

**Senedd Cymru**

**Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig**

**Ymchwiliad:** Prosesu Bwyd

**Cyf:** FP13

**Ymateb gan:** CFFl Cymru

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**Welsh Parliament**

**Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee**

**Inquiry:** Food Processing

**Ref:** FP13

**Evidence from:** Wales YFC



## **Response from Wales YFC to the Senedd Consultation on Food Processing**

Wales YFC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry into food processing. As a youth-led organisation representing the next generation of farmers and rural entrepreneurs, we are uniquely positioned to comment on the future of food production and processing in Wales.

### **1. Welsh Government's Performance on the Vision for the Food and Drink Industry**

While the Vision has provided a useful framework, we believe more targeted support is needed for young entrants into the food processing sector. There is a lack of accessible funding and training for young people wishing to diversify or add value to primary produce.

### **2. Are the Objectives Still Fit for Purpose?**

The objectives remain broadly relevant, but they must now reflect:

- The need to **retain young talent** in rural areas by providing them with viable business opportunities.
- To adopt the role and use the benefits of **innovation and digital skills** in modern food processing.
- Support **local supply chains** to support younger generation in developing viable and thriving business.

### **3. Impact of Decreasing Livestock Numbers**

We recognise the impact of previous and current Government policies on falling livestock numbers, this threatens the viability of local abattoirs and processors. This not only affects food security by impacting on a viable livestock supply chain but also reduces opportunities for young farmers to engage in short supply chains and direct-to-consumer models.

### **4. Supporting the Processing Sector**

We urge the Welsh Government to:

- Provide **start-up grants and mentoring** for young people entering food processing.
- Invest in **mobile or small-scale processing facilities** to serve rural communities such as small scale abattoirs and emphasise that value is added by keeping food miles to a minimal.
- Promote **collaboration between producers and processors** through co-operatives or shared infrastructure.

## 5. Barriers to Public Procurement

Public procurement remains overly complex and inaccessible to small Welsh producers. We recommend:

- Simplifying tender processes.
- Setting **local sourcing targets** for schools, hospitals, and public bodies.
- Supporting producer groups to meet procurement standards.
- The need to recognise the value and quality of Welsh produce.