Private Kill in the Usk Valley – Angel Hotel, Tuesday 18 February

1 Introduction
An abattoir in Gloucester has changed hands and the new owners no longer slaughter sheep or provide private kill. The loss of private kill facilities at the abattoir is impacting primary producers who were using the service. To address the issue a networking event was held in Abergavenny to publicise the facilities that are available within a reasonable distance and demonstrate the demand for organic slaughtering facilities. This document is a report of that event and identifies actions going forward.

2 Presentations
2.1 Dafydd Owen – BOBL Project
Welcome and introduction to the meeting followed by an overview of the relevance of private kill to farmers, particularly small organic producers. The information on the market for private kill is limited but the retail value of organic meat according to a Market Review conducted by the BOBL project in 2010 is £42m for beef and £19m for lamb. The spend per buyer for beef and lamb was £11.66 and £10.16 respectively. The UK market for organic product as a whole has returned to growth, and is currently increasing at a rate of £1.2m per month.

Private kill provides an added margin for small producers and retains value within the local supply chain. Marketing through private kill is more dependent on engagement between producers and consumers. This is particularly important for organic producers as it provides a channel for communicating the benefits of organic systems. The routes to market for private kill include direct sales locally, the same via couriers, Farmers’ Markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The latter is the least well known of these routes and the benefits include:

- Better cash flow, as consumers pay a monthly subscription;
- A more stable market as the volumes are relatively consistent;
- A CSA scheme can share the risk of harvest and prices
- Stronger links between food producers and the community.

2.2 Nick Miller – Organic sheep farmer
An outline of the importance of private kill to certain types of business. There is a consistent demand for Mr Miller’s product, but it is wholly dependent on private kill. The rate at which low numbers of lamb become ready to market each week integrates well with local private kill, but makes transport for longer distances uneconomic. The relatively small numbers of lamb produced and the properties of the breed make it difficult to realise their optimum value if they are marketed via other routes.

2.3 Phil Skeltenbery – SACert Certification Manager
A report on the recovery of the market for organic products and a summary of the certification options available to abattoirs and producers. The cost of full certification of an abattoir starts from £395 exc VAT. There is also a ‘local abattoir’ scheme whereby producers can take their livestock to be slaughtered under their own certification, even if the abattoir itself is not certified. The scheme only allows for slaughter and simple cutting, no processing such as sausages. The cost is £50 and where possible the inspection will be combined with the farm inspection. If this isn’t possible then a charge may be levied for additional inspection time. If more than two or three producers use the same uncertified abattoir then it would be more cost effective for them to club together and pay the cost of full certification.
3 Discussion

Points made during the discussion include:

- There are two schools of thought on certifying small abattoirs; the first is that there should be something simple for private kill where you simply identified what was taking place. In contrast cutting up is something different and a more thorough certifying regime is required.
- Selling organic is the same as for any premium meat. The challenge is selling the whole carcase. For catering establishments menus should be set to sell the whole carcase.
- The increase in distance to the nearest abattoir added significantly to the cost and time of private kill.
- The MLC levy was still charged for private kill, even though the producers were marketing the meats themselves.
- There is no throughput limit on small abattoirs with regard to licensing.
- Slaughtering organic livestock did add to the costs of abattoirs.
- Some small producers took the whole, or partly cut, carcase home and completed the cutting and packing on their own premises. In this case an organic farmers’ certification for cutting would be included with his producer’s licence.
- A query was raised as to the possibility of financial support for abattoirs. Previous support had been for cutting plants rather than abattoirs as there was deemed to be over capacity in slaughtering facilities. The support available had been mostly channelled through the Rural Development Plan and the current one, 2007-2013 was coming to an end in December 2014. The next one had opened for consultation and it was open for everyone to comment on what the plan should support.
- There might be overcapacity in slaughtering, but not in hanging and storage. If customers wanted meat matured for three weeks then a charge would have to be levied to cover the cost of chilling facilities and the time and effort in moving carcases around. The estimated cost of the refrigeration was £50 per carcase, but this could not be charged back.
- There was the potential to supply different markets, but one restaurant in London had 500 covers and maintaining a supply would require several producers.
- There was uncertainty over the scale of operation needed to supply such a customer and who was around to do so.
- There was a need for co-ordination and a contact point.
- Selling the whole carcase was paramount; one abattoir commented that not even butchers were now buying whole carcases.
- One organic marketing group that used to take whole carcases still had to sell some parts as non-organic.
- Setting up a co-operative and developing a brand was over-complicating what was initially required. Simple co-ordination between three or four producers could share the cost and logistics of transporting livestock to the abattoir.
- There was a need to improve the visibility of traceability. Producers had to be confident they were getting their own stock returned to them.
- The Soil Association programme of Farm-labs was based on bringing people together and could be relevant to developing co-operation amongst producers.

4 Actions

- A number of the abattoirs present indicated an interest in obtaining organic certification.
- To facilitate the logistics of transporting lamb for longer distances, producers needed to work together to share the cost and time involved. It was felt that there would be value in future networking meetings of producers interested in private kill. Action ODO.
# Appendix A: List of abattoirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email address</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Private Kill</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Cutting / Packing</th>
<th>Organic</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Phillips</td>
<td>LH &amp; CA Phillips</td>
<td>01792 850789</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hugh@gowerbutcher.co.uk">hugh@gowerbutcher.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Penclawdd, Swansea</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Monday, Cattle and lamb - Tues pigs</td>
<td>Yes, but limited</td>
<td></td>
<td>56m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>Cig Calon Cymru</td>
<td>01269 844471</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jfitzpatrick@cigcaloncymru.co.uk">jfitzpatrick@cigcaloncymru.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Cross Hands, Carm's</td>
<td>Lamb &amp; beef</td>
<td>Private kill on Wed.</td>
<td>Yes to cut pack</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil James</td>
<td>Raglan Abattoir</td>
<td>01291 690217</td>
<td><a href="mailto:neil@nsjames.co.uk">neil@nsjames.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Raglan Abattoir, Raglan</td>
<td>Lambs and pigs</td>
<td>Mon &amp; Wed pigs Tue &amp; Wen lamb only</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Kembery</td>
<td>Maddocks Kembery Meats</td>
<td>01656 739073</td>
<td><a href="mailto:andrew.kembery@hotmail.co.uk">andrew.kembery@hotmail.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Maesteg, Bridgend</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Mon: Lambs &amp; pigs. Thursday: Beef</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Request</td>
<td>54m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collwyn Kembery</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>07980 918398</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Roberts</td>
<td>HMD Butchers</td>
<td>01792 874100</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hmdbutchers@btconnect.com">hmdbutchers@btconnect.com</a></td>
<td>Crofty Swansea</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Havard</td>
<td>DT Havard</td>
<td>02920 885430</td>
<td><a href="mailto:DT.Havard@hotmail.co.uk">DT.Havard@hotmail.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Caerphilly</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Mon, Thurs. cattle &amp; sheep, Tuesday: pigs</td>
<td>Yes to cut, no to pack</td>
<td>Request</td>
<td>27m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Griffiths</td>
<td>Alan Griffiths</td>
<td>01547 540231</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jayne.ahg@googlemail.com">jayne.ahg@googlemail.com</a></td>
<td>22 High Street</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Mon – Pigs and lambs. Tue – all three. Wed beef &amp; pigs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>47m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan George</td>
<td>WJ George</td>
<td>01874 711233</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Bryan@georgebutchers.co.uk">Bryan@georgebutchers.co.uk</a></td>
<td>Talgarth</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Only on Friday. Simple cutting</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil</td>
<td>Cig Oen Caron</td>
<td>01974 298964</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tregaron</td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>Monday lamb Wed. pigs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>