

Beef Week 2026: success building on success

The continuing success of Beef Week is further testimony of the key role played by LMC in profiling the tremendous production standards achieved on farm quality assured farms across Northern Ireland for the benefit of consumers.

And this is a message that extends well beyond these shores to retailers and members of the public throughout the rest of the UK and all those other countries where beef from Northern Ireland takes its rightful place as a red meat delicacy.

Beef Week is a UK-wide initiative with the LMC co-ordinating myriad activities here in Northern Ireland, all designed to make maximum impact with consumers.

One of the most consistent take away messages from this annual initiative has been the strong commitment from food retailers in helping to boost the impact it makes across all levels of society. And 2026 has been no different in this regard.

As Northern Ireland's population continues to grow, the 'home market' has become increasingly important for the local beef sector.

And LMC has always taken an extremely proactive marketing approach where this key development trend is concerned.

Beef Week 2026 took place between April 23rd and 30th.

LMC Chief Executive, Colin Smith commented, "We worked in collaboration with other UK levy bodies and stakeholders to coordinate messaging on the health and nutritional attributes of beef, including the high quality standards upheld throughout the supply chain. The local beef sector supports thousands of jobs across the supply chain and is an integral part of our economy. Beef Week is a fantastic opportunity to shine a light on the exceptional quality of local farm quality assured beef and the dedication of the farmers who produce it."

He added, "I am delighted that the Ulster Farmers' Union, ABP and Asda joined us again this year to promote the farm to fork journey, highlighting the high standards of farm quality assured beef and the exceptional taste which sets it apart on a global stage."

This year's campaign took place against the backdrop of a growing consumer interest in the key role that beef can contribute to a healthy diet.

Beef Week also complements the other work undertaken by the Commission in communicating a strong red meat message to consumers of all ages across Northern Ireland the year round.



This includes the provision of school cookery demonstrations, which have the inclusion of farm quality beef as a key focal point.

Colin Smith again, "We began Beef Week 2026 with a sampling session at Asda Antrim. Representatives were on hand, chatting with consumers and inviting them to experience the quality and taste of Northern Ireland farm quality assured beef for themselves. Through our education programme we aim to inspire the consumers of tomorrow. Last year we launched Mini Beef Week, and I am delighted to confirm that it was back on the agenda for 2026. The initiative aims to inspire primary-aged pupils to taste and enjoy beef. The timing of Beef Week specifically allows us to directly endorse the benefits of this unique meat to school children across Northern Ireland. There is strong evidence to show that consumers are actively selecting beef in their diet because of the enhanced sources of high quality protein and other valuable nutrients, which the meat constitutes."

But what makes Beef Week different is the fact that the campaign allows consumers to learn more about Northern Ireland's farm quality assurance scheme and the benefits this unique initiative delivers at all stages within the beef production and marketing chain: from farm to fork.

The significance of the farm quality assured logo

Independent market research, carried out during recent months, confirms that the NIBL FQAS logo has a recognition rating of over 80% with the general public.

This is an extremely high figure, well above what would be expected for most of the best known-food brands purchased in local shops every day of the year.

Making this a reality is the growing commitment of retailers across Northern Ireland to include the logo on the beef they sell in their outlets.

Colin Smith explained, "Tesco, for example, have placed the NIBL FQAS logo on between 97% and 100% of the beef products they sold over the past 5 months. This is highly significant both in absolute terms and also the fact that Tesco is the largest food retailer in Northern Ireland."

He added, "LMC wants to develop the strongest possible working relationship with all of Northern Ireland's food retailers. Their commitment in procuring farm quality produced beef and lamb is exceptionally strong. However, it would be extremely valuable from a consumer endorsement point of view to have the quality assured logo equally reflected on all pack labels."

The Commission tracks the labelling practices of all the major food retailers operating in Northern Ireland courtesy of a mystery shopping initiative.

"It's important that we know the full facts regarding the labelling practices followed by all local food retailers, where the sale of farm quality assured beef and lamb produced in Northern Ireland is concerned," stressed Colin Smith.

LMC at Balmoral Show 2026

Balmoral Show 2026 will be a flagship venue for LMC. The event allows representatives from the organisation to interface directly with consumers, farmers and representatives of other stakeholder groups in equal measure.

The LMC management team will be at Balmoral from the Wednesday through to the Saturday.

Beef and lamb cookery demonstrations will be a key attraction throughout the four days of Balmoral 2026, drawing members of the public on to the Commission's Balmoral pavilion with the recipe options to be featured profiling farm quality assured beef and lamb in equal measure.

LMC will be located in its usual position, Stand B4, adjacent to the main show ring at the

The Commission is also confirming its continuing sponsorship of key livestock classes at Balmoral Show 2026.

These are: the sheep interbreed pairs' championship, the beef inter-breed champion of champions, the sheep young handlers' competition and the beef group-of-five championship.

Colin Smith concluded, "Balmoral Show is a must attend event for LMC. The occasion physically brings together all the target groups, which the Commission interfaces with on a year-round basis: consumers, farmers and representatives of the various agri food stakeholder organisations. The backdrop of the show also means that it is possible to communicate with all of these important target groupings in a meaningful and relaxed manner. There will be lots to talk about this year given the current state of international affairs and the numerous decisions that must be taken over the coming months with regard to the future direction of agriculture in Northern Ireland as a whole. And the debate on how beef and sheep and production can make a positive contribution to the development of a sustainable agri food sector will be of critical importance."

