

Food & Footprint

Research-backed end-to-end sustainability solutions.

Skye Mutton:
Promoting Isle of Skye Food,
Farming, and Tourism

Project summary

Working with Skye Connect and NFU Scotland Isle of Skye Branch, SAC Consulting explored opportunities to capitalise on Skye's booming tourism and hospitality sector to provide new routes to market for Skye farmers and crofters. The project facilitated stakeholder engagement bringing chefs, tourism operators, supply chain organisations, restaurants, hotels, farmers, and crofters on Skye together to identify barriers and opportunities to supply local chefs with local mutton.



www.skye-connect.com



www.nfus.org.uk



www.innovativefarmers.org/welcometoriss

The Isle of Skye is world renowned for its beautiful landscapes, culture, history, and vibrant food and drink scene. Crofting plays a crucial role in supporting local economies, providing employment in remote rural areas, and benefitting natural capital on the island. Most livestock are sold through the local auction mart and eventually leaves the island, losing the sense of product identity and provenance. With a booming tourism sector and consumer demand for high quality local produce, SAC Consulting explored new ways to connect; producers with chefs; catering students and hospitality outlets. Since mutton has been replaced by lamb on many restaurant menus, we wanted to reignite consumer interest in this flavoursome meat.

With support from ex-MasterChef finalist and Head Chef at the Three Chimneys, Scott Davies, and other award-winning chefs from the island, the project showcased quality Isle of Skye mutton at the Skye Connect Tourism Conference in 2018. The events' showcasing

dinner provided a great opportunity to engage directly with a range of hospitality and crofting producer stakeholders and set the foundations for future industry collaborations.

Students from West Highland College Catering Department were given the challenge to develop a recipe and menu based on locally raised mutton, working together with the 'celeb' chefs the students prepared, cooked, and presented the meal to conference delegates. High School students with an interest in the hospitality industry were also involved in staffing the dinner and serving delegates. Delegates included representation from the crofter/producer sector, so they were able to experience the process "croft to plate" and witness the interest and demand from the hospitality sector.

"We were very Impressed with the work done by Calum Johnston and Janette Sutherland on the Skye Mutton project through RISS. The way the information was gathered, and the project set up with a view to longevity and covering all bases, was incredibly professional and most importantly tailored to the area rather than relying on a generic template. Presentation of the survey and conclusions of the work done and organising of the samples at the 'Skye on a plate' event was also excellent. Both project leaders were warm, informative, and engaging and set the scene for conference attendees prior to the meal taking place. The output and outcomes of the project are clear and make the next stages to begin the work in earnest so much easier because of it."

Jake Sayles,
Agent and Group Secretary,
NFU Mutual Agencies
(Skye, Lochalsh and Western Isles)

Project Manager for Skye Connect,
Alistair Danter reflected on the project,

"There are several key elements of a project like this, and several learnings for anyone else who may do something like it in the future. Starting from the basis that there is an insatiable demand for local produce amongst visitors and tourists and taking an undervalued, yet available local product gave the project a unique opportunity. Working with such high-quality chefs was fantastic. The opportunity for learning that this created for the students was inspiring and really showcased the value of working with mutton. There were also complex aspects in the administration of managing so many different stakeholders, especially with the considerations required to manage the health and wellbeing of young people taking part in a real-life experience in a working environment away from college. We learned so much throughout the project and it was absolutely worth the effort we put in to achieve it."

Alistair Danter,
Project Manager, Skye Connect

The SAC Consulting Food and Enterprise team have a wealth of knowledge and direct industry experience in the food and drink, hospitality, and tourism sectors.

For more information on our team visit
www.sruc.ac.uk/business-services/sac-consulting/food-drink/

