

To: Lead Food Officers  
cc: SFELC, REHIS

15 August 2019

FSS/ENF/19/010

Dear Colleague

### **Sale of goose meat from Orkney extended across Scotland**

FSS would like to make you aware of the following information released by Scottish National Heritage (SNH) on 8 August 2019:

Greylag goose meat from the Orkney Resident Greylag Goose Project is now available for sale Scotland-wide. Wild goose meat from the project is available for sale from Orkney, where sustainable control of resident greylag geese populations is licensed to safeguard agricultural crops.

A key aim is to encourage the use of fresh, seasonal, wild goose meat and help boost local businesses. Sales will be licensed from 1 August 2019 until 31 October 2019. This short trial period takes advantage of the European Commission's approval for Scotland-wide sales.

Claudia Rowse, SNH's Head of Natural Resource Management said:

'We are delighted to announce Scotland-wide sales of resident greylag goose meat for a short trial period. Now, licensed sellers from Orkney will have a chance to develop the market for their product and people can try goose for themselves, on Orkney, and across Scotland.'

"Wild geese are an important part of Scotland's nature, but their rapid rise in numbers has been challenging for farmers and crofters. We know that striking the balance between conservation, farming and hunting can be difficult.

"Our goal is to give farmers and crofters the tools they need to safeguard their crops, enabling them to control goose numbers sustainably, and sell goose meat for profit."

Until now, meat generated by the Orkney resident greylag goose project could only be sold locally by retailers based on Orkney. SNH is working to secure longer term arrangements for the sale of resident greylag goose meat in Scotland. The overall number of geese will be maintained at a healthy, sustainable population. Sale of wild goose meat shot outwith the project is still prohibited under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

## Background

SNH is the government's adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Their role is to help everyone understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. For more information see [www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot).

Populations of resident greylag geese expanded very rapidly in some parts of Scotland in recent years, resulting in farmers and crofters struggling to control their impacts using traditional means. In Scotland, farmers and crofters have traditionally controlled resident graylag goose impacts with non-lethal and lethal scaring, undertaking lethal control in the open season and, under much of the closed season, under licence from SNH.

To help farmers and crofters whose crops were being damaged by a rapidly rising goose population, pilot studies were run in local communities in Tiree, Coll, Uist, Lewis, Harris and Orkney. The aim of the pilots was to reduce goose impacts by managing their resident greylag goose populations and by selling this goose meat locally. The studies confirmed that resident greylag goose populations can absorb substantial losses without any effect on their conservation status. Resident greylag geese are a quarry species, listed as a species of Least Concern (not endangered, threatened or vulnerable). These three pilots ended in March 2017, and SNH is supporting LGMGs to develop LGMG-led options for sustainable resident greylag goose management through Challenge Funding. The 2019 Transitional Challenge Fund will help local goose groups continue to control goose numbers in 2019 and investigate methods to reduce resident goose numbers in the future.

For more information see <http://bit.ly/2Y0Vgo3>. SNH and local goose management groups are also exploring other options together, such as more flexible licences when necessary, a review of bag limits in some areas, and licensed egg-oiling.

Yours sincerely,

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Enforcement Delivery