



## Presenting animals to the livestock market

**PGI Welsh Lamb is a respected product with a strong following in the UK and beyond. HCC is continually working to open new markets, including distant overseas markets.**

Increasing the shelf life of PGI Welsh Lamb is a key objective for the following reasons:

- *To increase the competitiveness of PGI Welsh Lamb in export markets;*
- *To reduce freight costs by utilising sea freight instead of air freight;*
- *To extend the seasonal availability of PGI Welsh Lamb;*
- *To reduce wastage caused by spoilage throughout the supply chain.*

New Zealand Lamb is setting the standard with 90+ days shelf life for vacuum-packed chilled lamb and up to 110 days for CO<sup>2</sup> gas-flushed lamb. This compares with PGI Welsh Lamb generally achieving a shelf life of 14-21 days.

Numerous factors influence shelf life but the condition in which livestock is presented to slaughter has the biggest impact on the potential contamination of the carcase.

- *Maintaining cleanliness throughout the supply chain is crucial to achieve a long shelf life;*
- *Presentation of clean livestock at the livestock market is an essential first step in this process;*
- *Presenting dirty livestock to the livestock market could reduce their value.*



**“It is in the best interest of everyone in the red meat supply chain to do all within their capabilities to increase the shelf life of PGI Welsh Lamb.”**

## Impact of on farm practices on shelf life of PGI Welsh Lamb

Consideration should be given to on-farm practices that can maintain and improve the cleanliness and presentation of lambs prior to transportation to the livestock market.

- *Lambs should be housed and feed withdrawn for 6 hours prior to transportation, however water must not be withheld. Sufficient bedding such as straw or sawdust should be used when housing stock to aid with drying;*
- *During the spring very lush grass can cause the animals to have loose dung. Changing to a drier diet for a few days prior to selling is advisable. Any lambs with daggs should be clipped prior to sale;*
- *In the autumn, as the length of the wool gets longer, all lambs should be crotched and belly clipped as close to being sold as possible. Holding them in a dry yard or indoors on clean bedding afterwards is essential to maintain cleanliness.*

Are you considering using roots as a finishing method?

It's important to take the finishing method into consideration. If lambs are finished on roots, planting a grass runback will offer the lambs a clean area to lay down – this will aid a cleaner presentation. Additionally, the belly clipping of lambs must be avoided before they're introduced to roots.

## Transportation

Fleeces can become contaminated during transport, but there are some simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk:

- *Always make sure the trailer has been cleaned and disinfected before loading a new batch of animals;*
- *After cleaning, new bedding such as straw or sawdust should be used in the trailer;*
- *The loading of wet animals must be avoided;*
- *Reduce stress by having good handling facilities, well maintained vehicles and ramps and by not mixing batches of animals;*
- *Vehicles with multiple decks pose contamination risks for the animals transported on the lower deck.*



**“It is crucial that cleanliness is maintained throughout the supply chain in order to successfully achieve a long shelf life – everybody has a role to play.”**