



They all did very well creating a good demonstration and encouraging the audience to visit local butchers.

**MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT:** Beaton Lindsay reported.

MEMBERSHIP: 329 members with 86 branches have paid to date. Total of 415 outlets. Membership packs are being sent to Comfort Foods, Rosemarkie.

1 new member Cheynes Quality Foods, Newburgh

Michael Shannon, Damm Delicious has taken over the business of William Glendinning of Charles Alexander & Son, Lanark who has retired due to ill health.

CORPORATE MEMBERS: 17 corporate members have paid to date.

#### REGIONAL MEETINGS

This October SFMTA Regional meetings will be held in conjunction with McAusland Crawford and Kellys Turkeys. Venues have been selected to create the most interest and for the facilities they offer (including us taking our own product in for cooking).

McAusland Crawford have arranged for Chris Musgrave of RAPS UK to give a demonstration on new products. There will be an opportunity to taste the new products at the end of the evening. Paul Kelly and / or Jim Monk will be there from Kellys Turkeys to tell us about what to expect in the Christmas market and to give everyone a taste of their delicious Scottish turkeys.

The awards for the steak pie evaluations will also take place with Douglas Sword of the sponsors Wm Sword attending to do the presentations.

At the Kilmarnock meeting at Braehead Foods there will also be an opportunity to view the sparkling new Cook School and game processing facility.

For that reason the Kilmarnock event will start at 7.00pm.  
All other meetings will start at 7.30pm and all will end at 9.00pm.

In Aberdeen we are delighted to be guests of the Seven Incorporated Trades at Trinity Hall.

These events sponsored through the European Social Fund Projects "Cut It In Scotland" are open to all members and their staff. There is no charge but since we are catering we would like you to tell us how many of you are coming along. Telephone Bruce to reserve spaces.

DATE	VENUE	START TIME
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	Braehead Cook School	7.00pm
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Inverness Caley Stadium	7.30pm
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Trinity Hall, Aberdeen	7.30pm
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Stair Arms Hotel, Pathhead	7.30pm

#### SFMTA AGM

The venue has been booked at the Conference Room of United Auctions Mart, Stirling on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November. Finance business to be considered at 12. Lunch with guests at 1.00pm and AGM to follow.

#### NORTHERN IRELAND TRIP

Seven SFMTA members will be taking part in a fact finding trip to Northern Ireland next week to visit eight shops including two shops that reached the final of the Meat Trades Journal's Butchers Shop of the Year in 2008 and 2009.

Douglas Scott reported that a group of Irish butchers will be visiting in the first week of October. Arthur Matthew is unavailable to assist as he is away that week.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:** Sandra Giddy reported.

**TRAINEE NUMBERS:** We have an increase again in trainee numbers with 319 trainees currently registered through SMT. We have 86 funded trainees in Lowland region and 27 funded in Highland region, 105 funded in Northern Ireland and 13 in North East England. We have one privately funded trainee and the remainder are ESF.

As you see, the increase in numbers is in all the regions in which we operate. Since April, a total of 43 trainees have completed their Level 2 SVQ or NVQ.

**SDS CONTRACT 2009-2010:** SDS training database is now fully functional after a ten week delay caused by the fact that the new qualifications and level 2 Modern Apprenticeships were not included on SDS spreadsheets which meant that we were unable to register trainees and progress their qualifications.

This delay, combined with the changes to the milestone payment plans for the revised qualifications has been the main cause of the knock on effect of a slow down in monies available to claim from SDS.

A further 7800 Modern Apprenticeship places have been made available by the Scottish Government and we were invited to tender for additional starts. Based on information from members and from our Assessors a bid for 33 extra start places has been submitted. Results will be announced within two weeks.

**ESF H&I PROJECT CUTTING IT IN SCOTLAND 2009-2013:** ESF funding for our training project in Highlands and Islands area of Scotland is enabling us to continue to support the Craft Certificate qualifications in the area and also to support businesses with short courses and training.

**ESF LUPS PROJECT CUTTING IT IN SCOTLAND 2009-2013:** Now that the project is confirmed, we are resuming service to the existing ESF trainees in the region and will also be able to offer to support businesses with short courses and training which we have been unable to provide during 2008.

If you have members of staff who you feel would benefit from our training services, then please do contact this office.

**MEAT SKILLS COMPETITION – NORTHERN IRELAND:** 8 finalists will go forward to the Meat Skills Competition Final event which is to be held in Templepatrick on 6<sup>th</sup> September. Meat is sponsored by NIMEA and chickens by Rockvale Poultry. John Proctor of Dunbia representing Meat Training Council who have put £2000 into the event, will present the prizes to the winners on the day.

We have 41 trainees who have now completed the level 2 NVQ component of their ApprenticeshipNI and these have all been invited to attend a presentation event on the day. A representative from Food and Drink Sector Skills, our funding partner, will present the certificates

**ILA SCOTLAND:** We are now a registered training provider under ILA Scotland and can now offer training courses such as our Food Safety Level 2 and HACCP level 2 and level 3 to the general public as well as to members.

To apply, persons earning up to £22,000 can contact ILA Scotland who will send out documentation to be completed and sent back to them along with 3 current wage slips and once processed funding tokens are issued up to the value of £200 which are exchanged for courses of your choice.

What this means is that eligible candidates will have their training courses such as the HACCP course and the Food Safety course funded by ILA Scotland. Information about our courses is available online at [www.ilascotland.org.uk](http://www.ilascotland.org.uk).

**FOOD SAFETY COURSE:** This course continues to be popular with the drop-in exams proving to be a bonus for those candidates who find it difficult to take time off their work for a day course. Our office remains open till 7pm on designated exam days to accommodate.

**INTERMEDIATE HACCP LEVEL 3:** This course is now booked for Stirling in October – places are still available and anyone interested should contact Claire. We have dates for another Intermediate HACCP course on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November. If candidates come forward we will locate the course to suit them. If insufficient candidates come forward we will cancel the November booking.

**FINANCE REPORT:** Douglas Scott reported.

**MEMBER SERVICES:** Projected income of £141K with expenditure of £93K part of the surplus is the £10k Dalziel money which will be spent before the end of 2009, executive travel expenses have still to be paid out, we are £4K light on spending on advertising and promotions.

**SCOTTISH MEAT TRAINING:** Income has been slow on all fronts except ESF claim in the lowlands and Uplands for £21K which went in as we were given the go ahead. The Highlands & Islands ESF income is £32K for the year. The Skills Development Scotland is £45k below our predicted spend in Scottish Enterprise area for the reasons which Sandra has highlighted. He said that the assessors were kicked every week to get the income. SDS is also wanting us to spend the money so it is not for the want of trying. The Irish one is well below budget forecasting £115k on the year, principally because there are 41 trainees have not completed their modern apprenticeship it would then be worth another £1,000 per head. We are sure that they will get their act together and the essential skills part of the qualification will be delivered. We have £4,500 from England. The income looks like £331k with expenditure of £335K making a £4k loss on the year which is better than the £92k loss last year. On the expenditure side there is nothing there unexpected. The problem with the accounts is the slow income stream

Douglas past round a sponsorship form for Scott Jarron who is doing a 50 mile cycle for charity.

**LIVESTOCK REPORT:** Alan Kennedy reported.

Given the fact that most, if not all, members have reported a slow summer, the shortage of live supplies seems to be the main reason for continual high prices. This in turn is making life very difficult for members who wish to do promotions to try to boost trade, and there seems to be little prospect of any improvement.

The NFUS held a meeting on August 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss this problem, but this cannot help matters in the short term. Bluetongue restrictions are also hampering live supplies.

On a slightly more positive note, at least cattle prices are not much higher than a year ago. I am assuming that this is because a slow trade is limiting demand, and a small strengthening of the Pound against the Euro has also taken the edge off the export trade.

I know that the examples of price that I quote are not ideal for everyone they only work fully if you sell nothing other than whole sides of beef. However, one or two trends have started to appear. The middle cuts (especially fillets) are the same or lower than last year, and some good deals are to be had by haggling with wholesalers.

Deadweight sides are showing a year on year rise of about 3%, vacuum packed cuts only around 1%. This again points to some high stocks at wholesalers, who will, albeit reluctantly, cut price to get sales especially on large quantities.

Lambs now cost less both live and dead than last year, again this could be the effect of both a stronger Pound plus slack demand, and, again, the expensive cuts are relatively good value.

Pork has, at least for the time being, stopped rising, thanks probably again to a weaker Euro. This is also reflected in the price of bacon.

Looking forward, we have to hope that the relatively quiet demand domestically for livestock will peg back any further price rises because scarcity of good stock is going to become a major problem. Lack of supply is also going to cause real difficulties for the larger wholesalers, as they will be unable to sustain economic throughput, so buying boxed beef is not going to be an alternative- buying live will always be more cost effective anyway!

Suggestion – wholesalers' price comparison page on SFMTA website (Members only), updated weekly by suppliers – links from SFMTA website to Premier/Mathers/Miller etc. This will allow people to do comparisons, especially for people who are loyal to one wholesaler.

Finally, Forfar mart price averages on 26<sup>th</sup> August

Steers – 181.3ppk  
Heifers 181.8ppk  
Hides £11.50  
Skins £0.50

Jamie Chapman said prices were a bit dearer today with 53 cattle. Hides for him are £17 and 70p for lambskins.

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Douglas asked if price lists were online, Alan Kennedy said no but if you phone up for a price list they will be sent to you. Jamie Chapman said that they could be told that 300 to 400 customers would look at it. Douglas said it was information that members had requested. Andy McGowan said the Scotch Beef Cattle Association have looked at the deadweight prices of the big plants paying farmers and the farmer passes the information on to them. He suggested that you could get individual members to pass the information to the office. Hamish Deans said the one difficulty of blanket pricing is the quality of the product. It is okay for on the bone but there is difficulties when you start to vacuum pack you may get the odd cow rump put in. Blanket pricing is not always the answer, he said the reason the butcher deals with the same wholesaler is they know what will be provided to them.

John Chapman said that livestock went up in price and a lot of females went to Europe for breeding. He asked if this was still going on. Andy McGowan suggested that most of the continent numbers were in decline. A lot of the changes in the last 2 to 3 years have been what EU countries have done with the CAP reform with them not doing anything before the first 18 months of it coming in.

Alan Kennedy said that a farmer both Jamie and himself buy from last year he was averaging £2 kilo and is only getting £1.89 this year. Alan thought maybe the wholesalers were buying cattle for throughput.

Hamish Deans said that there are different dressing standards at different abattoirs and three have been checked and the difference between best and worst was 5%. This is why it is difficult with blanket pricing.

BUY A BEAST WEEK: Andrew Wright was very keen on the idea. He has not progressed it far but asked for executive members to help to update the costing sheets for buying cattle. We had one auctioneer who was concerned about standing on other buyer's toes. Alan Kennedy had

volunteered to help. Alan Kennedy said we could also suggest that a beast could be bought for a member. Hamish Deans said that would be sensible as the biggest deterrent was time away from the shop to go to the market.

TB FREE STATUS: Douglas meeting at Pentland House. They were worried about testing south of the border not happening. The price would then drop; there would be a shortage north of the border. He could not see there was an issue. Andy McGowan said the concern is if they get a positive then they are stuffed. So if they are tested as soon as they come up there is a similar situation there. Hamish Deans said that we have to get TB out of the herd in the long term if we do not do anything about it is only going to get worse. Because it does not affect the eating quality of the meat it is not been addressed.

**PROMOTIONS REPORT:** Duncan Mackenzie reported.

POSTERS: Three new posters have been printed and sent out to members. These were themed to Scottish Food Fortnight and Eat Scottish Venison. The design work on both was minimal since that was provided and so cost was just printing, packing and posting.

DALZIEL PROMOTION: The production of a DVD showing cooking techniques for basic cuts of meat is progressing. As reported in June, Paul Mann in Edinburgh will look after the production.

Sandy Crombie has spent many hours writing the script and brief for content. The University of Abertay in Dundee has agreed to provide a demonstrator. Anne Colquhoun, Divisional Leader/Senior Lecturer, was our original choice but on her recommendation a lady graduate a little younger than Anne has been chosen to front the DVD. She is mid 20s and has butcher contacts in her family. Her accent is Scottish but hard to identify her origins in Arbroath. The demonstration kitchens at Abertay will be used for filming since they are large and bright and there is a seriously large amount of prep work required that students can provide. Date for filming 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November.

SCOTTISH STEAK PIE EVALUATION: This was held at Perth College on 13<sup>th</sup> August. In the Traditional Steak Pie category 29 gold awards and 35 silvers were awarded but in the Speciality Steak Pie category there are only 13 gold awards and 21 silvers. 174 pies were received for evaluation of which 89 were in the Speciality category.

Among the 18 judges were Radio Tay presenters Maureen Young from the *Ally and Mo Show* and Stuart Webster from Tay FMs *Wake up with Webster*.

The regional winners in the Traditional Steak Pie category were mystery shopped last week and six experts from Food Innovation at Abertay selected the winner. Judges were drawn from a large area of background in the food industry and came originally from Fife, West Lothian, two from the West of Scotland, an Irish woman and a Dutchman. They were unanimous in selecting the winner. The awards will be presented by Douglas Sword of the sponsors at the Regional Meetings in October.

SCOTCH PIE CLUB: Entry Forms are now in circulation for the 2010 Scotch Pie Club World Championships to be held at Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November. Presentation lunch will also be held there on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November. The SFMTA President normally gets an invitation to attend. Douglas has also helped the Scotch Pie Club recently to launch their website – [www.scotchpieclub.co.uk](http://www.scotchpieclub.co.uk) where previous winners and awards can be viewed as well as holding downloads of Entry Forms and Conditions.

BUTCHERS SHOP OF THE YEAR: The Meat Trades Journal is running the 2009 Butchers Shop of the Year Awards again this year with the Scottish element sponsored by the Scotch Butchers Club. Members were encouraged to enter and raise as many entrants as possible from Scotland. Kieran McAtamney in Ballymena also received some guidance and we have heard that he has made the final.

**FUTURE POSTER PROMOTION:** Christmas, New Year and Burns Night are now on the promotions horizon and if members have any new ideas that they would like covered please let us know.

**PINK FRIDAYS:** We will not be going ahead with the same aprons as last year. We are waiting for another suggestion from the print company as we have only an order for 34 aprons.

**QMS UPATE:** Andy McGowan reported.

The Scottish Pork promotion was on over the summer. We have now started on lamb, taking advantage of how the rates for advertising on STV have tumbled. This is taking place through September and Scotch Butcher Club members should have their packs. October and November will focus on beef. In the middle of this month we will be endorsing pork by SSPCA and branding alongside the QMS assurance scheme. The launch is a combination of ASDA and Broxburn also the Guild of Q. It is linked to all the pig farms in Scotland so it is not a supermarket thing or a butchers thing. Robertson, Ramsays or Vion Broxburn will be involved in coverage; any other plants please let Andy McGowan know. There are 12 SSPCA inspectors so it can be organised in a day or so. Chinese state vets are visiting this weekend with a view to reopening the market to China for things we tend not to eat.

The project on fat and salt levels in butchers' products is being pulled together for a public procurement exercise on the 29<sup>th</sup> October. We will have around that time a technical recipe manual.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter project, there are 15 topics of common interest. There are up to 6 page guides on certain things, in other words if you are operating an abattoir, alternative ways of meat inspection, processing or presenting offal to the market. Most of the abattoirs should have a hard copy of it. He can also make available electronic versions of it.

On Friday evening a programme "Mud,Sweat and Tractors" will be broadcast on BBC2. Friday is on beef and is following two farmers with interesting footage. Ian Faulds said he had seen it first time round.

There are two new members of the processing scheme, Caithness and Brechin.

Douglas Scott said that SFMTA are having a meeting with Donald Biggar, Jim Royan and Uel Morton on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**LABOUR CONDITIONS REPORT:** Douglas Scott reported.

We have been getting regular monthly reports from Peninsula and these show that we are about on average what we predicted usage would be. The subjects they have covered, disciplinary procedures, holiday entitlement, redundancy, resignations, sickness absence, sickness medical reports, statutory sick pay and terms and conditions. We have heard no complaints from members of Peninsula. Bruce McCall said their Employment Law training course was excellent and recommended to attend.

**LEGISLATION REPORT:** Douglas Scott reported.

**SCOTTISH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** a report on the last meeting about red meat was reported in the newsletter. Another meeting of the committee was held today. The Scottish Food and Drink policy was discussed, by and large looking at all sectors and the good of the food industry. We will probably see a skills academy come out of it. A report was circulated on the meeting. Country of origin was not progressing but is of great public interest. Information to consumers on pack Douglas thought if they get their act together they would be looking for similar information for loose. UK appears to be acting as a guinea pig for Europe for on pack labeling.

The iron in health issue, there is a SFAC response to it and it asks where they get the recommendations from based on colorectal cancer when they were meant to be looking at the effect of iron on diet. We were looking for a message 'eat more red meat' because it is good for your iron intake but there is still a chance of it.

FOOD HYGIENE INFORMATION SCHEME: The pilot was run in five areas with others in Scotland keen to start it. In England they have different star schemes in different parts of the country and they cannot agree if it should be 3,4 or 5 star. The Scottish scheme is being discussed at a meeting next week he is attending. Douglas was interested in the members' views of the pass, fail scheme currently in operation. Beaton Lindsay he said there is no problem. Douglas said that he has not heard any complaints from members.

MINCE: FSA wrote to Douglas on 17<sup>th</sup> August about mince regulations. It was a requirement for approved premises that mince be no older than six days according to EU regulation. The UK has worked without any derogation at all but basically ignored the regulation. Since the FVO visit it was noted that the UK was not complying. We have a number of emails from members. Douglas felt it was impossible to operate. He circulated the pink sheet of the points he had noted important

Scotland has built a worldwide reputation for quality foods and meat is prominent in the list of recognized and requested products. This to no small extent is based on the fact that we hang our meat on the bone often for up to a month. Supermarkets in the 1980's questioned the need for this but now nearly all are offering premium products based on the fact that carcasses have been hung.

Unfortunately we have to hang the whole carcass to get the maximum benefit from this process but often it is only the better cuts that enjoy the premium especially if the meat is going to be exported.

It is vital to the economics that all fit meat can be marketed and a proportion of that will be minced. To lose this ability would be to undermine the very process that makes our products so sought after, often to countries without the breeding base or discipline to follow such traditional methods.

With the best will in the world sourcing sufficient meat to mince within the number of days restriction is extremely difficult and bound to create supply problems.

The logistics of wholesalers and abattoirs delivering meat fresh enough to comply with the number of days between slaughter and mincing is very hard and near impossible at times of public holidays that stretch over weekends.

Those contractors delivering meat to butchers are now looking closely at their transport costs and can limit deliveries, even to those of the size of approved premises, to weekly. An increase in frequency of deliveries would be contrary to climate change objectives.

Restricting supply will put pressure on price with meat more than six days old being down valued since it is not suitable for approved premises to mince. Further pressure comes on supply should there be a downturn in demand for mincing beef for reasons of weather or festive period.

A build up of mincing beef usually occurs in late December but at the start of January the opposite is the case. A minimum number of day allowed for mincing severely distorts the traditional and efficient operation of the market.

Farmers and those supplying farmers markets very often have their beef boned and processed at approved premises. We would anticipate that their beef would require mincing within the stipulated time period.

The stipulation over number of days until mincing will greatly disadvantage catering butchers who are approved in competition with smaller retail butchers who are not. Cost of compliance will force up mince prices from approved premises. A hotel or restaurant might change to sourcing its mince

from a smaller supplier so at the end of the day the consumer would still be supplied minced meat over six days from slaughter. What one might ask is the point of such regulation?

There is also to my knowledge no pathological or epidemiological evidence to link this process with ill health. The regulation exists because of the nature of consuming mince on the continent. Mince in the UK is not eaten raw and I would be extremely surprised if minced meat is ever exported out of the country. For that reason in itself we see no need for the regulation.

In short we would be substantially economically and logistically compromised should this derogation not be allowed.

Douglas said the regulation only affected approved premises but even still he felt it would be very difficult to comply with it. Hamish Deans said that it should not be of interest to Europe since no mince is exported. Douglas added that George Jarron in his letter suggested a PGI for Scottish mince with a definition that it is over 6 days old.

#### **ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:**

Stuart Christie asked if everyone had received the brochure of Dalziel promoting Namibian beef. Ian Faulds phoned up and asked about it but did not get the prices from them. Stuart Christie said the rep had apparently received a lot of flack about it.

Stuart Christie said his audit at his plant about the Class 2 and 3 materials going in the same bin. De Mulder takes it away in one lorry and it is made into bio fuel. He came up with the idea to store it in a freezer and hire a lorry to take it to Fife. He wondered if anyone else had any problems with it. Andy McGowan felt it all could be treated as Cat 2. Andy McGowan suggested discussing it with John Goodman.

Hamish Deans said they have been circulated how MHS are going to implement draconian actions with plants not complying with documentation and practices. He has replied from the plant in quite strong terms, he received a letter back and he has sent a more serious letter, it is about us accepting new legislation and take preliminary causes which used to put you into court build up a case against you so they can practically close you down without going to court. We should always maintain as an industry if there is a difference of opinion we could go to court and it would help to keep them on their toes.

The initial change over now there would be no increase in MHS charges this going from a number based charge agreed throughout Europe to a time based charge and the difference is chalk and cheese. He said it will increase his charges three fold. He said they are not even OVS coming now they are OV now. He said it will put his costs up £70k per year. John Chapman suggested all the small abattoirs should have a meeting.

Duncan Mackenzie said that the MRC Sweet Chilli and the Mediteranean Tomato and Caper sauces are both gluten free sauces and are proving very popular with coeliac, there are not many sauces on the market which are gluten free.

Duncan Mackenzie said the Metro had an article about a film about a butcher. The offshoot of it is a lot of butchers are doing a lot of demonstration on how to prepare, venison, pigs, poultry. B & Q are now selling pig sties and this seems to have sparked it off.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday 21 October 2009

There was no further business and the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the chair.