

# FEDERATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SCOTLAND'S INDEPENDENT BUTCHERS

## Time to Make it With Meat

AUGUST 2002

**If you want to take part in this year's Make it With Meat Awards for Excellence you must post your entry form off to the Federation office in Perth TODAY.**

This newsletter has been sent to you ahead of the usual 1<sup>st</sup> day of month so that all members can be reminded of the 31<sup>st</sup> July closing date. As a Member of the Federation you have this exclusive opportunity to win in the "Make it with Meat Awards for Excellence 2002". This year we are delighted to have the support of Quality Meat Scotland for this extremely popular product evaluation.

QMS is thrilled to be an integral player in the promotion of new product development within the Scottish meat industry and looks forward to working with the participants and winners.

First introduced in 1994 this event fosters and encourages innovation in Scotland's independent meat sector. If your business is ambitious and progressive; if you have some innovative meat products give some serious thought to participating this year.

You are probably already offering your customers a range of ready prepared meat products that could win you a cash prize in one of the categories: beef, pork (including ham & bacon), lamb and burger.

Entry for these awards is **free**. The maximum number of beef, lamb or pork products that can be entered per shop is **four** including the burger category.

Prestigious certificates and tray highlighters will be presented for you to display proudly in your shop if your product qualifies for an award.

In addition to Gold, Silver and Bronze awards there will be 4 Diamond awards, one for each category. Diamond award winners will receive £ 500 in exchange for their recipe plus a certificate and tray highlighter.

**An additional Entry form is enclosed**

**MAKE IT WITH MEAT – ENTRIES CLOSE 31<sup>st</sup> JULY**



### This month

**Update on Ban on Sheep Gut**

**Meat Skills - The Finalists**

**Assurance Schemes under Review**

**OTM cattle considered**

**Why Train?**

**British Branding required**

**Illegal Meat Imports**

**Veggies love Meat**

**Tour to Ireland**

**Tender Talks on Eating Quality**

**MAKE *it* with meat awards *for* excellence 2002**

# Regional Meetings in August & September

Please take a note of the next round of regional Federation meetings.

Any Federation member is very welcome to attend at any (or all ☺ ) of the venues. All meetings start at 7.30pm. and finish around 9.00pm.

Date	Venue
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2002	Hilton Hotel, Bellshill
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2002	Laichmoray Hotel, Elgin
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2002	Forth Bridges Hotel, South Queensferry
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2002	Swallow Hotel, Bellahouston, Glasgow
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2002	Swallow Hotel, Kingsway, Dundee
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2002	Kings Arms, Melrose
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2002	Travel Lodge, Monkton

## Coeliac Society

Coeliacs are people requiring a gluten free diet. This growing sector of consumers estimated to be one in 200 are constantly seeking meat products made without wheat flour.

The Coeliac Society (UK) are about to start major production on the new 2003 Food and Drink Directory, which will become available to members in January 2003.

Some Federation members already listed find that this introduces a great number of new customers to their shops, some travelling many miles to buy the gluten free sausages, beef olives, burgers etc. These customers often serve up gluten free products to the whole family and buy other cuts of meat when making these special purchases.

If you make gluten-free products and would like to be listed by this Society please telephone them on 01494 437 278 or contact Liz McCorkill, Regional Manager for Scotland and Northern Ireland, PO Box 189, Londonderry BT48 8YB

Tel 028 71 357154, Fax 028 71 358620, e mail [scotland-ni@coeliac.co.uk](mailto:scotland-ni@coeliac.co.uk)

# TOUR OF IRELAND

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002**

Enclosed with this newsletter is details of an exciting fact finding trip to Ireland. Rarely could such a tax deductible working holiday be such a pleasure.

The itinerary is full, varied and extremely interesting. The Irish butchers are first class hosts and the welcome is sure to be huge. If after looking over the attached details you are interested in joining President Duncan MacKenzie on this tour please contact the Federation office immediately.

Flights are through Dublin and since that extends the choice of departure airport to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick that should bring the price down for everyone. The total cost of travel and accommodation is estimated at £340 at this moment.

We only intend to hold 20 places so if you are interested – lift that phone.

# MEAT SKILLS SCOTLAND 2002

## Regional Heats Results SPONSORED BY DALZIEL, BELLSHILL

All the entrants made very favourable impressions on the judges and they had their work "cut out" in being able to determine the best four entrants to go forward to the final. Despite a record number of entrants, the geographical distribution of entrants did not allow us to judge the regional heats as originally planned. In the end both the Under 22 and 22-30 categories were judged North and South (Forth/Clyde split).

### Under 22 Event:

South of Scotland

Winner: James Paterson from Hugh Black, Lanark

Runner Up: David Creighton from T Johnston, Falkirk.

North of Scotland

Winner: Brian McVicar from DG Lindsay, Perth

Runner Up: Aaron Taylor from DG Lindsay, Perth

### 22 – 30 Event:

South of Scotland

Winner: Chris McArthur from Hugh Black, Lanark

Runner Up: James Singer from Hugh Black, Armadale.

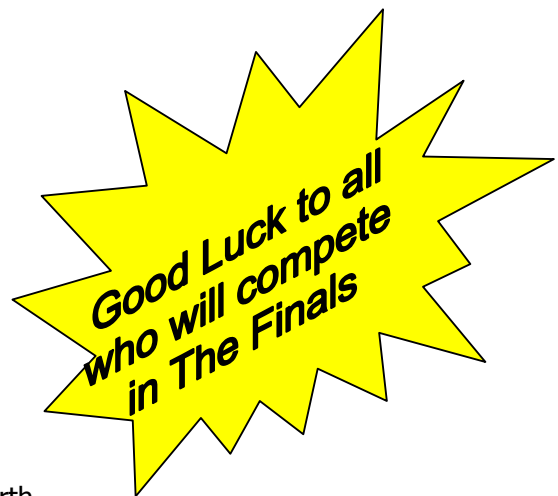
North of Scotland

Winner: Richard Megahy from Simon Howie Butchers, Perth

Runner Up: Bruce Fyfe from Simon Howie Butchers, Perth

The overall talent revealed in this competition was of an extremely high standard and improving year on year. Those who failed to make it to the 2002 final were in no cases bad, in fact the opposite. In the end we can only have four finalists in each category and I am sure when you come along to the Trade Fair in Perth to watch the finalists you will be most encouraged by what you see.

Finally thank you to all employers who put forward their trainees and to the trainees for entering this year's competition; hopefully they enjoyed the experience and will participate again in the future if still young enough to enter.



**FOOD TRAINING SERVICES  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
DALZIEL LTD.**

**QUALITY MEAT  
SCOTLAND**



# Sunlight

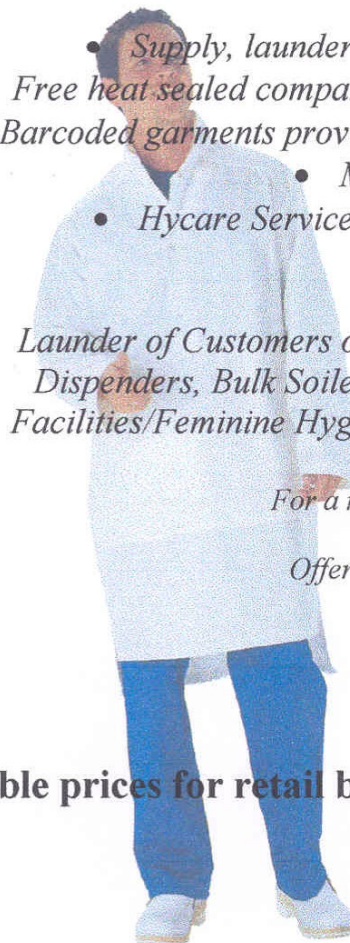
*Working in Partnership with the Scottish Federation of  
Meat Traders*



- Preferred supplier of workwear to all members
- Food Trade standard – coats, boilersuits, trousers
- Humpers Smock, Hats, Butchers Bib Apron, Waist Apron
  - Any many more items

*Service includes:*

- *Supply, launder and repair of workwear*
- *Free heat sealed company logo (up to 3 colours)*
- *Barcoded garments providing service history and*
  - *Management information*
  - *Hycare Service for food trade garments*



*Launder of Customers own Workwear, Garment  
Dispensers, Bulk Soiled Collectors, Washroom  
Facilities/Feminine Hygiene, Floorcare Services*

*For a representative to contact you  
Call 0800 616691  
Offer applies to new and renewed  
Contracts only*

**Unbelievable prices for retail butchers**

## Tender Talks on Research

**The principal factors that define meat quality are thought to be appearance, sensory properties / taste, healthiness and shelf life. There is a range of research activities currently investigating each of these. Tenderness was described as possibly the most important aspect of meat quality.**

Several interacting factors have been demonstrated to influence tenderness including growth rate, sex, pre-slaughter handling, chilling carcass, conditioning / ageing, marinades and cooking.

The Environment and Rural Affairs Department of the Scottish Executive has a group for Agricultural and Biological Research (ABRG). ABRG co-ordinates the work carried out at Scottish Agricultural Colleges, Rowett Research Institute, Hannah Research Institute, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Moredun Research Institute, Scottish Crop Research and Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh.

Nick Ambrose from ARBG and Chris Warkup from MLC addressed a workshop in Perth on 25<sup>th</sup> June. Your President Duncan Mackenzie, Promotions Convenor Cheryl Murdoch and Chief Executive Douglas Scott attended to hear the Industry Topic Review on Meat Eating quality being fully discussed.

A number of interesting facts about eating quality arose from the presentation.

- ❑ FSA Survey on Consumer Grocery Shopping Decisions:  
Top five unprompted influences:  
Price 46%, Taste 18%, Quality 17%, Personal and Family Health (12%), Production method (10%)
- ❑ Components of Meat Quality  
Carcase – Composition, Dimensions.  
Meat – Sensory, Technological, Nutritional.  
Hygiene – Pathogens, Shelf-life, Residues [ lack of medicine, packaging, foreign bodies.]  
Ethics – Animal Welfare, Environmental Impact, Genetic Modification.
- ❑ Consumer Requirements of Fresh Meat  
Price, Appearance, Texture, Taste, Safety [although this is often taken as given]
- ❑ Changes in Pig Carcase  
12% leaner than 10 years ago, which means if sales do not increase then we need 12% less pork produced.
- ❑ Carcase Specification  
In other words following within classifications considered optimum.  
61% of pig carcasses within target, only 13% of cattle and 28% of lamb.
- ❑ Eating Quality Traits  
Tenderness, Flavour and Juiciness in that order.
- ❑ Conception to Consumption Chain – factors affecting eating quality  
Type of Animal, Production System, Transport, Slaughter, Chilling, Ageing, Cooking.

- ❑ **Breed**  
There is a widely held perception that breed is important to eating quality. Research with pork has shown that pigs with more Duroc genes produces more tender pork. Research with beef joints revealed little difference among breeds with the exception of Belgian Blues where the larger muscled, lesser interconnective tissue led to a significantly better in tenderness. However research from the Rowett confirmed Aberdeen Angus steaks to be significantly more tender.
- ❑ **Feeding**  
It was shown that statistics prove that how pigs are fed in the last few days prior to slaughter can affect tenderness.
- ❑ **Growth Rate**  
Australian studies on cattle reveal no overall relationship between growth rate and tenderness. It was also said that a dominance hierarchy in pigs could lead to bullied pigs not eating so well.
- ❑ **Colour**  
Vitamin E extends the colour of the beef but it is not introduced to the feed because farmers do not reap the rewards.
- ❑ **Pre slaughter stress**  
Controlled levels of pre slaughter stress suggest no difference to tenderness. Colour of meat seems to be more affected than tenderness. In pork acute pre slaughter stress can be the cause of dry, tough Pork loin.

### **Post Farm Gate Effects**

Cold shortening caused by cooling meat too fast will cause toughness. Aitch Bone hanging as opposed to the traditional Achilles suspension begins to make huge differences when beef is hung for 5 days or more.

High voltage electrical stimulation of Lamb Carcasses speeds up rigor mortis.

### **Fatness**

As early as 1916 Bull wrote:-

"The main object in fattening is to improve the flavour, tenderness and quality of lean meat by the deposition of fat between the muscles."

### **Cooking**

Effect of end-point temperature on Pork Loin Eating Quality

Results were logged for flavour, juiciness and tenderness. Flavour benefited from higher temperature finishing – 80C but tenderness and juiciness were best at 65C.

### **Summary**

Most factors affecting tenderness are already known; they are mainly post slaughter except for pigs and overall further improvement would be incremental.

Flavour factors are less well understood and difficult to research.

The three species Workshops then came up with their specific wish lists:

## **Beef:**

Work on the suckler herd: pre weaning growth rates and the effects of growth rates up to slaughter.

Genetics: especially on the suckler cow types.

Feeds: examine the effects of different systems

Flavour: where has it gone? Establish what creates flavour and how it is affected by feeding

Food Safety particularly Epidemiology of E Coli 0157.

Concerns over existing animal health schemes and better feedback of information.

## **Lamb:**

Tenderness is over-riding factors yet there is no measure.

Seasonal variation leads to inconsistency of product and there is a need to gather more information about finishing hoggets

Communication and dissemination of market information.

## **Pork:**

Impact of heavier weight carcasses (up to 100k) and especially the effects on tenderness and skatole. – more relevant to manufacturers.

Need to know what converts muscle into meat – PH measurements

Need to evaluate the optimum time since last feed prior to slaughter – re stress.

Pig health and links to eating quality.

## **Next Steps**

This day was to pull the industry together to make their recommendations for new research topics. SEERAD / QMS / MLC will prioritise these points and aim to develop a research project for each species.

QMS's Eating Quality Project headed up by Kim-Marie Haywood on which SFMTA members Sandy Crombie and Murray Lauchlan sit is trying to implement the existing knowledge.  
The above in contrast examines future research requirements.

## **Report calls for vaccination if foot and mouth returns**

16 July 2002

A report commissioned by the Government has called for vaccination to be the linchpin of a strategy to curb any future outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

The inquiry, carried out by the Royal Society, said animals on any farm infected with foot and mouth disease should still be culled, but that healthy animals on neighbouring farms should not. Instead, they should be vaccinated as a "major tool of first resort" to prevent further spread of the disease.

The Royal Society said that better vaccines were necessary, but argued that the rapid culling of animals on infected premises would remain essential. The Society also indicated that the UK should liaise closely with its European partners to make sure the necessary emergency vaccination procedures could be in place by the end of 2003.

Although the Royal Society did not recommend routine vaccination, it urged international research groups to investigate "a vaccine that conferred sterile lifelong immunity against all foot-and-mouth strains," which would globally reduce the threat from the disease, as the BBC reported.

## **Distance Learning RIPH Intermediate Certificate in Food Hygiene**

No need to travel great distances; no need to attend a college. This Distance learning package has been designed by butchers for butchers. Anyone in a supervisory position within a butcher's business requires hygiene training to Intermediate level and we think that this is a convenient and cost effective way to satisfy the legal requirements.

For further details telephone Lynn at Food Training Services 01738 637785

### **Who is this course intended for?**

Skilled workers, supervisors and managers who work in organisations concerned with food handling, manufacturing, processing and catering but cannot attend a formal course.

### **Aim**

To ensure that candidates and the staff they manage operate in a safe and hygienic manner.

### **How long will the course take?**

In open learning format, between 60 to 80 hours of study.

Face to face invigilation of the examination is required.

### **Programme Content**

At this level, the open learning package consists of 9 modules, with a set of four workbooks. The open learning materials comprehensively cover the syllabus of the awarding body.

### **Total Cost**

The package including all nine modules, workbooks, mock exam, invigilation and certification is offered to Federation members at £295. This is dearer than if you attend at dedicated course but you save on travelling and nil time out of the business.

### **Topics Include:**

- ◆ The Law and its Officers
- ◆ Supervisory Management in Food Hygiene
- ◆ Bacteria
- ◆ Food Poisoning
- ◆ The Food Poisoning Bacteria
- ◆ Cross Contamination
- ◆ Personal Hygiene
- ◆ Food Spoilage
- ◆ Chill Storage
- ◆ Storage of Low Risk Foods
- ◆ Heating
- ◆ Food Borne Diseases
- ◆ Poisons
- ◆ Plant and Premises
- ◆ Cleaning
- ◆ Pests

### **Support**

FTS' well qualified and experienced tutors provide expert tuition. For distance learning candidate support is provided by Telephone  
Fax  
E mail  
Prompt feedback on all assignments

### **Qualification**

Successful candidates receive a Certificate in Intermediate Food Hygiene awarded by the Royal Institute of Public Health

# Essential Certificate in Food Hygiene

Essential Hygiene Courses	Venue
One day courses will be held on the following dates	
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> August	Perth
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	Cumbernauld
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> September	Melrose
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Edinburgh
To reserve your place on any of the above telephone Lynn on 01738 637785	

## British Meat brand should stay

20 July 2002

wrote Vic Robertson in *The Scotsman*

A FIRM case for retaining the brand name "British Meat" in home and export markets in spite of devolution issues has been presented by Gwyn Howells, the Director General of the Meat and Livestock Commission.

This had been endorsed by a "strong and spontaneous" response in consultation with the English meat sector on the future direction of the £15 billion a year industry.

It would also offer the Scottish sector the opportunity to have two beef brands, with a British label being attached to produce from those animals brought from as far as south-west England for finishing.

In addition to the £3.7 million for the Scottish marketing body, Quality Meat Scotland, and £2.6 million for its Welsh equivalent from MLC's projected £25 million budget this year, the devolved territories would have the opportunity for additional funding from development agencies and from Brussels.

"But from a marketing perspective, I am clear we must have proper segmentation of the market, not fragmentation," said Howells at a London briefing yesterday.

Segmentation provides interest and excitement for consumers. But you also have to be able to sell the advantages of that segmentation whether it is Lakeland lamb or Scottish beef.

"We have got to keep focusing on a strategy that puts the consumers first. If we do not satisfy them, we will not have an industry."

Howells, who was commenting on the consultation exercise in England in the wake of devolution splits, said there had been overwhelming support for the creation of EBLEX - the English beef and lamb executive - although it was felt that BPEX, the British Pig Executive, should remain as one national unit incorporating the 8 per cent of the national herd north of the border.

There had been considerable English opposition to the opportunities for Scottish and Welsh organisations to "cherry pick" elements of the core activities of the MLC, such as its economics and market analysis activities. A feasibility study into the future of the commission's Milton Keynes headquarters had been "broadly neutral" with no advantages found in moving. The commission also intended to maintain its political and marketing outposts throughout Europe.

# Banned but on the shelves

## More resources needed to combat trade in illegal meat

GLOBALISATION, as the two Royal Society reports into the foot-and-mouth outbreak pointed out last week, has caused an increased risk of infectious animal diseases entering the UK. As such, the overall objective of any national policy must be to minimise the risk of a disease entering the country and reaching the farm in the first place.

It is not a difficult concept: anyone familiar with the proverb about bolting horses and stable doors would get the message. Yet an investigation by The Herald has found hundreds of cans of meat from China, which are supposed to be banned under EU law from entering the country, on the shelves of shops in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Last year's foot-and-mouth outbreak cost this country dear. In financial terms, the bill was £8bn. In emotional terms, the suffering was unquantifiable. Given that devastation, it might have been expected that the government would have overhauled import controls to minimise still further the risk of infected meat from abroad entering the food chain.

Yet the front line in the fight against illegal meat appears to consist of 43 border inspection posts and two sniffer dogs. It is hardly Fortress Britain.

Meat imports are checked when they enter Europe to ensure they come from countries with a low disease risk and have been produced in accordance with EU hygiene and animal health regulations. The difficulty with illegal meat is that it is entering the EU hidden in legal consignments of fruit and vegetables.

Inspectors, who are already overstretched monitoring legal goods, do not have the time to search through containers on the off chance that they contain contraband meat. In Southampton, for example, staff are able to check only one in 30 loads of vegetables from outside the EU. Even so, between April 2001 and June this year, inspectors across the UK seized 62 tonnes of illegal meat and meat products. If that is the amount seized from inspecting a fraction of the containers then the problem is, potentially, huge.

Much of the debate on foot-and-mouth has so far been taken up with the merits of vaccination versus culling. Yet neither would have to take place if that disease and many others were kept out of the country in the first place.

Combating the trade in illegal meat will involve increasing the number of containers inspected, which cannot be done without more staff or better equipment. That will cost, but the bill will be a fraction of the £8bn that would have to be spent if the unthinkable happened and foot-and-mouth came to these shores again.

*-The Herald Opinion, July 22nd*

# Scottish Water rates

The wettest summer that we can recall yet we are being swamped by charges for water. Enquiries made by SFMTA confirm that in most cases the only way to significantly alter water charges for a property is to install a water meter. This option must be carefully considered however because once a meter has been installed, as a business customer you cannot ask for it to be removed and go back to paying for your services based on rateable value.

The information pack "Business Water Metering – Right for you?" is available from Scottish Water Tel 0845 602 885

## **Airline Ban On Meat...**

New European Union legislation could be in force by Christmas to stop air passengers taking meat with them during flights to and from abroad. The move is designed to prevent another foot-and-mouth outbreak.

Though the origins of the foot-and-mouth outbreak have not been established, some experts have blamed imported meat infected with the disease. Many have welcomed the move recommended by the Euro MPs who investigated the crisis, saying the latest proposal is vitally important to protect British agriculture.

However Plaid Cymru Euro MP Eurig Wyn, a member of the inquiry team, warned that more must be done to tackle the flood of illegal meat arriving in the UK. Customs chiefs told the inquiry that the equivalent of up to 500 kilos of illegal meat was arriving with every plane touching down in Britain, the equivalent of hundreds of tonnes a week.

While ending the existing 1kg-perpassenger-per-flight allowance may help in the fight against foot-and-mouth, it is feared that without tougher action on illegal imports it may end up having little or no impact.

Many fear the enormous scale of the black-market trade is leaving the country vulnerable to a new foot-and-mouth epidemic.

The EU inquiry team heard evidence that the government was warned six months before the foot-and-mouth outbreak of the threat posed by illegal meat imports.

The figures on the black-market trade were given to the hearing by Clive Lawrence, managing director of CIEL Logistics, a transport company dealing with imported animal products at Heathrow Airport.

## **Air passengers fined A\$10,000 for undeclared fruit**

17 July 2002

Two passengers who "made no effort" to declare a suitcase full of fruit on a flight from South Africa to Perth have been fined nearly A\$10,000.

Agriculture minister Warren Truss explained that "three apples, two pears and more than eight and a half kilograms of dried apple, plums and grapes" was discovered during an X-ray examination of the couple's luggage in Perth.

In a statement, Truss said: "The couple claimed they did not think the items qualified as food, even though one of them is a supermarket manager."

The A\$9,936 fine, handed down by a magistrate's court in Brisbane, amounts to the largest ever penalty for an infringement of Australia's strict quarantine and customs laws.

Truss said that the fine was "a timely reminder to all Australians of the importance of declaring items of quarantine concern" because of the quarantine risks associated with the dried fruit.

**SCOTTISH MEAT TRADE FAIR / NATIONAL SAUSAGE COMPETITIONS  
SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, DEWARS RINK, PERTH**

## REHIS Certificate in Elementary Health and Safety

This course is ideal for all employees and aims to ensure that candidates operate in a safe manner. The course lasts for six hours, delivered on one day.

Successful candidates are awarded the Elementary Health and Safety Certificate from the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. Forthcoming courses:-

Health & Safety Courses	Venue
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	Glenrothes
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Wishaw
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> October	Perth
To reserve your place on any of the above telephone Lynn on 01738 637785	

## Food at risk: Japanese food safety on the rocks

**The sterling reputation of Japan's food industry has been tarnished in recent months by one scandal after another.**

"Four cases of mad cow disease, most recently in mid-May in Japan's farming heartland; Brazilian chicken labelled as Japanese; Vietnamese salt labelled as Japanese; mixed rice labelled as single-variety, and US beef sold as Japanese" These are just some of the recent food scandals suffered by the Japanese food industry, notes a report by *The New York Times*.

The report says that national concern about food quality has risen sharply as a result, with newspapers and consumers starting to demand an overhaul of the system that is said to guarantee pure food, "a matter of national pride."

One major recent case in which beef was mislabelled to earn government subsidies pushed one of Japan's most reliable household standbys, the Snow Brand Food Company, into bankruptcy, and led to the arrest of seven former officers.

### **Brands need 'the trust of the people'**

"Food is something you put into your mouth – a brand becomes popular if it has the trust of the people." Joji Tsugai, Snow Brand's regional consumer complaints director, was quoted in the report, adding: "We lost the trust in our brand."

Although the Japanese pride themselves as heirs to inborn knowledge about such foods as rice and fish, most cases of food labelling have been uncovered by government inspectors: a year-long government survey of 113,581 rice retailers concluded in May that 15% had been selling mislabelled rice; the Marubeni Chikusan Corporation had sold Brazilian chicken as Japanese for 20 years.

A sailor's union survey of fish shops last November found that only 10% of packages of sliced raw tuna were correctly labelled. "For decades, Japanese have accepted paying high prices for domestically produced food on the theory that it was purer than imported food. Now, some city dwellers complain they are paying sky-high prices simply to subsidise inefficient farms."

With Japan's government dependent on votes from rural districts across this island, Hokkaido, the government does not dream of opening floodgates to food imports. Last June, Agriculture Ministry officials openly ridiculed a European Union report warning that Japan was a prime candidate for mad cow disease. Three months later, on Sept. 10, Asia's first case was discovered, on a farm near Tokyo. The government now estimates that the mad cow outbreak has cost farmers, meat packers, supermarkets and restaurants US\$2bn over the last eight months.

# Call to shake up Assurance Schemes

Food Assurance Schemes need a radical overhaul, according to a review of 18 schemes published on 9th July by the Food Standards Agency.

The Agency is recommending that a new independent organisation should govern 'Red Tractor' schemes, that core minimum standards need to be put in place across all schemes and that there should be better co-operation between them.

Speaking at the annual conference of the Trading Standards Institute, Chair of the FSA Sir John Krebs said: 'Assurance schemes such as the Red Tractor are potentially a force for good, driving up production standards and expanding choice, but they need a shake-up.'

'Most people are thoroughly confused about assurance schemes. The number of different schemes and their various logos adds to the confusion. For example, consumers are not sure whether the Red Tractor logo is to do with country of origin, better standards of production, or better quality food.'

'Schemes need to be independent if they are to improve consumer confidence. To their credit, industry has begun to take steps to improve the situation, and this is welcome, but further action needs to be taken to redress the balance.'

'The creation of a new, independent governing body for Red Tractor schemes, along with measures to improve transparency and consistency across the board are essential to meet the needs of the consumer.'

The review was commissioned by the Agency last November in the wake of research for its submission to the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food which highlighted consumer concerns about the schemes.

Food Assurance Schemes cover between 65% and 85% of food production but the review found that the confusion surrounding them makes it difficult for consumers to make informed choices about the food they are buying.

## Your view? -----Tell us if we read you wrong!

Assurance schemes are something that butchers have been to, tried it and while some have stuck in there others have decided that they are not for them. The Scottish Federation at one time had its own "Shop with Confidence" Scheme. That was absorbed in 1996 along with the English scheme – "Shop with Assurance" - into the Guild of Q Butchers.

Assurance schemes grew in popularity up until the introduction of Butchers Licencing with most finding the assistance with implementation of HACCP a great help. Since Butchers Licencing the need for such schemes and related assistance has diminished as licenced butchers now comply with the law.

In addition the existence of a licence removes the customer's search for signs of further assurance. Licencing provides the base referred to in the following draft recommendations. HACCP exists in butchers shops and inspection is carried out by independent inspectors from the Local Authority who in turn are monitored by the Food Standards Agency.

Most butchers feel that they maintain standards way in excess of other food businesses. The suggestion that EN45011 is required meets with no great approval because the customer does not know, and is not interested in, what it means.

Consumer assurance in butchers shops is now assumed and few traders are willing to spend cash trying to promote an emblem that no one recognises.

# FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY POSITION DOCUMENT ON FOOD ASSURANCE SCHEMES – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

## Scope

In recent years assurance schemes have developed to take up a prominent position in the UK market place. They are voluntary schemes which establish production standards covering food safety, environmental protection, animal welfare issues and other characteristics which might be considered important by purchasers of a food product. These standards are supported by inspection regimes to check that scheme members comply with these standards. Schemes now cover at least 85% of home production in the milk, eggs, chicken, pig, cereal, oilseed and pulse crop sectors, and over 65% for beef and lamb and horticultural produce.

The FSA's remit is to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. This paper therefore deals with the food safety and consumer choice issues which arise in connection with assurance schemes.

Implications for animal welfare and environmental protection and consideration of producer interests are outside the FSA's remit, and are for others to take forward. The paper does, however, cover controls on claims, including those which relate to animal welfare and the environment, because of their influence on consumer choice. The views in this paper are based on a review carried out for the FSA by an independent consultant.

## The Food Standards Agency's concerns

It is clear that schemes **have not succeeded in explaining to consumers what assured food is and have not involved consumers adequately** in the operation of schemes.

The material available to consumers on individual schemes is very variable both in terms of its content and its accessibility. It is **very difficult for consumers to identify what they are paying for** if they buy assured produce.

The absence of objective consumer information and the lack of consistency between schemes in the way they describe themselves makes it **very difficult for consumers to make informed choices** between produce from different schemes.

The British Farm Standard red tractor logo, which can be used on produce from schemes recognised by AFS, is familiar to many consumers, but it **does not convey a clear message**. The red tractor is not an indication of origin and while it has not yet appeared on imported produce it could potentially do so. However, a significant number of consumers view the red tractor logo as indicating UK sourced produce. This is the source of **much consumer confusion**.

The **basis for scheme claims** is often not clearly explained, and terms like 'high production standards' and 'quality' have no clear meaning for consumers. This points to the need for greater openness in relation to the evidence supporting claims, and for schemes to commission and make available expert evaluations of this evidence.

There is also a risk that scheme **logos may be mis-used** on non-compliant produce; schemes need to incorporate tight controls on their use.

Although there was no evidence seen during the review to suggest that, to date, 'baseline' schemes had resulted in additional costs to the consumer, a challenge for the future will be to **balance consumer benefits and consumer costs**. Membership of schemes can entail

additional costs for producers, both in terms of the cost of meeting higher standards, and of membership and inspection fees, which could lead to higher prices. Standard setting arrangements need to draw on expertise from across the food chain, including consumers, to balance the interests of all parties.

In addition governance arrangements for 'baseline' schemes need to respond to the risk that these schemes may, by representing such a large majority of producers in each sector, discourage competition and **reduce consumer choice**.

So far assurance schemes have not made significant inroads into processed foods or the catering sector. Significant consumer benefit could in principle follow if schemes could break into these sectors, which are increasing their contribution to consumer diets.

### **Consumer benefits**

Nevertheless, the FSA's view is that development of assurance schemes has benefited consumers, and that schemes have potential to contribute to further improvements in production standards and to further extending consumer choice.

Farms belonging to schemes are subject to **independent inspections**. Some include **independent checks along the whole food chain from farm gate to retail point**. On-farm checks could in principle encourage improved hygiene standards on farms and, as a consequence, reduce the risk of microbiological contamination. Scheme inspections and the enhanced internal management controls required by the schemes are issues which can be taken into account by local authorities when considering their own inspection programmes. This will sometimes enable local resources to be used more effectively.

Many schemes aim to **increase hygiene standards over time**; consumers could in principle benefit from this continuing pressure on producers and suppliers to increase standards.

Some schemes have already introduced **standards and controls which go beyond those currently set down in legislation for food safety**.

Two examples with food safety objectives are: the introduction of vaccination against salmonella in laying hens in the Lion scheme (to minimise salmonella in eggs); and the inclusion of testing and scheduling in the Assured Chicken Production Scheme (which enable the slaughterhouse to schedule slaughter of salmonella positive flocks at the end of a production run).

Some schemes have **expanded the range of consumer choice**, meeting the demand of some consumers for regional foods or for food produced to specific standards of animal welfare. Organic schemes, which are under-pinned by specific legislation, also contribute to the range of choice for consumers.

The FSA considers that 'baseline' assurance schemes could in principle **help deliver a number of the FSA's policy objectives on food safety**.

For example, assurance schemes could contribute to reducing foodborne disease by including controls aimed at reducing contamination of raw foods with pathogens. Schemes could also incorporate elements which contribute to delivery of statutory controls, such as the likely future requirement for supply with animals destined for slaughter of a wide range of information on health status, disease occurrence etc. Assurance schemes could also provide a useful foundation for the development of control programmes for specific pathogen/animal combinations such as are envisaged in draft EU legislation. They could also form a basis for complying with EU food hygiene legislation currently under negotiation which may require primary producers to adopt a hazard-based approach to food safety.

## THE FSA'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Co-operation between schemes

Individual assurance schemes, rightly, are in competition with one another both in the marketplace and for members. Yet all scheme members, and retailers, would benefit if more consumers understood what was meant by 'assurance', valued this attribute for their food and trusted claims made by schemes about food production standards. **The FSA recommends that assurance schemes, food manufacturers, retailers and consumer representatives should work together to:**

- Promote the benefits to consumers which can be delivered by assured food
- Develop and keep under review minimum core criteria for operation of individual assurance schemes
- Develop and promote best practice guidelines for food assurance schemes
- Provide objective consumer information on schemes
- Consider extension of assurance into the catering and independent sectors, processed products and imported produce.

### Core criteria for individual schemes

All schemes incorporate a set of production standards and external checks to ensure they are delivered; the way they do this varies. A 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate, but all schemes should take proper account of consumer interests when setting production standards, make sure scheme members comply with those standards and communicate clearly to consumers what the scheme delivers. **The FSA recommends that schemes should incorporate the following criteria into their operating arrangements: Setting and delivery of production standards**

- Standard setting boards should represent the interests of all stakeholders - consumers, retailers, producers, enforcement authorities and relevant experts – and be independently chaired
- Schemes should be UKAS accredited and certifying bodies should be independent of the standard-setting body.
- There should be at least annual inspections, some of which should be random or unannounced,
- Arrangements for training and expertise of inspectors should be reviewed regularly.
- There should be clear procedures for dealing with non-compliance by members
- Schemes should take a hazard based approach to standard setting both on-farm and during processing
- Schemes should work together to deliver whole food chain coverage.
- Where appropriate there should be arrangements for monitoring outputs in order to substantiate claims
- Controls on the use of logos should aim to ensure that they are not used on non-compliant produce. In addition arrangements for liaison with official enforcers should be improved to facilitate the exchange of information on membership and labelling claims.

**SCOTTISH MEAT TRADE FAIR  
NATIONAL SAUSAGE COMPETITIONS  
SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER,  
DEWARS RINK, PERTH**

## Transparency for consumers

Schemes should provide explanatory material in retail outlets and on their web-sites that can be readily understood by the consumer. This material should clearly describe:

- what the scheme seeks to achieve
- in what ways, if any, scheme standards exceed the legal minimum
- the inspection regime, including the frequency, the amount of notice given and the policy on random and unannounced inspections
- how instances of non-compliance by scheme members are dealt with
- the basis for any specific claim, for example on food safety or quality, including cross-references to supporting scientific evidence and a proper expert evaluation of these data
- arrangements for monitoring delivery of standards, for example analyses of scheme produce, including publishing results
- how consumers can comment or make complaints

Schemes should also ensure that logos used on members' produce carry a clear consumer message

## Assured Food Standards Schemes

Following the recommendations of the Commission on Farming and Food in England some stakeholders are discussing future governance arrangements for the Assured Food Standard schemes. **The FSA considers that these discussions should be widened to include other interested parties. The aim should be to establish an independent, authoritative body which will take proper account of consumer interests and improve consumer understanding of these schemes.** To achieve these objectives the decision-making body at the heart of the new governance arrangements for AFS should:

- Be independently chaired
- Include members with expertise covering the whole food chain, including consumers
- Consult widely on its objectives and policies

### **The FSA considers that the new body could improve transparency by:**

- providing objective consumer information on the standards
- ensuring that its logo carries a clear consumer message
- extending coverage to imported foods, and requiring provision of clear country of origin information on qualifying produce
- overseeing the accuracy of claims made about AFS scheme improvements
- ensuring there is rigorous policing of AFS schemes

The new body should also **promote best practice by:**

- taking account of the recommendations on core criteria outlined above
- overseeing continuing improvements in schemes, for example coordinating improvements in food safety and other areas of consumer concern across the food chain.

It should also ensure sufficient flexibility in its overall administration to encourage other schemes to join, and the emergence of new schemes and standards.

The FSA suggests it will be important to widen these discussions to include other UK interests, including other assurance schemes with an interest, wider consumer representation and interests across all relevant government departments.

**VISIT THE FINAL MEAT SKILLS SCOTLAND ON  
SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, DEWARS RINK, PERTH**

## WHO urged ban on by products in feed

All four cases of mad cow disease, three in Hokkaido, were traced back to a milk-substitute feed given to the cows when they were calves in the spring of 1996. The blended feed, the report says, "contained an animal fat from the Netherlands, which has had 21 cases of mad cow disease since 1997. In 1996, the World Health Organisation urged Japan and other countries to ban the use of such cow by-products as feed, but Japan made the ban voluntary. Since last October, Japan has checked all cattle taken to slaughter BSE. But about 40% of Japan's 168 slaughterhouses now refuse to accept older cattle for fear of contamination.

Last autumn, after their BSE outbreak, slaughterhouses and meat companies sought to unload frozen meat stocks in the face of plummeting consumer demand. The government finally announced "that it would buy up the beef from cows slaughtered in the month after the first case of BSE."

In May 2002, a government audit found that about half of the frozen beef purchased under the programme was either Japanese beef stored in warehouses prior to the mad cow outbreak, or low-cost beef imported from Australia and the United States, countries without BSE. With Japan the largest destination for American beef exports, the American industry has begun an US\$8-million advertising campaign to reassure the Japanese about the safety of American beef.

## WHO meets Neeskens at Keurslager

Johan Neeskens has met many more important people in his career than SFMTA Chief Executive, Douglas Scott. The Dutch World Cup star of 1974 and 1978 took time to talk footie following a recent match in Holland.

Those eagle eyed, and photocopier permitting, will notice that the two met at the side of a Keurslager stall. It seems that most of the catering done on amateur grounds in Holland is done by this group of butchers. Sausages and burgers are cooked up by members of the local K butchers staff.

Neeskens is Head Coach at Dutch Premier League side NEC Nijmegen.



# Dietary roulette in a witches' cauldron of the chemical food age

wrote Albert Morris in *The Scotsman*

Sat 29 Jun 2002

DOES anyone remember that happy breed, the "hearty trenchermen", who could demolish with strength and with majesty a great comfort of western civilisation, the "slap up meal"?

There were many when I was a juvenile digester, who, at the table's crunch, faced life's frying and battering days reinforced by wallpaper-paste-thick porridge, sizzling slices of battling bacon and shell-fire sausages. They were grapplers with heroic stews that steamed, like the Royal Navy, into action, tacklers of puddings, black as the Earl of Hell's teeth fillings, chops of seductive succulence that stuck in the mastication memory and meat, red as a Victorian maiden's first blush, that Tory grandee, Lord Woolton, pronounced, after his party's general election victory in 1951, was what Labour-drained, blood-thinned Britain needed to revive.

Where are the old meals of yesteryear we could eat without fearing they could cause or exacerbate afflictions from arthritis to asthma, falling hair to faints, eczema to behavioural changes and low blood pressure and gum up, as if with super-gluue, the arteries?

As one who uses his eating irons like a sword and lance, and has never feared to face a second helping of sticky toffee pudding, I feel that food has become, not a source of pleasure but a kind of Russian roulette in which each mouthful might menace mental or physical health, causing some people to have migraines, bronchial attacks and seizures, and contains colouring ingredients that could turn children into hyperactive, juvenile delinquents.

All that fuss about genetically-modified food no longer worries me when I consider the witches' cauldron of preservatives, emulsifiers, surfactants (detergents) and sequestrants (ion-removing substances; all right, that's a closed book to me, too) that can be found in food production. Do you know that some 2,000 permitted additives can be used to sweeten your burger bun or colour your ketchup, and if that brings out some eaters in spots, and turns them bright blue all over, that is a hazard of the chemical food age and just let them eat their hearts out?

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), the French jurist and gourmet, said: "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are." He said a mouthful. I'll tell you what I am - and millions are like me - a masticating maelstrom of hydrolysed vegetable protein, tetrasodium disphosphate, tricalcium phosphate, permitted colour, sodium ascorbate, bleaches, anti-caking agents, non-nutritive sweeteners, moisteners, thickeners, thinners and what else?

Scientists are telling us and the revelations could turn us pale at our plates and make us reach, as a famed Fleet Street columnist used to write, for the sick-bag.

Swedish scientists have found "significant levels" of acrylamide - a probable cancer-causing chemical - in many cooked and processed foods such as potatoes, crisps, crisp-breads and breakfast cereals. It may also be formed naturally in fried, oven-baked and deep-fried potatoes and roasted, grilled and barbecued food.

Investigations are continuing. The World Health Organisation is evaluating the research, but Food Standards Agency scientists say it is too early to advise people to change their diets or the way they prepare food; so munch on, crunch on, take your luncheon and hope for the hazardous best.

Such scares come and go, but we can take precautions. Night and day, under the hide of me, there are naturally-occurring anti-oxidants swirling inside of me that can be boosted from a

judicious supply of red wine. These absorb cell-producing free radicals, an excess of which can be caused by environmental and other pollutants, alcohol, radiation and cigarette smoke, possibly resulting in many degenerative diseases.

So that's OK; but I still am uncertain whether coffee, tea and milk are safe. My doubts also apply not only to meat and fish but also to just about everything I eat. A friend tried a so-called Jungle Diet. He ate bananas, coconuts and palm oil. He didn't feel better, but his tree-climbing improved.

Yesterday, confronting to-day's menacing menus, I threw caution and cholesterol-counts to the wind. In a restaurant, after my possibly potassium nitrite and monosodium-glutamate-enriched chicken and chips, I ordered a, doubtless chemical-crammed, banana split made with three scoops of vanilla ice-cream, chocolate-chip sauce and a large dollop of whipped cream. "Do you want a cherry on top?" asked the waitress. I refused. At my age, you have to be careful about your health.

## Spam Spam Spam Spam...

Hormel are celebrating the sale of the six billionth can of Spam.

SPAM luncheon meat hit the shelves in 1937 in the US. Sixty-five years later in July 2002, the company sold can number six billion, that's 6,000,000,000 (US billions) and a lot of trips to casualty for stitches in fingers.

SPAM luncheon meat has grown over the years because of its versatility, quality and taste, claim the makers. The one billionth can was produced in 1959; the second billionth can in 1970; and the third, fourth and fifth billionth cans in 1980, 1986 and 1994, respectively.

SPAM is produced at Hormel plants in Austin and Fremont, Nebraska, who, between them, produce over 44,000 cans an hour. SPAM is also manufactured in Denmark, Korea and the Philippines and is sold in 41 countries and is trademarked in more than 100 countries.

In the United States, a can of SPAM is consumed every 3.1 seconds. Hawaii leads the way with 6.7 million cans sold annually, or 5.5 cans a year per Hawaiian.

Over the years, SPAM choices have expanded, including the following introductions:

- In 1962, a seven-ounce can was produced
- In 1971, smoke-flavored SPAM was introduced
- In 1986, SPAM less sodium was unveiled
- In 1992, SPAM lite entered the marketplace
- In 1999, SPAM oven-roasted turkey was introduced
- In 2000, SPAM hot & spicy was launched in the South and Southeast

An entire 16,500-square-foot museum is now dedicated to SPAM, including a gift shop selling numerous SPAM-branded items. You can't get enough of a good thing.

### For Sale

1 Reich Steam Cooker Tray Loading	2 x 8 <sup>FT</sup> Cabinet Display
1 Trolley Loading Reich Steam Cooker with Shower	1 x 8 <sup>FT</sup> 4 inch Display Cabinet
1 Maja Derinder	1 x 8 <sup>FT</sup> 3 inch Display Cabinet
1 Butcher Boy 56 Mincer	1 x 6 <sup>FT</sup> 7 inch Display Cabin
1 Bastra 200 Litre Electric Kettle	

Contact: **Quality Fayre Scotland Ltd**

**Tel 01555 840239**

# The Modern Day 'Vegetarian' – Meat and Veg? 17 July 2002

Approximately five per cent of adults in Britain claim to be vegetarian, but research by Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) Family Food Panel has revealed that half of these people actually eat fish, one third eat chicken and one quarter eat red meat. This leaves an average of less than three per cent of the population who are true vegetarians, the significant minority of which are women aged 17-34 years old.

When asked for their reasons for not eating meat, only 44 per cent of true vegetarians said it was due to moral reasons relating to animal suffering and cruel practices. Twenty two per cent stated that they were vegetarians for health reasons and nine per cent said a series of recent food scares was the reason for excluding meat from their diet.

Despite the decline in 'true vegetarians,' over recent years, there has been an increase in people eating textured vegetable protein (TVP) as an alternative to meat, with the 'healthy' Linda McCartney and Quorn ranges proving increasingly popular. Both brands provide a wide range of meat free products which are mainly consumed as meat substitutes with vegetables and/or potatoes.

Other key findings:

- Quorn products, worth an estimated £93 million in Britain, account for 46 per cent of total vegetarian foods. Vegetarian bacon and vegetarian spaghetti bolognese are two of the most popular Quorn products.
- Vegetable based products such as vegetable grills and burgers have also become more popular, particularly with women aged 25-44.
- Frozen vegetarian food is also a popular option, with vegetable pizza (consumed by children in particular), macaroni cheese, cauliflower cheese, vegetable curry and vegetable lasagne as the five most popular meals.
- Consumption of chicken and beef has seen growth while pork, lamb and turkey have become less popular choices in recent years.
- Linda McCartney products are consumed most regularly by children aged between six and ten and also by females aged 45-64.

Sara Donnelly, Account Director at TNS' Family Food Panel said:

"The focus of vegetarian food marketing by manufacturers and retailers will need to change in order to appeal to a more diverse market place, including men and older women. Whilst, meals without meat, for example, meat-free pasta dishes, soups, salads, stir-fries and sandwiches are becoming more popular, meat still features in a significant majority of people's diets.

However, in a society that places huge demands on time, a growing number of consumers are looking for meals that are convenient to prepare, and meat is often perceived as inconvenient. Because of this, there are now opportunities for food marketers to target consumers who want convenient, healthy, meat-free meals, rather than marketing products specifically as 'meals for vegetarians.'

Additional findings from TNS Superpanel indicate that the total vegetable market, including salads, is currently worth £3.3 billion and has grown by nine per cent over the past twelve months. The most popular vegetable is old potatoes, with over 980,000 tonnes being sold every year.

Family Food Panel (FFP) is Britain's largest and only continuous monitor of food and drink consumption. The database complements purchase panel data as it tracks products to their final consumer. Users of FFP data include many of the leading food and drink manufacturers as well as retailers and generic marketing bodies. The sample is demographically and regionally balanced to offer a representative picture of the GB market place.

Taylor Nelson Sofres

# Stakeholder group meets to discuss BSE controls

18 July 2002



A core stakeholder group including consumer representatives and experts from the fields of science, industry and food law enforcement, met for the first time in mid July to discuss the BSE controls currently in place.

The group, which was established as part of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) review of the Over Thirty Month (OTM) rule, is charged with advising the FSA on whether the rule could be changed without causing unacceptable risks to consumers.

The OTM Rule is one of the key BSE controls and prohibits human consumption of meat from cattle aged over 30 months at the time of slaughter.

The group's discussions must also take into account a risk assessment being developed by a separate risk assessment group established jointly by the FSA and the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The group will be FSA chaired by FSA Chair Sir John Krebs and include FSA CEO Geoffrey Podger and FSA Veterinary Director Debby Reynolds. It also includes Sue Dibb from the National Consumer Council, Sam Miskelly from the General Consumer Council of Northern Ireland and Dr John Godfrey, of the FoodAware and FSA Consumer Committee.

Representatives from the field of science are Peter Smith, chair of SEAC, and Official Veterinary Surgeon Jill Nute, from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Food law enforcement will be represented by Phil Gore from the Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services; and the food industry by Mike Attenborough, Meat and Livestock Commission; Neil Cutler, National Farmers' Union; Alistair Donaldson, Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers; and Sion Aron, Farmers' Union of Wales.

## Cancer scare on fried food

Jonathan Leake and John Elliott, *Sunday Times*

30 June 2002

SENIOR food scientists have told their families to stop eating chips, crisps and other highly heated foods after the discovery that many contain a chemical known to cause cancer.

Last week scientists from around the world met at the World Health Organisation in Geneva to discuss acrylamide, a carcinogen recently found at unexpectedly high levels in fried and baked foods ranging from Walkers crisps to McDonald's chips and Ryvita biscuits.

Only a handful of products have been tested in the UK but the evidence suggests that the highest levels are in "junk" foods such as crisps, chips and some toasted cereals.

A Food Standards Agency (FSA) study found that levels of acrylamide in chips and crisps were from 17 to 350 times higher than recommended. Such products are rich in starch and polyunsaturated fats — both tentatively linked with the formation of acrylamide.

Peter Farmer of Leicester University, who chairs the FSA's committee on mutagenicity, said: "The risk is unknown but it could be on a par with tobacco."

Tony Barnett, professor of medicine at Birmingham University and an expert on diet, is one of several food scientists advising their families to avoid some highly heated foods.

Experts emphasised that nutrients in fresh foods could neutralise the effect of acrylamide.

# Why Train?



TRAINING! HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Before you decide to turn over the page thinking – “ah who cares” – think again.

Where are you going to get trained staff?

Do you have pride in your business?

Do you want your customers to come into a happy atmosphere, and enjoy the experience of visiting your shop?

Do you want your staff to be more interested in their work?

Do you want to increase your profits?

Do you want to ensure that your staff meet your legislative needs. Keep the EHO off your back!

If you have more questions than answers then TRAINING would be important to you.

## Meat Industry SVQs:

These training programmes have been developed especially for the meat industry and also for each sector operation.

### LEVEL II - Butchery Operations:

This qualification covers Food Safety, Safe Working Practices, A Unit to Help staff work with each other – very valuable in any business – Meeting Quality Specifications, Butchering, and Processing.

You will note that there is nothing additional to your everyday needs. All training is centred around what is essential in your business.

A similar qualification is available if you have an employee you wish trained in manufacturing products – ie sausage making, pies, haggis, blackpudding, to name but a few.

AND very important to all Retail establishments – A FRONT SHOP qualification.

Covering Customer Service, Selling, Cutting, Weighing, Food Safety and Safe Working Practices.

This qualification will help your employees to be more confident in the front shop and to be comfortable serving customers. Improve their sales techniques and hopefully achieve add on sales!

### LEVEL 3 SVQs –

These are for the more experienced staff and will link to the Federation Diploma, which is currently being reviewed to give a very professional qualification for the industry.

WHAT DOES IT COST: IF YOUR EMPLOYEE IS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, THE GOVERNMENT FUNDED TRAINING PROGRAMME WILL PAY FOR THIS.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE - PHONE MOIRA BRADY on 01738 637785.**

**DON'T DELAY MOIRA WILL BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS YOUR TRAINING NEEDS.**

# Council under fire over deal for Isles abattoir

wrote Fordyce Maxwell in *The Scotsman*

18 July 2002

WESTERN Isles Council has accepted an offer from RG Meats (Wholesale), based in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, to lease Stornoway slaughterhouse, which went into receivership this year.

But the company has made it clear that taking the lease is conditional on getting grants of £3.9 million and an interest-free loan of £960,000 from Western Isles Enterprise.

In return, RG Meats will put in £100,000 of its own cash to a business which, it says, will supply meat slaughtered in the Western Isles to specialist halal and kosher meat markets - from animals slaughtered according to Muslim and Jewish law - around London.

The company's bid was one of only two received by the deadline set by the council's slaughterhouse sub-committee.

The plan envisages expanding to take in other areas apart from Lewis and Harris, extending the existing boning facility or building a new facility and opening a distribution £2.5 million centre in the London area.

An appraisal by a council official has expressed reservations, noting that RG Meats intended to source 104,000 sheep or lambs annually, whereas the total available in the Western Isles last year was 62,749.

The previous operators, Heather Isle Meats, went into receivership after it emerged that aid provided by the Council was illegal under European rules. A rescue and restructuring package of £334,000 over three years was refused by the council.

A councillor close to this week's decision said: "It gives us an operator, the rest of the plans are for the longer term and it is up to the company to go after these grants themselves. At the moment we are confident that slaughtering will go ahead from August to December."

Councillor Donald John MacSween said that the decision to lease to RG Meats was "beyond belief" when rescuing the previous operation would have cost much less.

A spokesperson for Highlands and Islands Enterprise said: "Each application we get will be treated on its merits, but enterprise network money is usually targeted within the HIE network area."

## **Think-tank blames celebrity chefs for 'food poverty'** 18 July 2002

Demos, a leftwing think-tank has suggested that celebrity chefs are partly to blame for accelerating 'food poverty' among the less wealthy.

According to a report in the Financial Times, supermarkets are concentrating on fashionable foods and trendy ingredients recommended by celebrity chefs, "creating a culture that denies the poor access to a nutritious diet".

In its report "Inconvenience Food," Demos said that the collapse of the independent food retail sector, dominance of the supermarket chains and the decline in public transport had led to "food deserts," where nutritious food was hard to find. It claimed that food manufacturers had a commercial incentive to push high-fat, low-nutrition food at the "value" end of the market.

Co-author Tim Lang, professor of food policy at Thames Valley University, is quoted by the Financial Times as saying: "Our changing food culture and widespread affluence have led the large supermarket chains to target a certain kind of upmarket customer, with the effect that people on low incomes have been left out."

# BSE and Sheep Casings



This is a draft of the last FSA Board Meeting Minute.  
Recommendation 11 (addition of intestine to list of SRM)

Board members noted that, if accepted by the Board and implemented at European level, the position of imports from third countries would need to be considered carefully by the Commission so that any public health benefits were not dissipated. The effect of such measures on the German industry had already been raised, but it would be for the German industry to raise its concerns at the European level.

Board members were aware of the problems facing risk management in areas where there was unclear or incomplete information. However, with the recommendations of the Phillips report and the experience of BSE in cattle, the Board had a duty to consumers to consider whether precautionary measures were necessary.

Board members noted the information provided by the Natural Sausage Casings Association. This questioned the proportionality of the proposal, Board members noted the difficulty of assessing proportionality. In cases such as this there was no clear cut, obvious answer and conclusions had to be drawn on the basis of the information and argumentation that was available.

The Board also noted that any conclusion it reached on the stakeholder group recommendation was the first rather than the last step on the road to implementing it.

There would be further opportunities for representations to be made during the negotiation process at the European level.

Furthermore, the present discussion should not be taken as the end of policy evolution. There were many other aspects of BSE work under continuous review and development, and like these a conclusion at this time could be reviewed if new evidence came to light.

All recognised the difficulty and uncertainty surrounding this whole issue, but recalled the Agency's primary functions of protecting public health and commitment to the interests of consumers. It was also pointed

out that key scientists with knowledge and experience of BSE who responded to the consultation supported the recommendation.

On the information available, Board members were content to accept recommendation 11 as a practicable step offering substantial risk reduction.

Board members asked whether the processing of intestine into sausage casings removed infectivity. This was largely a physical process using stripping and pressure to remove mucosa. It was unclear how much infectivity would be removed by this process.

It was noted that while some producers preferred to use natural sausage casings derived from sheep intestine, alternatives to these casings existed which could be used by specialist sausage producers.

It therefore appeared that if the EU decided to add sheep intestine to the list of SRM the sausage market should not collapse.

In the UK, some 15% of sausages used sheep casings, around 10-15% used pig casings and the remaining 70-75% were skinless or used artificial casings.

The Board **accepted** the recommendations of the stakeholder group, with the provisos given above, and acknowledged the difficulty caused by uncertainty in the evidence available.

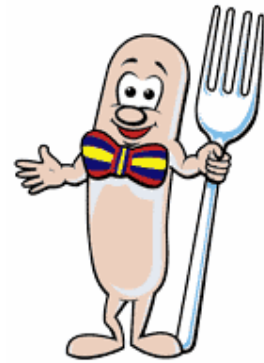
Recommendation 11 would now be taken forward to the European Commission, and work on other recommendations taken forward in line with the Board's comments.

# Scottish Sausage Competition

National competitions for Pork Sausages and for Beef Sausages will be held at the Scottish Meat Trade Fair in Perth on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September. Entry Forms are attached. The outright winners will qualify for the Meat Trades Journal's Champion of Champions Competition.

Sausages are an increasingly important market:- 5.3 Billion sausages were eaten in the UK last year, up 11% on the figure for 2001.

To win you must enter; make sure you get your entry off now!



## Distance Selling: Temperature Control Aspects

### Issue

The FSA Board considered the Food Advisory Committee (FAC) Review of Distance Selling at its meeting in February 2002 and asked to be made aware of any existing problems with temperature control of mail order goods.

This information note precedes the full discussion of the FAC Report scheduled for the September FSA Board meeting.

### Discussion

The FAC's Review notes that "No examples of serious problems arising from distance selling had been brought to their attention although this could be due to under-reporting of such incidents by consumers".

However, neither the Agency nor the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre of the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) is aware of any incidents of food poisoning in the UK related to mail order food products. Whilst occasional isolated incidents cannot be ruled out, if mail order foods were a significant contributor to food poisoning outbreaks, it would have been picked up by the PHLS monitoring system.

### Board Action Required

The Board is invited to **note** the information paper, against the background that there will be a full discussion in September.

## Businesses For Sale

Family Butchers established over thirty years, [owner retiring]. Profitable well appointed shop, in central Hamilton. Large front shop with two refrigerated counters, refrigerated window display and large well equipped preparation area with fan assisted oven etc. Back shop with walk in chill. Rest Area with facilities. **Tel 01698 427806**

DL Stewart, 52 Bonnygate, Cupar, Fife: Traditional Butchers for sale or lease due to ill health. Profitable business showing over 50% gross profit. This shop is retail trade only at present but there is plenty of scope for wholesale to hotels and restaurants. Can be leased on suitable terms, with a view to buying at a later date. Can be tailored to suit first time business.

**Genuine enquiries only to Dave Stewart on 01334 650331 (daytime) or 01382 541524 (evenings)**

# **SIAL Diary Date 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2002, Paris**

## **5000 Exhibitors to the Food Industry**

### **Lamb trade with France saved**

27 June 2002

Britain's sheep farmers are breathing a sigh of relief after a proposal which could have decimated lamb exports to France was postponed.

France had been considering introducing unilateral regulations demanding the removal of the spinal cord from all imported lambs over the age of six months. But following intensive work by the Meat and Livestock Commission along with industry organisations both at home and abroad and the Government trade can continue as normal.

MLC Sheep Strategy Manager David Croston said: "We joined forces with the industry and other organisations to ensure that the full impact of these unilateral proposals was understood by all, especially the industry in France."

MLC Manager in France Remi Fourrier, said: "The lamb trade is extremely important to both countries and our aim was to make both the French industry and Government aware of the potentially devastating effect the move could have.

"We are delighted these proposals have been postponed though we are still waiting for details. This gives us a breathing space to continue our work to get these proposals scrapped. In the meantime French consumers can continue to enjoy the delights of British lamb."

The announcement was made at EU Council of Ministers meeting by French Agriculture Minister Hervé Gaymard.

Britain's lamb trade with France in 2000 was worth more than £155 million which would have been halted, if the proposals had gone ahead.

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