making the long journey to the other side of the World for it. Just being with butchers from all over the World under one roof



speaking to each other, sharing stories, seeing each other's different styles, ways of doing things and learning from each other is something you simply don't get the chance to do every day.

It's fair to say Gary has had a great year since winning Scotland's Butcher Wars and he said, just over 20 years ago I entered my first butchery competition and never did I think two decades later I would become a World Champion Butcher and go the other side of the World to represent my country, but it just shows you where a career in butchery can take you.

I feel privileged to have been given these experiences along with many more great times over the years which have created lifelong memories for me!!

If I can offer any advice to a young person thinking about butchery as a career or a young butcher that is thinking about entering a butchery competition it is... do not worry about making mistakes but make sure and learn from them. Ask, look, and listen to advice and take every opportunity you are given at there is no limit to what you can achieve or where you can go within this great craft!! Well done Gary from everyone at Scottish Craft Butchers!



Perth butcher named Scotland's beef banger champion



A Perth sausage has been crowned the best in Scotland.

D G. Lindsay & Son Butchers have been named the Scottish Beef Links Champion 2026, following a rigorous competition featuring some of the country's finest producers.

Delighted owner Beaton Lindsay (56) said he was "overwhelmed" by the honour for his beefy banger that has remained unchanged for generations.

The champion sausage was named regional champion for the east of Scotland in the biennial Scottish Craft Butchers awards before being crowned national champion.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic," said Beaton. "I was thrilled to win the regional title, but to take the Scottish Championship is just unbelievable. It's one of the titles every butcher vies for and to lift the championship is a dream come true.

"We didn't create a special batch for the competition – I just selected some from our counter display that day." Beaton, a fourth-generation butcher in a family business dating back to 1863, has been in the industry since he was a small boy. He explained that the beef link sausage recipe has remained unchanged during that time. "If it works well, why change it," he said. "Our beef sausages have always been a big seller and really popular with our customers. To find favour with a judging panel of industry experts and discerning consumers is fantastic."

Lindsays sell around 300 lbs of beef links every week – that's 3,600 sausages – with production experts Brian MacVicar and Koen Barclay keeping the supply stream going. "We are a small team of nine here," said Beaton, "and everyone works really hard. This award is testament to them all." Beaton claims there is no great secret to their hand-crafted championship-winning sausage. "Quality is key," he said. "We use prime Scotch beef flank mixed with just the right amount of fat and seasoning to make it moist, firm and tasty. "To have them judged the best in Scotland is terrific. We better ensure the production team can keep up with demand if everyone wants to try Scotland's best beef banger."

Judges described the Lindsay beef link as "a fantastic sausage" "Texture and consistency were perfect," they said. "It has a great balance of flavours and the taste is delicious – a level above the standard beef sausage. If you want to elevate your sausage choice – buy this."

Gordon King, Executive Manager of Scottish Craft Butchers, said that the competition had brought together some of the finest producers in the country and competition had been fierce.

"Every butcher wants to secure accolades for beef link sausages," he said. "This is a title everyone is chasing. "Beef links are a staple product among our craft butchers – one of the pillars of our business," he said. "Each butcher produces their own traditional sausage using skills and guarded recipes passed down over the years – often unaltered for generations. "Lindsays have perfected the perfect beef link sausage to lift the Scottish Championship. It's phenomenal and a very worthy winner. "It's great to see the Championship go to a long established family butchers where not only the staff – but also the customers – are made to feel part of the family," he added. "They are the perfect example of a local craft butcher."

Drew Goudie, Group Commercial Manager with championship sponsors Scobie & Junior, said they were passionate about supporting the butcher trade and the people driving it forward.

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“The Beef Link Sausage Competition is a great platform for recognising quality, innovation and craftsmanship,” he said, “and we are proud to support it in partnership with Scottish Craft Butchers.”

The competition also awarded four other regional titles with all five butchers competing in a blind tasting by an expert judging panel for the overall championship.

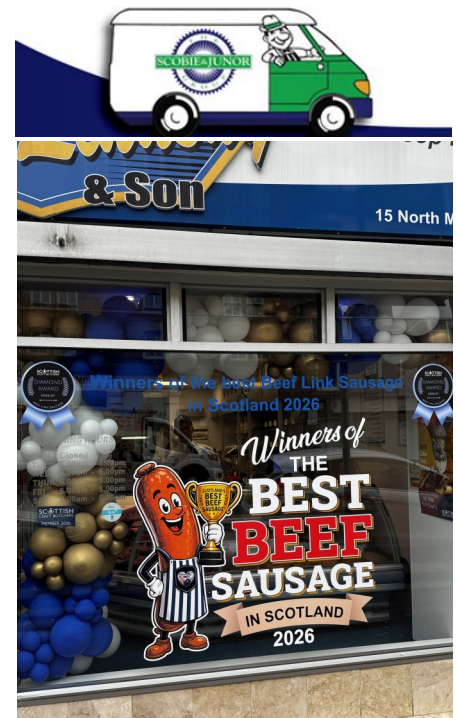
They are:

North of Scotland Champion – D. Gilmour Butchers, Kingussie;

Southeast Scotland Champion – Hugh Black & Sons, Bathgate;

Southwest Scotland Champion – T. H. Carson, Dalbeattie;

West of Scotland Champion – McCaskie’s Butcher and Café, Wemyss Bay.



Bo'ness butcher cooks up the nation's favourite speciality burger

Young Bo'ness butcher Luke Ross has proved he has the winning touch, bringing home a leading national industry award for the best speciality burger in Scotland.

Luke (21), fourth generation butcher with the family's Thomas Burns & Son Butchers, has won the coveted top Diamond Award in the Scottish Craft Butchers Speciality Burger evaluations.

The tasty Nacho Cheeseburger Melt was judged the best in Scotland by a panel of experienced industry and consumer evaluators, awarding it a rare 100% in every category, ranging from appearance and texture to flavour, composition and overall appeal.

"This burger is unreal – super tasty," they judged. "Love it!"

Thrilled owners, sisters Jane Ross and Emma Burns, acknowledged Luke's innovation, agreeing he was the creative genius behind their popular artisan craft products.

Luke's nation-beating gourmet burger consists of quality Scotch minced beef with a melted nacho cheese reservoir in the middle, topped by a flaky pastry lattice brushed with Mexican glaze.

And Luke admitted coming up with new products that would wow the customers is the favourite part of his work.

"I spend a lot of time working on different flavour combinations and testing out what works best," he said. "I love coming up with something new. My guide being that if I wouldn't eat it, I won't make it for others.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to have taken the best speciality burger in Scotland title. I thought the burger would do well – it's really good – but to take the Diamond Award is something really special."



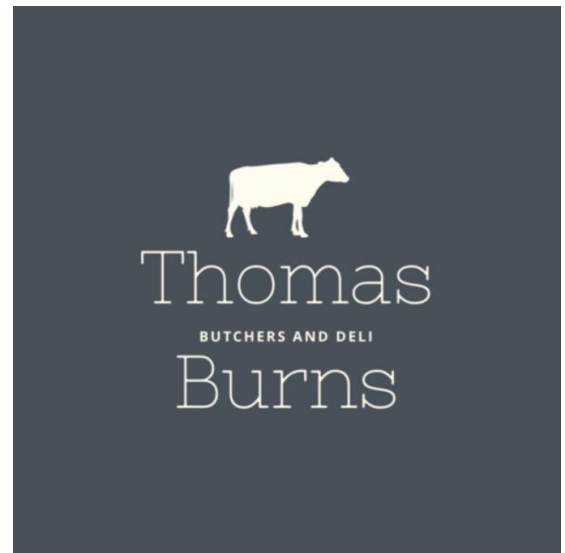
This is the second time Luke's creativity has earned a Diamond Award for the family butchers. Two years ago, he lifted the Make It With Pork title for Truffled Hogs and he has his sights set on securing a diamond hat-trick in the future.

Mum Jane said they were all "over the moon" with this latest industry accolade.

"We're all so proud of Luke," she said. "His late Grandfather and Great-grandfather would have thrilled in his success.

"Luke is so passionate about his work and he brings new and exciting ideas to the counter constantly – the customers love him and his products.

"This new product was already winning favour with customers and when the announcement was made and the event judges found out where the winning burger came from, they were phoning up to order some as they had loved it so much."



Gordon King, Executive Manager of Scottish Craft Butchers, said he had tasted the winning burger and found it “a great eating experience”.

“This is exactly the type of innovative product that today’s customers are looking for,” he said. “As tastes change and customer demands heighten, our local craft butchers are pushing the boundaries beyond traditional favourites and experimenting with new and exciting flavour combinations.

“Luke is proving himself to be an expert in this field, with two Diamond Awards under his belt, and everyone at Thomas Burns & Son should take credit for his advancement and development and be very proud of this latest achievement.

“It’s not easy to create something original that will win favour with the judges and Thomas Burns & Son were up against some very strong opposition from all across Scotland.

“To earn full marks across the board with any product is just remarkable. Well done Luke.”

Colin Hewitson, partner with sponsors C&K Hewitson, said they were proud to be involved with such a prestigious competition.

“This Scottish Craft Butchers award has attracted tasty and exciting entries from across the whole of Scotland,” he said. “We are proud to be associated with this high standard of competition and innovation and look forward to tasting the winning burger from Thomas Burns & Son.”

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Butchers Backing Brighter Futures

Scotland's butchers have always been at the heart of their communities, supporting local families, farmers and charities.

Now, we're asking butchers across the country to come together to help disadvantaged young people strive for a brighter future.

Every day, thousands of young people in Scotland face challenges such as poverty, poor mental health and limited opportunities.

With your support, Aberlour Children's Charity can help provide vital services, mentoring, training and safe spaces that give young people hope and confidence for the future.

There are many ways your shop can raise funds while engaging customers and staff. Why not hold a "Sausage Saturday" where a small donation from every pack sold goes to the cause?

You could organise a raffle, donation tin collection, sponsored staff challenge or a barbecue tasting day in-store. Some butchers may choose to create a special product with a percentage of sales donated, while others could encourage customers to "round up" their bill at the till. No matter how big or small the contribution, every pound raised will make a real difference. Together, Scotland's butchers can help back brighter futures for young people who need it most.

Please get in touch with **rachel.deuchar@aberlour.org.uk** who can arrange a poster to display in your shop window or till.



A huge congratulations to Martin Farrell, the manager of James Chapman Butchers, Glasgow Road shop in Wishaw, who ran in the Manchester Marathon on Sunday the 18th April. He raised over £1100 for Alzheimer's Research and came in 920th place of the 28,000 participants who crossed the finish line.

He finished the race with his own personal best time of 2 hours and 57 minutes, and all at Chapmans are proud of his achievement.

Congratulations Martin from everyone at Scottish Craft Butchers

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Scottish Craft Butchers members have the benefit of access to Lindsays' employment law team for all employment law queries.

Members are urged to get in touch with the team before taking action in relation to any employee grievance or dispute, disciplinary action or proposed dismissal, including redundancy.

The team will provide advice and guidance on procedure and minimising the risk of successful claims.

Members also have access to Lindsays' online library of legally compliant key documents for handling day to day employment issues.'



National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates

The hourly rate for the minimum wage depends on your age and whether you're an apprentice.

You must be at least:

- school leaving age to get the National Minimum Wage
- aged 21 to get the National Living Wage - the minimum wage will still apply for workers aged 20 and under

Current rates

	21 and over	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2025	£12.21	£10	£7.55	£7.55
April 2026	£12.71	£10.85	£8	£8

Apprentices

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice rate if they're either:

- aged under 19
- aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

Apprentices are entitled to the minimum wage for their age if they both:

- are aged 19 or over
- have completed the first year of their apprenticeship

Larbert butchers “steak” their claim on national industry award

A Larbert butcher has beaten off competition from all over Scotland to “steak” their claim on a top industry award.



Kinnaird Butcher Shop & Deli has won the coveted Diamond Award for the best ribeye steak in Scotland in the Scottish Craft Butchers Awards 2026.

Thrilled director Karl Hearton (37) said the staff were “absolutely buzzing” with the announcement and said that the national title was testament to the hard work and investment at the McIntyre Avenue shop.

Karl revealed that they owed their success to their walk-in Himalayan rock salt chamber – the first and only one of its kind in Scotland – used to dry age their cuts of prime Scotch beef.

“We know our steaks are good and we know why,” he said. “We built this shop and business around the salt chamber and have become renowned for our dry aged steaks, with customers travelling from as far as south of the Border to buy them.



“By using prime quality Scotch beef and drying it for 40 days in the chamber, we have perfected the optimum process for the tastiest steaks and we’re really ecstatic to have that belief backed up by this award – it’s tremendous.”

Kinnaird keep a constant rotation of cuts in the drying chamber, allowing a constant supply of roasts ready for customers' steak requests.

“We usually cut our ribeye to around 12oz steaks, but we can make them as large or as small as the customer wants,” said Karl.

And Karl is over the moon that his favourite cut has been the one to lift the multi-award-winning shop’s latest accolade.

“Ribeye is my idea of perfection,” he said. “It’s the best steak going and to be judged as producing the best ribeye in Scotland is pretty special – a great achievement for us all.”

Judges described Kinnaird’s nation-beating entry as “an exceptional steak”.

“Moist, tender, flavoursome,” they said. “Superb.”

Scottish Craft Butchers Executive Manager Gordon King said the maturing of the meat held the secret to success.

“Our local craft butchers do steak extremely well in Scotland,” he said. “Each perfects their own ageing process, maturing the meat gently and cutting and trimming as the customer prefers.

“Experience and skill come into play and Kinnaird have some of the best in the form of Karl, owner Gavin Colquhoun and butcher Ryan Tierney who are all responsible for the ageing process at Kinnaird.

“The winning steak was exceptional and wowed the judges and it’s heartening to see the focus, dedication and passion put into the process pay dividends in the form of a Diamond Award for Kinnaird.”

Jason Ward, general manager with awards sponsors John Scott Meat, said he was thrilled to see one of their customers lift the bi-ennial award.

“Kinnaird always know how to treat any cut of meat,” he said, “and we always select our prime beef for them.

“A personal favourite, the classic ribeye steak is up there with the finest cuts of beef available.

“We’re proud to be this year’s sponsor of the Best Ribeye Steak Competition and would like to congratulate all the Scottish butchers who showcased their exceptional produce. It’s a true testament to the outstanding quality available at your local butcher, where quality, provenance, and traceability come as

standard.” FULL RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SCB WEBSITE





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REGIONAL MEETINGS IMAGES Many thanks for the tremendous support at all meetings
Appreciation also goes to Colin Hewitson, Paul Cox and Steve Dunn for their presentations which are available on the members only website





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Apprentice Contribution Helps Deliver Major Efficiency Improvements at John M Munro Ltd

During his apprenticeship with John M Munro Ltd, Ruairidh MacKenzie identified an operational inefficiency within the company's beef processing operation that ultimately led to significant improvements in productivity, yield, and process flow. While completing his qualification, Ruairidh highlighted an issue relating to the handling of rump and roast products within the beef breakdown process. His observation identified weaknesses in stock rotation and daily production flow, which resulted in high-value products remaining in chill longer than necessary. Although the original observation focused on a specific area of production, it prompted a wider operational review across the business. As a direct result, the company implemented a revised production process supported by a £30,000 capital investment. The changes delivered substantial operational benefits within the beef breakdown process, including:

- Labour time reduced from 9.0 minutes to 4.2 minutes per side
- Productivity increased from 6.7 to 14.3 sides per labour hour
- Elimination of double handling and rehangng activity
- Improved process flow

Reduced manual handling requirements

The financial impact has also been significant, with measurable annual returns including:

- Approximately £5,000 labour savings per annum
- Minimum £17,500 annual yield improvement through increased trim recovery

Total measurable annual return of approximately £22,500

The investment is expected to achieve payback within approximately 16 months, before taking into account additional operational benefits such as improved capacity, reduced handling risk, and overall efficiency improvements.

While the wider investment extended beyond the initial observation, the company recognises that Ruairidh's contribution was instrumental in identifying the opportunity for improvement. "His awareness and confidence to challenge the process are exactly the qualities we aim to develop through our apprenticeship programme."

John M Munro Ltd also recognised the important role played by Craft Skills Scotland in supporting apprentice development within the industry.

Ruairidh MacKenzie

"The apprenticeship gave me the confidence to speak up and suggest ways we could improve the business. Seeing the company take my idea seriously and put it into practice has given me a real buzz."





Another great result at Stoddarts in Broxburn where another 2 member from the butchery team have completed their Modern Apprenticeship SCQF L5 in Meat and Poultry Skills.

A huge congratulations to (f/l) Virgilo Peralta and (f/r) Crisanto Delos Santos for completing their course.

Being presented with their Certificate from their two mentors Wilson and Scott.

From all here at Craft Skills Scotland congratulations and well done.



Huge Congratulations to Benjie Bialen from Stoddarts in Broxburn for successfully completing his Modern Apprenticeship SCQF L5 in Meat & Poultry.

Benjie is pictured receiving his certificate from his training manager Wilson Hendry.

Great work Benjie and Congratulations from all here at CraftSkills Scotland



A huge congratulations to Matthew Macintyre from Balgove Larder on an incredible 10-year journey with the business which has led him to complete his Modern Apprenticeship SCQF 5 in Meat and poultry skills!

Matthew's path is a brilliant example of progression. He started out as a kitchen porter, before moving into cheffing in the Steak Barn, then progressing through the shop, café, and deli, and even going on to run the Pizza Box.

For the past 2 years, Matthew has been working in the butchery department, after lending a hand over a busy Christmas period and discovering he really enjoyed it — leading him to further develop his skills in the trade. It's been a pleasure to work with you Matthew!!

Matthew (pictured left) receiving his certificate from mentor Dave Lawson (pictured right)

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From **aprons** that mean business, to **bobble hats**, **beanies** and **baseball caps** that laugh in the face of Scottish weather. Add **gilets** and **jackets** for shop-floor swagger, and **thermal cups** to keep your tea hot longer than a debate about square vs sliced sausage.

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Huge congratulations to Nicole Gibson on completing her SCQF 5 Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Skills!

Nicole has been involved in butchery since she was 17 years old and has now spent 5 busy years working in the industry. She originally started out serving customers before progressing into whole carcass butchery at Strachan Craft Butchers, where she has taken to the role like a duck to water.

Nicole's favourite thing to do: Boning lamb

Nicole's favourite product to make: Kitchen-ready value added meal trays — full of colour and variety.

Nicole explained that one of the things she loves most about butchery is that “you get a good laugh with your co-workers.”

Here she is being presented with her certificate by her manager, Ryan Miller.



A huge congratulations to Peter Bellshaw on successfully completing his SCQF Level 5, Modern Apprentice qualification in Meat and Poultry Skills! Peter has been with The Smiddy for the past 2 years after making the move from a career in fishmongery into the world of butchery. Bringing with him a strong food background and a real passion for cooking, he has settled into the role brilliantly.

One of Peter's favourite parts of the job is serving customers, helping them choose the right products, sharing cooking advice, and offering recipe ideas to help people get the best from what they buy. His enthusiasm for food and cooking really comes across when speaking to customers. Throughout his qualification, Peter has worked incredibly hard and shown real determination to keep progressing and developing his skills. Completing his Level 5 has taken a lot of effort, and he should be extremely proud of what he has achieved.



Huge congratulations to Marc Ingram on completing his SCQF Level 6 in Meat and Poultry Skills! Modern Apprenticeship

Marc has been part of the team at The Smiddy Butcher for almost 5 years and has become a passionate ambassador for the trade.

One of Marc's favourite parts of the job is meeting customers and chatting to them about the different meats, where they come from, and the stories behind the products. Marc also explained what the apprenticeship has done for him personally:

“It changed my life — it gave me confidence and hope, and I've learned more than I ever could have in school. It's opened a lot of doors.”

Marc's journey shows just how much apprenticeships can help people grow both personally and professionally, and it's been brilliant to see his confidence and knowledge develop over the years. Well done Marc!



A huge congratulations to Alasdair Findlay on completing his SCQF Level 6 Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Skills! Alasdair has now spent the past 3 years with The Smiddy and has been working in the butchery trade for 4 years in total.

He really loves the creative side of the job, especially coming up with new sausage flavours and working on boning venison — two areas where he really enjoys getting hands on and developing his skills.

One thing that surprised him most about butchery is just how expansive the trade is.

“You can always learn something new or pick up a new technique because the industry is always evolving.”



Huge congratulations to Mark Weldon on completing his SCQF Level 5 Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Skills!

Mark has been working in butchery since November 2023 and joined David Cox last June. In a short space of time, he has come on leaps and bounds in both his confidence, skills, and knowledge within the trade.

One area Mark has particularly enjoyed learning is beef breakdown, developing his understanding and practical skills as he continues to progress in the industry.

Throughout his qualification, Mark has put a huge amount of effort into his learning and development, always showing a willingness to listen, learn, and improve.



Huge congratulations to Stephen on completing his SCQF Level 6 Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Skills!

Stephen has been in butchery for 13 years and started out learning how to serve customers, something that came naturally to him with his great patter and personality.

He then moved onto making burgers and sausages, but always wanted to get involved in boning out and knife work. Once he got the opportunity, he never looked back.

Now working at Gillespies Family Butchers, Stephen says his favourite part of the job is the teamwork and the people he works with. He also enjoys creating new products for their constantly changing cabinet.

One thing about Stephen is that he puts a bit of love into everything he does, and that really comes across in his work every day.

Completing his Level 3 is a brilliant achievement and a reflection of all the experience and skills he has built up over the years. Well done Stephen!



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You
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at the
Butcher's*

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*Get your hands on
our juicy bits*




**Fire up
the BBQ**

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***Big Summer
of Sport
Big Night in***



*The BBQ Starts
at the
Butcher's*

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*Big night in
Big Flavour*




**Fire up
the BBQ**

**SCOTTISH
CRAFT BUTCHERS**

POSTERS & SCREEN GRAPHICS



SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

Scottish Craft Butchers members have exclusive use of the posters and screen graphics produced here.

We issue new marketing material 4 times a year to help our members maximise the opportunities that seasonal food events present.

The screen graphics and posters for the Summer 2026 cover the BBQ season and the opportunities the Sunshine (Hopefully) and big summer of sport brings to increase sales. With the opportunity to promote eating at home this summer the consumers desire to fire up the BBQ is there to increase sales.

We hope you find the graphics and posters useful and can use them to increase sales to your business.

We have a catalogue of past versions of the screen graphics. These can be viewed and downloaded from the members only section of the SCB website.

However, if you would rather we sent them directly to you, then please get in touch with bruce@craftbutchers.co.uk



**SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS
AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES SURVEY**

**JUNE
2026**

**MAY
2026**

SCOTCH BEEF

+/=/

Fillet Steak	7081	=	7081
Sirloin Steak	4287	=	4287
Ribeye Steak	4494	+	4479
Popeseye Steak	2795	=	2795
Topside	2360	=	2360
Round / Rump Steak	2382	=	2382
Stewing Steak	2073	=	2073
Rolled Brisket	1968	=	1968
Steak Mince	1644	=	1644
Boiling Beef Bone In	1242	=	1242

DOMESTIC LAMB

Whole Leg of Lamb	1959	=	1959
Centre Cut Leg Bone In	2474	=	2474
Gigot Lamb Chops	2619	=	2619
Lamb Leg Steaks	2718	=	2718
Chump Lamb Chops	2597	=	2597
Single Loin Lamb Chops	2756	+	2835
Double Loin Lamb Chops	2835	-	2756
Rolled Shoulder Lamb	1954	=	1954
Lamb Shanks	1401	=	1401
Diced Lamb	2160	=	2160
Minced Lamb	1911	=	1911

PORK

Pork Tenderloin (Fillet)	1866	=	1866
Pork Leg Steaks	1342	=	1342
Single Loin Pork Chops	1362	-	1376
Double Loin Pork Chops	1376	+	1362
Rolled Shoulder of Pork	1245	=	1245
Belly Pork	1260	=	1260
Pork Loin Steaks	1501	=	1501
Diced Pork	1255	=	1255

PRODUCTS

Sliced Beef Sausage	1257	=	1257
Beef Link Sausages	1328	+	1328
Pork Link Sausages	1320	=	1320
Speciality Pork Sausages	1411	=	1411
1/4lb Beefburger	178	=	178
Sliced Black Pudding	1091	=	1091
Ball Haggis	1163		
Beef Stir fry	1868	=	1868
Pork Stir Fry	1516	=	1516
Chicken Stir Fry	1756	=	1756

**SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS
AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES SURVEY
NEW PRODUCTS ADDED**

**JUNE
2026**

**MAY
2026**

BACON				
Smoked Back Bacon	1521		1521	
Unsmoked Back Bacon	1475		1475	
Streaky Bacon	1570		1570	
Chicken				
Chicken Fillets	1409		1409	
Bakery Products				
Scotch Pie (Plain or Onion)	184		184	
Ind Steak Pie in Pastry Shell				
Large Mince Round				
1lb Ashette Steak Pie	1331		1331	
Regular Sausage Roll				



**WELCOME TO OUR
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**The Next Scottish Craft Butchers Executive Meeting
Wednesday 3rd June 2026 at 6:30pm
Online Zoom Meeting**

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Members are requested to support these businesses who pay a membership fee to support our work

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Members are requested to support these businesses who pay a membership fee to support our work

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Livestock Prices

Data collection co-ordinated by AHDB Meat Services (Economics) on
behalf of QMS, updates available at www.qmscotland.co.uk

Market commentary courtesy of Iain Macdonald, Senior Economics Analyst, Quality Meat Scotland



	W/E 16/05/26	Previous week	Previous year
Scottish Abattoirs			
Prices			
Steers dwt	607.3 p/kg	615.7 p/kg	705.2 p/kg
Heifers dwt	611.2 p/kg	623.8 p/kg	702.7 p/kg
Young Bulls dwt	586.3 p/kg	595.1 p/kg	691.7 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	3215	3030	3048
Heifers	2148	2098	2482
Young Bulls	543	483	581
Scottish auctions			
Prices (Source IAAS)			
Steers lwt	340.60 p/kg	338.58 p/kg	391.96 p/kg
Heifers lwt	344.63 p/kg	361.69 p/kg	397.79 p/kg
Young bulls lwt	297.06 p/kg	314.75 p/kg	351.64 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	127	106	122
Heifers	198	174	175
Young bulls	18	8	11

Livestock Prices continued

Data collection co-ordinated by AHDB Meat Services (Economics) on behalf of QMS, updates available at www.qmscotland.co.uk

Deadweight cattle week ending 16th May 2026								
	All steers p/kg			All heifers p/kg			All Young bulls p/kg	
	3	4L	4H	3	4L	4H	3	4L
-U	605	598.5	591.7	616.7	609.7	607.8	594.6	594.6
R	612.4	613.7	609.4	618.3	615.9	610.8	586.9	587.3
O+	608.3	603.9	598.6	608.7	609.1	601.2	558.1	573.8
-O	583.1	590.8	584.5	562	597.5	595.2	540	561

Sheep prices Scottish (IAAS)	W/E 13/05/26	Previous Week	Previous Year
Prime Sheep SQQ lwt	415.83 p/kg	390.17 p/kg	293.20 p/kg
Ewes lwt	£154.70/hd	£144.87/hd	£135.30/hd
Sheep numbers			
Scottish Auctions			
Prime Sheep SQQ lwt	16252	17056	16618
Ewes	4121	3445	3618
GB Abattoir (AHDB)	W/E 16/05/2026		
New Season Prime Sheep SQQ dwt	870.9 p/kg	836.9 p/kg	665.4 p/kg

Deadweight sheep week ending 16th May 2026 Source: AHDB				
		2	3L	3H
	U	881.5	886.7	882.9
	R	874.4	878.9	876.1
	O	859.4	875.2	866.9

Pigs	W/E 16/05/26	Previous week	Previous year
GB abattoirs			
Standard Pig Price (SPP)	179.6 p/kg	178.34 p/kg	206.23 p/kg

GB deadweight pigs SPP week ending 16th May 2026 Source:AHDB					
	Method 1 and 2	Change		Method 1 and 2	Change
	p/kg dwt			p/kg dwt	
Up to 59.9 kg	136.14	-1.27	80.0 – 89.9 kg	181.82	+1.80
60.0 – 69.9 kg	167.74	+5.38	90.0 – 99.9 kg	182.04	+1.38
70.0 – 79.9 kg	176.75	+1.66	100 kg & over	175.00	+0.12

Sheep market:

Following strong Ramadan and Easter demand in March and April, hogg prices eased slightly in early May before recovering to above £4/kg lwt at Scottish auction marts. Prices reached a season-to-date high of 416p/kg lwt for the week ending 13 May, and remaining elevated as result of the tightening supply. Having spent the early weeks of 2026 running slightly behind 2025 levels, auction prices have averaged around 25% higher year-on-year since the third week of April before picking up significantly to 42% for the second week of May. Prices remained holding around 32% above the five-year average during the four weeks ending 13 May.

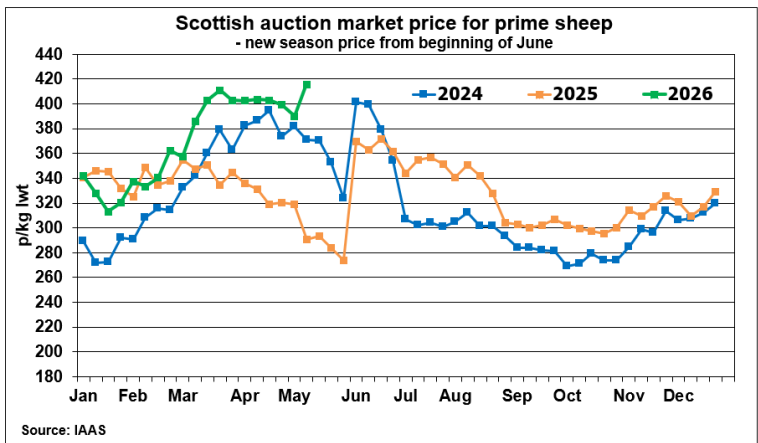
After a sluggish autumn, Scottish auction throughput picked up at Christmas before making a strong start to 2026, running higher year-on-year for most of the first quarter. After falling behind 2025 levels during the Easter weeks, numbers recovered to above 2025 levels before falling 2.2% below again for the week ending 13 May. Hogg availability has been supported by a slightly increased Scottish lamb crop (+1%), a slow marketing pattern, and sharply increased store lamb sales (+9%).

At GB level, lamb supply has been fundamentally tight this season, reflecting a 2.1% reduction in the 2025 lamb crop. Whilst Defra slaughter data showed slightly higher kill levels through to the end of March, April saw a dip in throughput compared to the year before.

After a strong 2025, UK sheepmeat exports continued to trend higher at the start of 2026, with volumes reaching a 25-year high for the first quarter, up almost 19% year-on-year. Over 95% of the total was shipped to the EU.

Whilst imports also had a strong start to 2026, growth slowed in March to around 4% year-on-year. Imports from Australia slowed sharply, falling by around 20% on the month in March, although year-to-date volumes remained 43% above 2025 levels. New Zealand shipments saw a smaller decline, down 9% in March and around 8% year-to-date.

Farmgate price levels remained elevated in 2026 despite slightly increased imports and overall market supply, highlighting the strength of sheepmeat demand.



Beef market:

Scottish prime cattle prices have declined for five consecutive weeks following the Easter period. In late April, Scottish abattoir numbers were above 2025 levels when Easter fell but dropped below the year earlier levels again by mid-May. South of the border, numbers remained stronger than in 2025 for the five weeks to 16 May, which may help explain the overall softening prices. Scottish Prime cattle prices averaged at 606.8p/kg in the week ending 16 May, their lowest since the end of January 2025 and around 14% behind year-earlier levels, reflecting the peak at the end of April 2025.

Prime cattle auction prices have also trended downwards, despite occasional increases since March. Steers have averaged around 341p/kg, with heifers falling to 345p/kg for the week ending 13 May.

After the seasonal increase in cow prices came to an end in early April, prices have fallen sharply. All grades have now recorded five consecutive weeks of decline, with R4L cow prices averaging 532p/kg, the lowest since the end of February 2025 and nearly 11% below year-earlier levels.

Scottish cow slaughter has also declined this year, with numbers in early May 14% below 2025 levels, with a similar trend seen year-to-date.

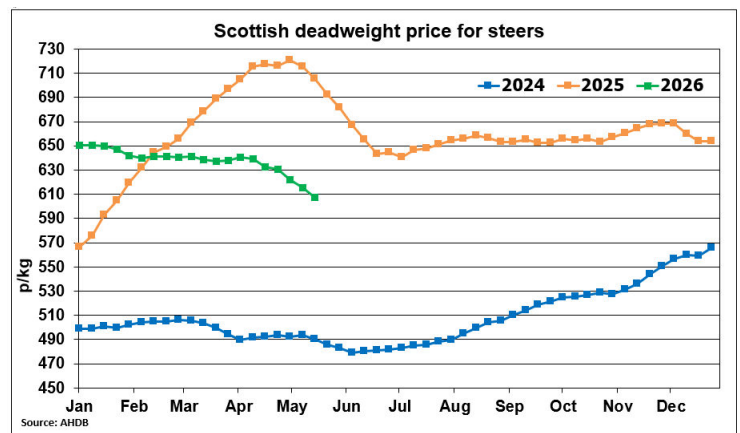
After a strong start in 2026, store cattle prices have begun to follow the downward trend seen in 2025, albeit slightly earlier. Auction marketings have remained below 2025 levels, with year-to-date volumes down 7.8%.

Although slipping slightly behind the highs of late spring 2025 when the finished cattle trade was at its record high, store values remain elevated when set against finished carcase value.

Despite cattle population data pointing towards relatively stable supply, Scottish prime cattle slaughter has fallen by around 3% year-on-year in 2026.

Following a 4% decline in GB prime cattle slaughter in 2025, Defra data showed a more stable first quarter of 2026, with marginal declines continuing in April.

Over the first three months of 2026, UK beef imports continued to increase, albeit at a slower rate of 2% driven by higher volumes from non-EU markets while EU imports declined sharply. Exports rose by 18%, supported by a weak domestic demand and a falling EU cattle herd.



Pig market: .

Pig prices fell to their lowest since the increases seen in 2022 in May. However, the pace of decline has slowed, with the SPP recording the first rise in four weeks in the week ending 16 May, suggesting early signs of market rebalancing. Despite this, the 70 -104.9kg price remained 9% lower than at the end of 2025 and nearly 13% below last year’s levels.

AHDB’s cost of production model estimates that in the first quarter of 2026, margins were negative at around £4 per head. With further falls in average carcass prices, margins are likely to remain under pressure, bringing an end to the recent period of positive returns before the full losses of 2021/22 were recouped.

Carcass weights have averaged 2.5% higher than a year earlier, although they have declined for five consecutive weeks from Mid-April to Mid-May. This has added to downward pressure on the overall carcass prices, which averaged £167.30 in the week ending 16 May, around 11% lower than a year earlier.

Heavier weights reflect a backlog on farm caused by abattoir issues in autumn and winter, resulting in a higher share of carcasses exceeding the target weight range.

While not as bad a situation as four years ago, carcass weights data suggests that conditions remain difficult, making it a longer-lasting backlog.

GB prime pig slaughter rose by 3.6% year-to-date in April, exceeding expectations of a relatively stable supply, driven by a combination of a slight uplift in pig numbers and a backlog on farm.

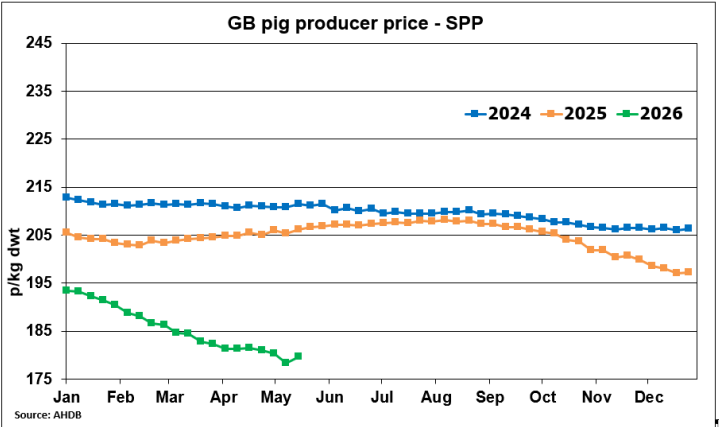
After adjusting domestic production by adding imports and subtracting exports, total UK pigmeat market supply has fallen by nearly 2% in the first quarter of 2026, highlighting the softness of demand when set against falling market values. Exports have rose by 30%, while imports have fallen by 8%.

In Scotland, the number of pigs leaving farms for slaughter fell by more than 3.5% in 2025, with the gap growing throughout the final third of the year. While movements to slaughter declined further at the start of 2026, throughput rebounded from March into April, resulting in a year-to-date increase of 2%.

While sitting 18% lower than their 5-year average, EU prices have started the spring season strongly. As a result, the GB lead over the EU average has halved from the January peak of 50%, with the gap at 25% where it increased into May.

While, not contributing to an increase in import volumes, the large price differential between GB and EU pig prices is likely to be have had a major impact on pricing in the supply chain as, in the most price sensitive market segments, buyers will have had a much cheaper alternative to bargain with.

The UK pork export market has remained strong in 2026, with higher volumes being driven by the EU markets alongside a soft domestic market. Exports to the EU in 2026 are 38% higher than in 2025, while non-EU exports rose by 21% compared to same period last year to March. Sales to China and Hong Kong continued to rise in March, increasing by 15% year-to-date.



Source: AHDB



Many thanks to Iain MacDonald from Quality Meat Scotland for his market commentary each month. Thanks also to Heather Macdonald for the charts and prices.



SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS SINGLES GOLF COMPETITION

Glasgow Golf Club

Gailes Links

Irvine, Ayrshire,

KA11 5AE.

01294 311561

www.gailelinks.co.uk

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY

EMAIL Bruce@craftbutchers.co.uk



Tea/Coffee & hot roll on arrival.

1 Round Golf – First Tee off time 12:30

2 Course Meal

First 48 entries only accepted.

Entry Fee £85.00 payable in advance.

In the event of a tie inward half is compared first.

Competitors will be notified of tee-off times in advance.

Presentation of prizes will take place after the meal:

Singles Winner, Silent Pairs, Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin.

Wednesday 5th August 2026

Organised by the Scottish Craft Butchers

Tee off times commence at 12:30

Entry cost £85 including meals and prizes.

The competition is played over 18 holes as a full stableford.



Glasgow Golf Club's Gailes Links is a premier 6,903-yard, par-71 championship links course in Ayrshire, Scotland, renowned for hosting Open Championship Final Qualifying. Designed by Willie Park Jr. in 1912, it features classic links characteristics including undulating fairways, punishing gorse, heather, and, as discussed in the Gailes Links Golf Course review, strategically placed bunkers.

Key Features and Description:

Design & Layout: As detailed on Fine Golf, the course is lauded for its traditional, "true" links feel, featuring natural, rolling terrain rather than dramatic, mountainous dunes.

Signature Hole: The par-3 6th hole (152 yards) is a highlight, playing from a high tee to a basin-like green surrounded by bunkers.

Conditioning: Known for its firm, fast, and high-quality greens and consistently excellent conditioning, making it a top-tier year-round venue.

Accessibility: The course is highly regarded for being a "tough yet fair" test of golf, offering a top-class experience.

Visitor Experience & Amenities:

Clubhouse: The clubhouse offers a full restaurant, bar, and terrace, often serving traditional Scottish meals.

Facilities: Includes a well-stocked pro shop, driving range, and putting greens.

Gailes Links is consistently chosen by the R&A for championship qualifying, underscoring its status as a top-level Scottish links experience

The View From The Butcher's Block

Ah, summer. The season of sunshine, barbeques, family gatherings and, for retail butchers, the annual challenge of trying to predict whether customers will buy enough burgers to feed the village or enough sausages to supply a small nation.

Every year starts the same way. We spend months looking forward to the warmer weather and the opportunities it brings. Then the first sunny weekend arrives and suddenly everyone wants 400 burgers by lunchtime, while our carefully prepared display of slow-cook casseroles sits looking slightly confused in the corner cabinet.

This summer, of course, comes with the added excitement of a major football tournament. For many butchers, the biggest challenge won't be keeping up with customer demand – it will be managing the fixture list and the staff rota.

There seems to be a mysterious phenomenon that occurs whenever Scotland qualify for a major tournament. Staff who have shown little interest in annual leave for months suddenly develop an urgent need for a few hours off at precisely the same time as kick-off. Some become experts in creative scheduling. Others start offering elaborate shift swaps worthy of a Premier League transfer negotiation.

"We're all in this together," they say.

Until Scotland are playing.

Then somehow everyone else is expected to cover the counter. Of course, the reality is that most independent butchers are football fans themselves, so many shop owners find themselves trying to serve customers while secretly checking the score every thirty seconds. The challenge is maintaining a professional image while pretending that you're not refreshing your phone under the counter.

Then there is the great British weather, which remains as reliable as ever. One day we're preparing for a heatwave and ordering extra barbecue packs. The next day we're wondering if we should put the steak pies back in the window.

Yet despite all the unpredictability, summer remains one of the best times of year for our trade. Independent butchers are perfectly placed to make the most of local food, outdoor entertaining and community events. Customers want quality, they want local produce and they want advice on what to cook. That's where we shine.

Whether it's creating a winning barbecue range, promoting award-winning products, or helping customers feed family and friends during the football, there are fantastic opportunities to showcase the craftsmanship that makes our businesses special.

So while the staff may be negotiating football-related leave requests, customers may be changing their orders with the weather forecast, and Scotland may be causing blood pressure levels to rise across the nation, let's enjoy it all.

After all, summer only comes once a year. And if we're lucky, Scotland might even still be playing by the time this newsletter lands on the counter.

Now that really would be something worth celebrating.



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