

**MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD WITHIN  
8/10 NEEDLESS ROAD PERTH ON WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2002**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Duncan MacKenzie</b>	<b>President (Chair)</b>
	<b>Mark Barnett</b>	<b>President Elect</b>
	<b>Douglas Scott</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>
	<b>Moira Brady</b>	<b>Secretary</b>

plus Executive and Ordinary members as detailed below:

R C Baillie, R Baird, B Brymer, Jamie Chapman, G J Deans, W Ferguson, D Lindsay.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from John Chapman, Stuart Christie, George Deans, David Jarron, George Jarron, George Lees, Jim Hastie, Arthur Matthew, Adam McLay, Cheryl Murdoch and Graham Murdoch.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** The Minute of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March was approved by Hamish Deans and seconded by Bruce Brymer.

**MATTERS ARISING:** Under the Training & Development Report, page 4 of the Minute, Wilson Ferguson asked for clarity of understanding regarding the Meat Training Council and Sector Skills Councils. Moira Brady responded with full details of the Government's new initiative to move away from National Training Councils. The Meat Training Council, of which SFMTA is a partner, is the organisation for the meat industry. The government intends to rationalise the number of NTOs, and will introduce Sector Skills Councils to bring together a number of similar occupations.

Within the food industry the Bakers, Fish Processors, and Food and Drink have already agreed to come together to form a Food Sector Skills Council. Meat Training Council, with the full support of the national meat industry, is submitting a bid to form a Meat Sector Skills Council. SFMTA are wholly behind them and it is important that members of the Executive put forward their individual support to Meat Training Council. Wilson stated that it was very important to hold on to a meat-led organisation and asked Moira to keep the Executive Committee informed of developments. Moira is to attend a meeting in London later this month when it is hoped that further information will be available.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT:** The Chief Executive reported that during the past month he had attended three Regional Meetings, plus a Scottish Food Advisory Committee Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March and together with Moira, Training & Development Manager, had attended a Scottish Enterprise Meeting in Dundee on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

A report from the SFAC Meeting would be given under Legislation and Moira will report on the Scottish Enterprise Meeting within the T & D Report.

The Regional Meetings had been very successful although attendance could be improved, especially at the Lanarkshire meeting. The members who were attending these meetings reported that they had found them beneficial and that they had enjoyed meeting with other colleagues from the industry.

**FINANCE REPORT:** Douglas reported that an earlier meeting had been held that day but unfortunately David Jarron and Bruce Brymer had been unable to attend.

The normal procedures were followed which included looking at the bad debts, which were not too critical, although one will require serious follow up.

On looking over the accounts it was noted that the Food Training Services accounts were not projecting well at the 6 monthly stage. The Scotbeef Contract would be crucial to maintaining a break-even position at the end of the year. The committee had looked over the expenses for the past six months to identify if, and where, efficiencies can be made, particularly with regard to the assessor's expenses.

On the general membership side it was projected that a deficiency of £972 could be envisaged at the year end. Currently 350 members fees have been received but any additional subscriptions coming in will reduce the projected deficit. Bruce McCall is in the process of telephoning late payers to chase them up.

At the moment 10 Corporate Memberships have been received with 11 budgeted.

The cost of running courses had also been considered by the Finance Committee and they have agreed to return to this again next month. It was noted however, that it is difficult to make profits out of courses, especially as so few candidates are taking part. In the past the volume on the courses helped to offset expenses.

**MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT:** Convenor Mark Barnett confirmed the Chief Executive's report that 350 members had now paid and that 6 Corporate Members fees had been received.

**Handbook** - The Handbook had now been circulated to all paid members. The Chief Executive had updated the Legislative articles and the handbook gave good solid information to members, which included details of the Sunlight preferential rates. The sum of £1850 had been received for advertisements.

**Golf:** The Federation Golf day was arranged for 15<sup>th</sup> May at Rosemount Golf Course, Blairgowrie. Tee-off time was between 11.15 and 12 noon. The first 25 entries will be accepted.

**Renewals:** The Chief Executive commented that Bruce McCall had contacted almost everyone who had not paid their fees this year. A number had stated they would not be re-joining, others had said not re-joining at the moment and only one or two stated they were discontented with their membership. This was mainly in the Edinburgh area.

The Dumfries and Galloway Project had given us a list of non-members in the area and these will be followed up. Douglas stated that the Environmental Health Officers could be a source of support to encourage butchers into membership. He added that he intended to write to all Local Authorities Environmental Department, outlining what SFMTA did for its members and would include a copy of our Handbook with the letter.

Mark Barnett stated that the Fife EHO had commented that they would wish to see all butchers with the SFMTA Labelling Board, which could make their job easier.

The Chief Executive continued by commenting on the **Regional Meetings**. The meeting on 18 March in Glasgow had not been well attended, especially from the Paisley membership, but the meeting had been a very good positive event. The following night the meeting had been at Monkton, Ayrshire, with 9 butchers attending and again it was a good positive evening with members going away quite happy with the outcome. It was noted that after the formal discussions a number of members stood around just chatting with colleagues. At Elgin on 26<sup>th</sup> March, we had a good turn out with the room almost full to capacity. The outcome of the evening again was very positive. Mike Gibson, a local butcher and member of the Scottish Food Advisory Council was present at the meeting and responded to Douglas's criticisms of SFAC with an understanding and support for the Federation. Most people attending the meeting contributed something to the discussions.

President MacKenzie stated that the important outcome from the meetings was that butchers were mixing and chatting with each other.

David Lindsay suggested that at the meetings the names of those attending was recorded and prior to the next event send a circular letter to all who had been present asking for suggestions for the discussions at the next meeting. This would give the members a feeling that they were contributing to the event and they had the opportunity to discuss local situations. **The meeting agreed that this was a very good suggestion and that the Chief Executive follow it up.**

Roy Baird asked the name of the venue for the next Queensferry Meeting. The Chief Executive explained that the Forth Bridges was not available for that evening and asked the Fife members if they had any preferences.

**It was suggested and agreed that we try the Quality Inn.**

**TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:** Convenor Bruce Brymer opened his report by commenting that today we received the first formal entry for the under 30 year old Scottish Meat Skills Competition. He continued by stating that this was an in-shop event and that the candidates were asked to breakdown a Thick Flank of Beef and a skin-on, chump on Leg of Pork. Butchery skills together with innovation and display would be judged, along with food safety and health & safety practices. Two hours would be allocated to complete the task.

The younger group, under 22 years, would be asked to breakdown a skin-on, chump on Leg of Pork and they would be judged on butchery skills, together with traying and display. Food Safety and Health & Safety practices would also be taken into consideration. One hour will be allocated to complete the task.

Bruce stated that the entries were slow in coming in and that he would be pleased if members of the Executive could encourage their own young butchers and those of other members in their area, to take part.

**Distance Learning Hygiene Programmes:** Bruce reported that due to lack of uptake on group courses, Food Training Services had developed a Distance Learning Package for both Essential Hygiene and Intermediate Hygiene.

Interest has been shown for the Essential Course with 7 candidates currently registered and a potential of a further 8 to be registered. Of those already registered 5 are non-skillseekers, who have paid £40 each for the course (There is no fee for currently registered Skillseekers)

**Intermediate Distance Learning:** Bruce reported that this package is now ready to go out to candidates. He added that Moira has had to look for EHO support for candidates and to mark the pre-exam paper. Approximately 3 hours per candidate will be required from the EHO. A local EHO has agreed his services.

The cost of the package will be £295.

**UK Skills event – Four Nations Championship:** The Four Nations championship will take place during the week of the U K Skills, which is 13<sup>th</sup> November to 16<sup>th</sup> November. Dates for the Four Nations have yet to be agreed, but it is possible that the competition will be split over the two days of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>.

The age limit for the candidates is 17 to 22 years old, and we will require to decide now who our team will be, and also to select a third member as a reserve. A training programme for this event will also require to be drawn up. Bruce asked those members of the Executive, who have had experience coaching a previous team to let him know if they would be willing to give their support this year.

Bruce reported that the Spring Training Newsletter had now been circulated to all registered trainees and that copies were available today for any Executive members who wished to have one.

**Skillseeker Income** - Moira Brady continued the report by detailing the Skillseekers Income for the month of March. This claim amounted to £18,968, which included £8,550 new start income from a recent secured contract. The amount claimed for Skillseeker targets was therefor £10,418 against a budget figure of £20,270. If all the trainees had completed their paperwork by the set target date the total claim, including the new start payments, would have amounted to £26,650.

Moira added that it was crucial to the cost effectiveness of managing the skillseeker programme that trainees completed their targets within the set period. Failure to do so was causing delays in income and also additional expense of an assessor making further visits.

**Lead LEC Developments** – Moira reported that on 31<sup>st</sup> March Food Training Services' Contract with the 12 individual LECS within the Scottish Enterprise area, ceased and technical speaking we then should have come under a direct Contract with Scottish Enterprise with an appointed Lead LEC responsible for working with us.

Douglas and I had our first meeting to negotiate the Contract on 28<sup>th</sup> March. The meeting failed to achieve a positive outcome, probably due to the Scottish Enterprise negotiators not being familiar with the skillseeker system. The volume of contracted skillseekers has still to be agreed and Douglas and I are currently checking over our system to ensure we have a complete accuracy of numbers. It is important that we get this right. A further meeting will be held before the end of April when we will be expected to agree and sign a Contract.

At the meeting we were given a copy of Scottish Enterprise's Financial Policy for the year 2002/3. This Policy has been the result of much deliberation between Scottish Enterprise and national Training Providers. The copy given on 28<sup>th</sup> was version four which has to be the final statement for the current contract year.

The new figures are an overall decrease on the average amount Food Training Services were receiving for the year just completed. This is due to our skillseeker numbers being strong in the few LEC areas that paid substantially higher amounts of funding. Had we been strong in more of the weaker areas we may have been more satisfied with the new funding rates!

**MTC Intermediate Certificate Meat & Poultry Management:** Moira stated that Food Training Services were appointed a nominated provider at the end of last year and since then we have been working towards getting candidates registered. The programme is geared more to Meat Plants, although it is designed for supervisors/managers within the retail sector too. However, as the programme involves four tutorials per units (and there are four units) the candidates from butchers' shops would require to come together in a group for these events.

To date we have had enquiries from three meat plants and we hope to be able to start delivering the programme soon.

**Meat Safety Certificate:** In December of last year a mailshot was sent to all Scottish Meat Plants, advising them of the Meat Safety Certificate and our approval to deliver this. Two enquiries were received and one plant has now agreed a date for delivery to 15 people. The other company has indicated an interest in taking it forward later in the summer.

**Training Numbers:** In concluding the report Moira stated that, due to the exercise she and Douglas were conducting on skillseeker numbers, she was in a position to give a report of these. Level 2 Skillseekers 116, Modern Apprentices 50 and Modern Apprentices in the 25+ age group 54. These figures include the Scotbeef Contract but do not take in those Meat Plants who pay for their training.

**LIVESTOCK:** Convenor Jamie Chapman reported that it had been a quiet month on the livestock front. Cattle and sheep prices are fairly consistent with quality stock still commanding good prices. Usually prices start to rise between the end of April and July with the house fed cattle drying up and the grass cattle not yet ready. If there is the predicted shortage of cattle this has yet to be seen! New season lambs are starting to appear at markets with the top quality being seen to sell in the region of £75 for 46kg lambs. There may be a shortage of early lambs, with the traditional early areas, such as Cumbria, being culled out last year.

The large plants continue to avoid the live auction markets, this may be on the instruction of the multiples in their bid to dictate the price to the producers.

Hide prices are rising with up to £30 for cattle and £3.20 for hogs.

In questions to Jamie following the report he confirmed that prices may start to rise by the end of this month. Also that the new season lambs currently available may be lambs from local farms, he expected the Spring lambs to be later this year.

Hamish Deans reported on the Meat Hygiene Policy Forum Meeting that he attended. He remarked that there was a lot of on-going concern displayed regarding the Food Standards Agency taking over the responsibility. FSA appear to be listening more to the Unions than the Meat Hygiene Services and this may mean that a Vet could be monitoring a Meat Hygiene Services Inspector who is monitoring a slaughterman! This is causing unrest amongst the Meat Hygiene Service' Inspectors.

Micro-testing this will commence within large plants in June along with the need to implement HACCP. There have been no firm recommendations on how testing should be done. Smaller plants will require to implement this at a later date. On average the cost of implementation of this could be around £6,000 per year.

Hamish continued by stating that he was aware of reported cases of head meat being identified in products at analytical testing. There is evidence that this had come from Ireland. Hamish stated that manufacturers are importing head meat boning it out and including it in processing. He added that it was not illegal.

At the meeting Hamish had asked about OTM would this phase out and Food Standards Agency could not give a reply on this. Meat Hygiene Services were working on this two years ago, and it as a staged process. It has been on the "back burner", Hamish remarked that it would be a help if this was taken out.

Commenting upon QMS taking over from MLC Hamish remarked that in Wales they were well advanced with the move from MLC, but they had had a lot of assistance from MLC in the process.

Hamish then remarked upon a new Directive from Europe regarding the disposal of blood and added that if it were to be followed this through completely it would do away with blood collection. He then asked Douglas if we received a monthly report from QMS and he replied that an abridged version was circulated to Livestock Committee members giving a market update of animal numbers.

Hamish stated that he had been asked if he was attending the Meat Hygiene Service Industry Forum. He had attended this meeting in the past but stopped going to London because of the cost, which was not subsidised. He remarked that the Forum will be phased out and Food Standards Agency will take over. The meeting agreed that Hamish should attend this meeting and that SFMTA meet the expenses.

The Chief Executive then drew the meeting's attention to an article printed in the Daily Record on Monday, regarding a filthy pig farm run by one of the country's biggest pork producers. The article did not read well and there were serious health concerns regarding the products from these pigs.

The pig company were members of QMS's Farm Assured Scheme but were removed immediately on the awareness of the report. Questions are being asked of QMS why the firm were ever allowed into the scheme and that further investigations are needed on how they remained members. Hamish replied that we cannot just accept this we certainly need to have more information on when they were last inspected and what did the report state. He was concerned that this could impact on other members of Quality schemes, as it belittles the whole aspect of it.

Wilson Ferguson suggested the Chief Executive write to Ross Finnie putting forward a strong complaint and send a copy letter to QMS. He also suggested that we consider writing to the Trade Press giving them information of our letter to Ross Finnie. After further debate the meeting agreed that the Chief Executive should write to QMS and copy the letter to David Crawley of SEERAD and Ross Finnie. It should also be pointed out how issues such as this can impact on the whole industry and that, butchers are at the end of the line having to explain the problems to consumers.

**LEGISLATION:** The Chief Executive opened his report by stating that, following Neil Griffith's presentation at last month's meeting, regarding QUID, he wrote to IRIS and Food Standards Agency in London. He also raised the matter at a Scottish Food Advisory Committee Meeting in Melrose. IRIS have responded saying they will liaise with FSA to give a consolidate response.

Douglas continued with a report from the Scottish Food Advisory Committee Meeting in Melrose. This was the second meeting he had attended and it was very demeaning to note that nothing had happened from the E-Coli Task Force Report. The response from The Scottish Health Department was that they required to get on with things because of Scout and Guide camps etc. coming up soon.

On microbiological safety of food on Mycobacterium Bovis it was pointed out that Scottish figures were blacker than elsewhere, but it was felt that the surveillance bias caused this. Nevertheless, infected cattle were entering the food chain and this was wrong. The committee agreed that they wished the practice to cease, the meat was unfit but not necessarily unsafe. The risk is low, but it was felt that most consumers would choose not to eat meat that had TB. Mike Gibson supported the idea of withdrawal from the food chain, but pointed out that a lot of the cases of TB were in over 30 month cattle.

W Davidson an EHO was not happy about it going into the food chain but said that the routine meat inspection would identify cases. However the question of whom the beef belonged to was significant, as DEFRA would not own the carcasses until legislation was changed.

**BSE in sheep:** the report on the consultation was not yet released. The FSA board is concerned that testing does not work. In the EU millions of animals are being tested and consequently there is an increase in detection. There was concern that these animals were being tested on slaughter and were entering the food chain. There were doubts over the continued importation of over 30 month beef from Poland, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Douglas stated that, although the meeting did consider farmers markets, there was nothing to report because they are waiting for FSA Scotland to respond to the recommendations made by the committee.

The public session was not well attended but Douglas raised the matter of labelling as a consequence of QUID. SFAC recognise that there were problems with the regulations and they would look into the matter further.

He also asked about possible derogation for meat plants, which will supply Farmers Markets and butchers if they cut for Farmers Markets. Hamish remarked that possible new Legislation would put Farmers Markets and other general markets in the same category.

With regard to QUID, President MacKenzie asked the Chief Executive to put in writing a draft response, as it was totally wrong to have products like pate and oxtail soup with no meat in them.

Bruce Brymer suggested that an article be included in the next newsletter asking members to let the Chief Executive know of any markets where meat was being sold. Douglas remarked that the problem of monitoring controls arose because EHOs state there is no money in their budget to cover inspections at markets on Saturdays or Sundays.

Douglas further reported that Food Standards Agency was holding a Traceability Conference on Friday 12 April, but he did not feel it was worthwhile attending. Douglas has, however, asked for a copy of the papers.

**Beef Labelling:** Douglas referred to a letter regarding the Regulations being enforced at retail level. There is evidence of retailers in large supermarkets not meeting the requirements of the Regulations, which includes labelling of meat as Scottish Beef. SEERAD wish to be notified of any identified illegal practices.

**LABOUR CONDITIONS:** In the absence of the Convenor the Chief Executive stated there was nothing further to report since the last meeting.

**PROMOTIONS:** In the absence of Convenor Cheryl Murdoch, the Chief Executive presented the report. Douglas stated that he had had a meeting with Maggie Mitchell from QMS to build on what has happened since our last meeting.

Douglas tabled three papers one referred to the Proposed Role of Quality Meat Scotland, the second was on the Proposals of the Welsh Body and thirdly the English Body – Team England. Any response to these proposals has to be received by 28 May.

Promotions: QMS submission Douglas reminded the meeting of the discussions at a previous meeting when an agreed format for the Independent Butchers' Logo had been identified.

Jamie Chapman raised the question of membership of Specially Select Scotch and the need to sell 100% Scotch Beef. He wondered how the supermarkets could be in this scheme. It was noted that some supermarkets were displaying the SSS banner in front of a cabinet that contained other than Scotch meat. It was felt that the scheme was open to abuse and especially by the larger supermarkets.

Referring to the proposed role for QMS Douglas stated that it was important that the Executive writes down all of the things they want to happen. We need to look at things like Support for Crisis etc. There appears to be nothing in these proposals which suggests that this has been considered. It is imperative that members digest this paper and come back to the next meeting and highlight the gap areas.

**ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:** Wilson Ferguson referred to the Scottish Young Butchers Association, of which he was a Past President. This Association was started some years ago to encourage younger butchers to get involved in some of the Federation activities. However, it appears to have run its course and there is a complete lack of interest. Therefore, it seems pointless to keep it going. Wilson proposed that the Executive Committee agrees to wind up the Scottish Young Butchers Association and that the finances within the Association be transferred to the Federation for Prizes for Young Butchers Competitions. Hamish Deans remarked that this money would require to be ring-fenced for this purpose and not to be included within the Federation accounts. Jamie Chapman seconded the Proposal.

The next Meeting was agreed for 8 May at 2.30 p m.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 16.55 hours with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair. Bruce Brymer submitted his apologies for absence from the next meeting.