

31 March 2020

Recognising the valuable role of the Scottish food production supply chain

Dear MSP,

We are writing to you to seek your assistance in recognising the valuable role that the food production supply chain is doing by providing high quality food to front line workers and the Scottish population, during this unprecedented time.

It is more critical than ever that food can still be grown, reared, caught, produced, processed, distributed and sold through local and national retailers, online, as well as delivered directly to hospitals and vulnerable groups.

Scotland's food and drink industry has taken this emergency seriously and we want to make sure you know the measures of good practice that we have recommended to our members and stakeholders.

On 23 March, Nicola Sturgeon advised businesses if they are contributing something essential to the battle against Coronavirus, including food supplies that the Scottish Government want them to stay open if possible. She said these businesses must be able to meet social distancing and health and safety requirements. We have advised all of our members to adhere to this guidance.

Food Standards Scotland has set out clear guidance on social distancing in a food production environment {<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus/questions-and-answers-covid-19>}. Our members are implementing this advice and many have been since well before the lockdown.

We were delighted to see the positive messages of support for food production late last week from the Scottish and UK Governments:

Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, said:

"I, and the Scottish Government as a whole, want to whole heartedly thank all those involved in the food sector and supply chains for the continued hard work that is going on to provide the public with the essential food needed to see us through this unprecedented time."

George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said:

"In the face of what is perhaps the greatest health challenge this country has faced in our lifetime, I want to pay tribute to all those who are working around the clock to keep the nation fed – in our fields, processing plants, factories, wholesalers, stores and takeaways and all of those moving goods around the country and to our homes.

"The last three weeks have been stressful and difficult for everyone working to feed the country and provide them with other essential items. Food retailers have faced an unprecedented increase in demand and those working in food production and distribution have had to work harder than ever to ensure that food and drink are kept on the shelves."

We are proud of how workers across Scotland have risen to the many challenges that they face as a result of Covid-19. We hope you have the opportunity to recognise frontline workers and the many unsung heroes in support industries, including the Scottish food supply chain.

We are proud of them and we hope you are too! #hiddenheroes of the coronavirus crisis.

Yours faithfully,

David Thomson, CEO, FDF Scotland

Scott Walker, Chief Executive, NFU Scotland



Alan Clarke, Chief Executive, Quality Meat Scotland

Tim Bailey, Chief Executive, SAOS



James Withers, Chief Executive, Scotland Food & Drink



Alasdair Smith, Chief Executive, the Scottish Bakers



Julie Hesketh-Laird, Chief Executive, Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation



Donna Fordyce, Interim Head, Seafood Scotland

