Federation News

The Newsletter for Scotland's Craft Butchers

SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF MEAT TRADERS

FEBRUARY 2013

Rare Competition

This is the time of year when butchers have the opportunity to enter into competition. Enclosed with this publication are entry forms for Meat Skills Scotland, the 2013 Craft Butcher awards and a new idea – a Premium Sausage evaluation - to encourage butchers to make high meat content sausages.

The Meat Skills Scotland competition is sponsored by the Scotch Butchers Club meaning all eight finalists making it through to the finals at the Scottish Meat Trade Fair in Perth on Sunday 12th May. There are two categories – over and under 22 years of age. Entries close on Wednesday 20th February.

The Craft Butcher Awards will be judged in mid March and prizes presented at the Trade Fair. This will include a Poultry Products evaluation and an evaluation for Venison Products. Both these competitions are sponsored by Colin Hewitson from KRH Ltd. Lucas Ingredients have also stepped in to sponsor our Beefburger evaluation which is always popular and will again include mystery shopping to establish the overall winner.

New for 2013 is the Premium Sausage evaluation. QMS have promoted this helping with the judging, prizes and testing of the award winners. We know that it is tricky to come up with a good blend when increasing the meat content so winners will attract considerable interest in the trade, media and from customers. There are categories for both Pork and Beef examples.

At the Trade Fair there will be the usual Haggis and Pork Sausage competitions. Also there will be the launch of a Dalesman sponsored idea to come up with a special sausage for Sausage Week. Later in the year there will be a Steak Pie and Speciality Pie evaluation.

The aim of all this activity is to highlight craft butchers as manufacturers of top quality meat products.

Featured this month:-

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Telephone advice on Health & Safety is available to SFMTA members by phoning 0560 3468085 or by email: **SFMTA@nhasco.com**
You will need the reference number on the yellow introductory sheet that was enclosed in the November newsletter on phone SFMTA on 01738 637472 for it.

SFMTA Executive

President Ian Faulds has invited any member who would like to get more involved in the workings of the Federation to come along and hear more at the SFMTA Executive Meetings that are held in Perth every second month. At the January meeting the President welcomed Paul Boyle from Boghall Butchers who took up the invitation. Paul said that he was amazed by the extensive work undertaken on the members behalf.

Below are some of the recent meetings where SFMTA represented the industry. Many of the reports of these meetings are posted on the SFMTA Members Only website under External Meetings.

SFDF Apprenticeships Seminar, Edinburgh on Thursday 25th October
There was an audience of around 30, mainly employers but also parties interested in training heard Caroline Fox, Policy Manager, Food & Drink Federation gave overview of Scotland's Food and Drink Industry. [It provides 21% of total industry turnover in Scotland – the largest manufacturing sector.] Gerry McBride from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) was ill so his presentation was read out. SDS was formed in 2008, bring together careers, skills, training and funding services.

Skills Scotland, Edinburgh on Thursday 30th October
One of three large careers events where it was noticed that the Food and Drink presence and attractiveness could be improved. This to be taken up with both QMS and SFDF but ultimate responsibility lies with Improve, the Sector Skills Council.

Scot Gov Animal Health Stakeholder Meeting, Edinburgh on Monday 20th November.
This is a group that SFMTA are pleased to be involved with, thankfully most of the time the business is of a nature – animal diseases – which does not directly affect members.

Food Standards Agency Pre Consultation Event, Edinburgh Tuesday 21st November.
This was reported on in the last Newsletter but the Federation will seek to be actively involved in the creation of the New Food Body in Scotland. Meetings will be arranged with Charles Milne, Director of FSA in Scotland and Ian McWatt who is in charge of meat inspection.

Cross Party Food Group, Holyrood, Tuesday 21st November
Topic was presented by Food For Life that promotes a quality mark for meals eaten outside the home called a Catering Mark. This is in use at East Ayrshire Council, Highland and Stirling Councils.

Support Training Action Group, Holyrood, Tuesday 4th December
Most interesting part of what was a fairly heavy meeting was presentation about Certificates of Work Readiness. This is a SDS project to provide employers with a standard which shows that an individual has demonstrated the skills, attributes and behaviours required in the workplace.

SAMW Seminar and New Year Lunch, Edinburgh, Friday 11th January 2013
Attended by President and Chief Executive. Good networking event with two interesting presentations reported further into this newsletter.

Customer Connect - Meetings with Finbarr Malone, Leith, Perth, Braehead on Tuesday 15th January 2013. This was a presentation of an electronic customer loyalty card scheme that is popular with butchers in the Republic of Ireland. Three members attended at each venue and a couple intend to take the idea on. See article on page 14.

Horsemeat found in supermarket burgers

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has launched an investigation after the Irish food authority discovered traces of horsemeat and pig DNA in beef burgers on sale in the UK.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) found horse DNA in 10 of the 27 beef burgers they tested. They found pig DNA in 23 of the burgers. The burgers were on sale in Tesco and Iceland in the UK and Dunnes Stores, Lidl and Aldi in the Republic of Ireland.

One of the Tesco burgers contained 29 per cent horsemeat. The meat came from three plants: Liffey Meats and Silvercrest Foods in Ireland and the Dalepak Hambleton plant in North Yorkshire.

The FSA said it was urgently investigating how 'a number of beef products' on sale in the UK and Republic of Ireland came to contain some traces of horse and pig DNA.

Jenny Morris, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's principal policy officer, said investigators would need to look at the supply chain in the affected businesses.

'For me the issue reinforces the importance of supply chain checking - any problems there will potentially compromise food safety further down the line. There are different issues for large and small businesses. Traceability will be a key factor,' she said.

Tim Lang, professor of food policy at City University in London, said that he knew of no safety implications, but that it raised 'deep concerns'.

'Firstly, is it fraud? No label declared the horsemeat or traces of pig DNA. Secondly, it appears to be adulteration, a cheaper meat being substituted for a more expensive one. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, this exposes failings in commercial food governance,' he said.

Big retailers, he said, are supposedly in control of the food system, yet their management and contracts and specifications have been found wanting. Retailers understandably are saying this is a matter of their suppliers. These were own-label products, we are told. If I was on their boards of directors I'd want an overhaul of their commercial governance on meat products,' he said.

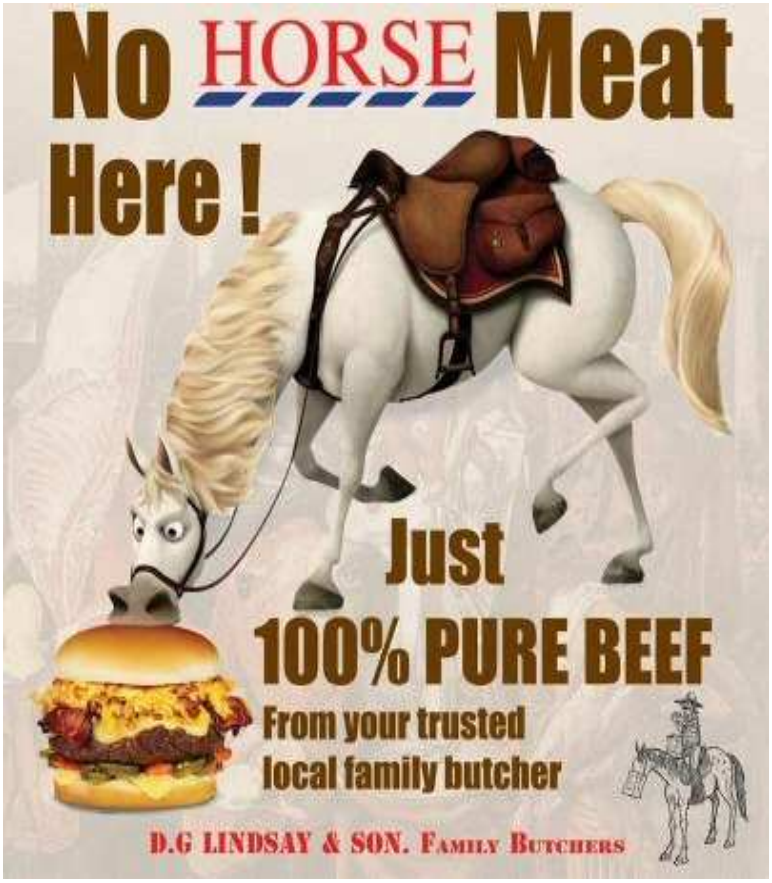
He added that the state system of food governance had worked. 'The authorities audited and exposed the failures. Good for them. Finally, we need to remember that many cultures eat horse quite safely. But if fraud and adulteration are found, it's a sign that standards are either stretched or weakening,' said Mr Lang.

Alan Reilly, FSAI chief executive, said although the findings posed no risk to public health they raised concerns.

'While there is a plausible explanation for the presence of pig DNA in these products due to the fact that meat from different animals is processed in the same meat plants, there is no clear explanation at this time for the presence of horse DNA in products emanating from meat plants that do not use horsemeat in their production process,' he said.

The FSAI also tested 31 beef meal products including cottage pie, beef curry pie and lasagne. They found 21 contained pig DNA.

SFMTA Members Response



Above: Robertsons of Broughty Ferry
Left upper: Scott Brothers, Dundee
Left lower: DG Lindsays in Perth

Quality Meat Scotland statement: Chairman, Jim McLaren, said:

"Our industry is absolutely committed to protecting the integrity of our Scotch Beef brand and we take great pride in the world-leading traceability we have in place.

"The quality assurance schemes in Scotland guarantee Scotch Beef comes from cattle born, reared and slaughtered in Scotland.

"Ensuring consumers have absolute confidence in our labels is at the heart of our assurance process which includes traceability from birth to slaughter, with our processing assurance checks particularly focused on labelling integrity.

"Despite the media interest I'm pleased to say shoppers have understood the clear message from health officials that there is no food safety risk and the feedback we are receiving from meat retailers is one of business as usual."

Tesco apologises to customers

Tesco has apologised to its customers following the discovery of horse meat in some beef burgers on its shelves. It has now withdrawn the implicated products, which were produced by Silvercrest Foods, part of the ABP Food Group.

Tesco Technical Director Tim Smith and former FSA Chief Executive said:
"Our investigation of the supplier will cover in great detail exactly what happened, who was responsible for it and just exactly how long this has been going on. It is critical we get to the bottom of those facts to ensure that it never happens again.

"There are really only two ways this could happen. One of them involves illegality by suppliers, or suppliers to those individual suppliers, or gross negligence, in which case we are still very keen to get to the bottom of this."

He also said the company will not be taking products from that producer until the investigation has reached a satisfactory conclusion.

'We are working with the authorities in Ireland and the UK, and with the supplier concerned, to urgently understand how this has happened and how to ensure it does not happen again,' he said.

The chronology of events leading up to the announcement.
77 ingredient products had been targeted in a Food Safety Authority of Ireland authenticity survey.
The first samples were taken in mid-November by the FSAI and more testing at the end of the month led to samples being sent abroad for analysis.
On 21 December, the Department of Agriculture and the FSAI took samples of ingredients from some processors in Ireland.
Those results were received by the FSAI on Friday 11th January and the department was told on the following Monday afternoon.
The Cabinet was told by Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney in advance of the results being made public.
The minister said the FSAI and the Government had waited until they had the full facts before informing the public of the test results.
He said there was no food safety issue involved and they needed to be sure of the content of the burgers involved before going public.
Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin said the reliability of food labelling has been put in doubt by the revelations.
Mr Martin said that those buying cheaper meat products were entitled to the same food safety and traceability assurances as those able to afford expensive cuts.

Where did it come from?
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, announced on Saturday 26 January that an joint investigation between his department and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) had made a "major breakthrough", after raw materials from Poland used in burger production at Silvercrest were found to contain "significant levels" of equine DNA.

Further testing of the Polish ingredient showed up to 20% horse DNA relative to beef, leading the Minister to come to the "firm conclusion" that the raw material was the source of the equine DNA found in burgers manufactured at Silvercrest. He added that all samples taken from Irish ingredients were negative for horse DNA.

More controls on meat processing sought
The Irish Farmers' Association has called for more rigorous testing of third party products introduced into the food chain during meat processing.

New Year boost to the Lucas Butchers Classic Sausage Mixes range…

Five Fantastic NEW Sausage Mixes!

Lucas Ingredients has just launched a lip-smacking FIVE new flavours to complement its existing range of Butchers Classic Sausage Mixes.

The new flavours include improved recipes for **Pork & Apple** and **Pork & Chive** mixes, as well as the more exotic, contemporary mixes for **Chilli & Coriander, Cajun and Smokey Barbecue Sausage Mixes.**

Like all Butchers Classic Sausage Mixes, the new flavours are made from the finest ingredients and have been created to suit the needs of the UK's retail butchery trade. They comply with the 2010 Department of Health regulations on salt levels and contain no MSG.

But that's not all: For a limited time only, Lucas is offering customers a Trial Pack containing all 5 new Butchers Classic Sausage Mix flavours for just £10 per Pack.

The pack will feature one sachet each of Chilli & Coriander, Smokey Barbecue, Cajun, Pork & Apple and Pork & Chive Sausage Mixes. Enough for butchers to make up a trial batch of sausages for them and their customers to try.

To order a trial pack, customers simply need to contact their usual Lucas distributor, or visit **www.lucas-ingredients.co.uk** and complete the enquiry form.
For more information, butchers may call the Lucas free Customer Care line on 0800 138 5837.

Florida Villa to rent

Enclosed in a peaceful gated community, and overlooking a picturesque lake, Briarwood Villa is an ideal setting for those who wish to soak in the relaxing atmosphere of Naples. With three bedroom and two bathrooms, the villa's features also include well-appointed, luxurious rooms, a private solar-heated screened pool and spacious lanai area, and a large double garage.
See more at **http://briarwoodvilla.com** and to negotiate a very good discount contact Stewart Collins by email at **stewart.collins@talktalk.net**

Seeking Customers

As many of you will have read in the January 2013 SFMTA Newsletter, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Associations hosted four regional meetings in November 2012 to explore and discuss the opportunities and challenges facing butchers during the current economic climate.

At the meetings, butchers listened to research presented by Jack Broussine, QMS Marketing Executive, exploring how red meat buyers view and use a butcher shop to purchase red meat products. Butchers were then split into small groups to discuss the findings of the research and how the sector should respond.

Each group was asked a series of questions relating to the research, asked to discuss these and write down their feedback. Below is a summary of responses and a fuller version is enclosed for you to see all the views that were expressed.

1. How do you encourage shoppers to come back time and time again?

Modern consumers use butchers but also other forms of retail. The groups decided to see how they could increase consumer's loyalty to the retail sector i.e. the butcher sector. Four themes were identified as being essential in encouraging customers to increase their visits to butchers shops: Product quality and diversity; helpful and knowledgeable staff; store environment/access; and loyalty schemes.

Product Quality and Diversity

- The diverse range of quality products available from a butcher shop were regarded by all the groups as something which should be leveraged to encourage customers to return.
- Shoppers need to be reminded that butchers not only offer quality, locally produced products, but that there is a product to suit every budget and occasion - not just a special occasion.
- Butchers should look at adapting their pricing structure to ensure the customer is comfortable with what they are buying and how much they are spending. This may mean pricing per 100g as well as per 1k or showing the unit price for a joint or steak of meat
- Special offers, meal packs and increasing the range of convenience food were seen as an opportunity to increase sales.

Helpful and Knowledgeable Staff

- The importance of staff was recognised as a key point by all groups. Ensuring that the customer has the best possible experience when visiting the butcher shop will encourage them to return.
- Butchers should provide a personal service, sharing the knowledge of the product and how to use it with the customer.
- One group commented that butchers need to train all counter staff in customer relations so that they are able to make customers feel at ease.

Store Environment/Access

- A group highlighted that in order to stand out from the supermarkets there is a need to have a clean shop and a good display.
- Where convenience and access are an issue, free delivery, late night opening, and flexible opening hours could be offered.

Loyalty Schemes

- Generating loyalty amongst new and long term users was seen as key to encouraging the shopper to return time and time again.
- Loyalty card schemes, where shoppers are rewarded for their repeat custom and further communication by email is an option. This can range from simply providing new customers with a stamp card on their first visit or investing in customer loyalty software.
- Loyalty schemes will usually allow you to contact your customers on going with current offers and highlighted products.

How could you better understand what your customer thinks about you and your product?

- Surveys or one-to-one communication was suggested.
- Butchers could use a suggestion box, offer a prize draw in return for completing a survey, use social media, ask customers to taste and rate new products, ask for feedback on previous purchase and generally, ask the customer what they would like more of.
- One group suggested that butchers should study what their customers buy. This was echoed in a number of the case studies, were presenting butchers analysed their sales on an on-going basis.

Where do you think QMS and SFMTA could help you to communicate and understand your customers?

There were four areas where attendees thought QMS and SFMTA could provide support: staff training; disseminating research and sharing ideas; community involvement and education; POS and promotion.

Staff Training: Help with staff training on customer service skills and modern marketing techniques.

Disseminating Research and Sharing Ideas: Distribution of relevant market research to help members make informed decisions and the continuation of regular regional meetings where ideas can be shared.

Community Involvement and Education: Assistance to educate the next generation of shoppers through collaborative projects in schools and local community in conjunction with QMS, SFMTA and local butchers.

POS/Promotion: Continue to provide a variety of point of sale materials to help educate customers as well as help to emphasise butchers strengths to the public.

Overall the groups felt that meeting to exchange views was extremely helpful and it reassured some butchers that they were not dealing with issues on their own.

Some participants have asked for the possibility to meet every other year, creating a business forum which will focus on the butchery sector. QMS and the SFMTA are considering how best to reflect these suggestions within their respective strategies and will factor these into future planning.

National Butchers' Week – 4th to 10th March

With the ongoing challenge to recruit young people into the butchery business, National Butchers' Week represents a great opportunity for the trade to promote itself as a great place to pursue a career, and not necessarily just one for the boys.

As a trade that has traditionally been dominated by men, we're seeing a small, but growing number of women coming into the industry to train as butchers and this year's National Butchers' Week will throw a spotlight on that trend, as well as highlighting the vital importance of the high street butcher within the community.

Ed Bedington, editor of the *Meat Trades Journal* (MTJ), which organises the week, said: "We often hear butchers talking about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining young men into their businesses, but how many have considered encouraging women beyond the counter? There are plenty of ladies working in butchers' shops, serving customers, but we're now starting to see increasing numbers of women going further back into the shop and picking up a knife.

"With an increasing consumer focus on food and provenance, we're seeing more women becoming interested in butchery techniques, and we think it's something the trade should encourage. Not only does it open up a wider pool for butchers to recruit from, but can potentially bring new perspectives to your business."

As well as highlighting the opportunities for a career, National Butchers' Week is all about shouting about the trade and putting the spotlight on why consumers should be using their local butcher's shop.

MTJ will be urging all butchers to think of activity to draw attention to their business during the week, from special offers and tastings, to carrying out events in the local community. Materials are available at www.nationalbutchersweek.co.uk for download, and include national curriculum-based lesson plans involving butchery, which can be used to encourage interest from local schools. The week would not be possible without support from sponsors, which include Eblex, Bpex, Lucas Ingredients and The Dalesman Group.

Bedington added: "We'll be keen to hear your plans for the week. Also if you are, or employ female staff, let us know – we're keen to hear their views on the butchery sector. If you haven't thought about any activity, now is the time to start thinking; you can do as much or as little as necessary, but don't waste the opportunity to make a splash during National Butchers' Week." Get in touch with the editor by calling Ed Bedington on 01293 846567, or email him at ed.bedington@wrbm.com.

Help and support

Those looking for ideas and materials for National Butchers' Week can visit the www.nationalbutchersweek.co.uk website, which features a wealth of material to help you make the most of the week. As well as the promotional poster, included in this issue, which should help you market any special deals, you can download and print additional posters for use in the shop.

As the week will continue the theme of positioning butchers as the experts in meat, there are 'Ask the Expert' badges available to order through the site, and there is a downloadable press release for you to adapt to help promote your business to local media during the week. Posters are included with this newsletter and can be overprinted A3, contact SFMTA.

Beef Labelling Enforcement

Letter from Scottish Government, 8th January 2013

TRACEABILITY OF BEEF AND BEEF PRODUCTS: FOOD & VETERINARY OFFICE REQUIREMENTS – USE OF BEEF LABELS

The European Union (EU) Food & Veterinary Office (FVO) carried out an audit of the traceability of beef and beef products in the UK last year.

In their report the FVO Auditors questioned the use of abbreviations on labels in the UK, particularly:

- for the names of Member States and third countries, especially "UK", "ROI", "IRL" and "IOM" (respectively used for United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Ireland and Isle of Man); and
- the use of "SL" instead of "Slaughtered in…"

We have written to the European Commission (EC) stating that the UK should be allowed to continue using these abbreviations but we have been unsuccessful in persuading the Commission to change its position. The Commission's view is that EU legislation makes no allowance for the use of abbreviations.

I am writing to advise you that some changes to current labelling practices will therefore be needed if your members use these abbreviations.

Use of abbreviation "SL" for "Slaughtered in…."

The Commission is clear that Article 13(2)(b) of Regulation (EC) 1760/2000 specifies that the country of slaughter indication should read "Slaughter in…" not "SL"

We are now asking UK food businesses to alter their product labels at the next opportunity or at the latest 30 June 2013. We hope that this will allow businesses to use up stocks of existing labels.

Member State names
Article 13 and 14 of Regulation (EC) 1760/2000 set out the form of indication for Member States. For example, Article 13(2)(b) states that labels must contain the information: "Slaughtered in (name of Member State or third country) (approval number)".

The UK's interpretation is that internationally recognised country abbreviations, including the reserved and internationally recognised designation "UK", are sufficient to satisfy the "name of the Member State" requirement.

The Commission does not accept this view and states that industry should instead use "United Kingdom" on labels.

We continue to state that the use of internationally recognised country abbreviations should be allowed and we await the Commission's further response. We will advise you as soon as we have any update.

In the meantime we would be grateful if you could notify your members of the developments explained in this letter as soon as possible please.

Yours sincerely

John Burns
Livestock Policy Branch
The Scottish Government

QMS Research Conference Report

Dundee, Wednesday 16th January 2013
Profitability from Performance

QMS Board member Phil Thomas introduced the day and after a brief scene setting launched into climate change considerations.

Beef and lamb have highest emissions because they produce lots of methane. There is a built in disadvantage which causes concern. The emerging picture is now deeply interesting and provides the underpinning to begin to formulate a new future for ruminant production - a vision for sustainable intensification of production.

The more efficient farms drive down emissions but there can be great variations between farms. Efficiency of feed use is the crux, all the factors that reduce efficiency of feed use will go hand in hand with reducing profitability and reducing emissions.

Optimising the feed conversion efficiency emerges as a key driver for high economic productivity and reduced carbon footprint; and this requires close attention not only to feeding and optimising daily gain but to maintaining high health status and reducing the `overhead` of unproductive stock

Farmer Colin Clarke from Auchterless explained that in 2010 August steer store price £1.70 per live kilo meaning 550kg beast cost £940. That produced a £220 gross margin when sold 120 days later. Weight had gained from 550kg to 720kg. His conclusion:- paid too much for stores. In 2012 he made a £260 gross margin on 550kg store steer that produced a 400kg carcass worth £1460.

Farmers have combined equipment and shared manpower but speaker Colin Clarke from warned that even in very productive Aberdeenshire erecting wind turbines looks potentially better return. At current prices agriculture provides £110m to the local economy but it is estimated that by 2015 wind turbines will provide £105m to the same area!

Bugs in the Soil

Dr Rupert Hough from the James Hutton Institute suggested that soil transmits disease in animals. To help manage livestock and the land studies have compared disease hotspots with the soil. It would appear, although no real surprise, that the environment plays a significant role in disease prevalence.

Acidic soil and iron content appears to support Johne`s disease. Anecdotal evidence suggests that liming or improving drainage may reduce survival of the organism in the soil.

Carbon in Grass

Jimmy Hyslop of SAC addressed how much does scot grassland need to be sequestrated to negate its beef and lamb footprint.

On average Scotland`s grassland would need to sequester approximately one tonne of carbon per hectare per year to fully negate the carbon footprint of its beef and sheep production.

This figure came from a study from the average taken from 21 farms was 774 hectares selected from north to south. Livestock density 0.4 per hectare, mainly beef.

Scientific studies though highly arguable, suggest that Scotland`s grassland may be able to sequester at least a substantial part of its livestock based GHG emissions and therefore it`s carbon footprint. It is claimed that grassland sequesters three times as much per hectare as forestry.

After lunch the first speaker was Declan Troy from Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority. His subject was modern approaches to beef processing to ensure eating quality. Consumer focused research into meat eating quality has shown that tenderness, juiciness, flavour and overall palatability remain the most sought after attributes by consumers and tenderness in particular is the most important.

While there have been many efforts at improving the tenderness of beef, research has shown that unacceptable levels of beef toughness are still a significant problem.

Many controls have been introduced into the beef processing line in order to alleviate meat tenderness inconsistencies such as hanging the carcass by its aitch bone, electronically stimulating muscles, improving chilling conditions and preventing muscles from shortening.

Using a novel system called **Tenderbound System**, the carcass is hot boned , that is, the meat is removed shortly after slaughter rather than after chilling in the conventional manner .

The hot meat is tightly packaged in elasticated film using a `Pi-vac` machine. The new system overcomes two major disadvantages associated with hot boning, the toughening which is caused by muscle contraction during chilling of hot boned meat (due to excessive shortening of free muscle contraction as compared with partially restrained muscle on a carcass) and shape distortion. Forces from the film hinder contraction and prevent toughening of the muscle. The resultant beef steaks are more consistently tender.

This new development - Tenderbound System - works on muscle restraint? 1.5 hours after slaughter. Hot bone and then look after it specially. Strip loin taken out and put through pi vac system. Stored in film that forces muscle to stay steady. Temperature is then not important to tenderness after this. Tender and consistently tender beef is then produced with negligible weight loss.

Dry ageing will also produce a premium product but with up to 20% weight loss. During ageing - natural enzymes work.

There was a review of the economic situation of the meat industry given by Stuart Ashworth of QMS. His presentation examined lack of profitability in the sector. Squeeze appeared to be greatest in the abattoir sector. Cost price to retail price comparisons show evidence of squeeze on processors.

Impacting on this
CAP, Environmental policy, World trade, Consumer spending power and confidence,
Weather and Exchange rates.

All these are outside the control of the supply chain. What is, however - production chain can influence enterprise efficiency and key to that is the extent to which we embrace and use innovation. There are a range of other factors within the industry`s control – including enterprise mix and efficiency from animal health to the selection of breeding stock and stock for market.

He concluded that there was plenty opportunity but with economic challenges. If sustained profitability is to be achieved, innovation and the appliance of science is extremely important.

Customer Loyalty Works for Butchers

In the craft butchers world of chasing sales and margins and increasing competition from the supermarkets, it is essential to always give your customers ever more reasons to stay shopping with you and actually increase that shopping habit, too. In fact the supermarkets have done this already by implementing loyalty programs.

If you, as an Independent Butcher, cannot just play the supermarkets at their own game, but actually beat them and are able to do so for a very small monthly outlay, then that's a prize worth having...

customerCONNECT
EXPERTS IN BUTCHERS LOYALTY

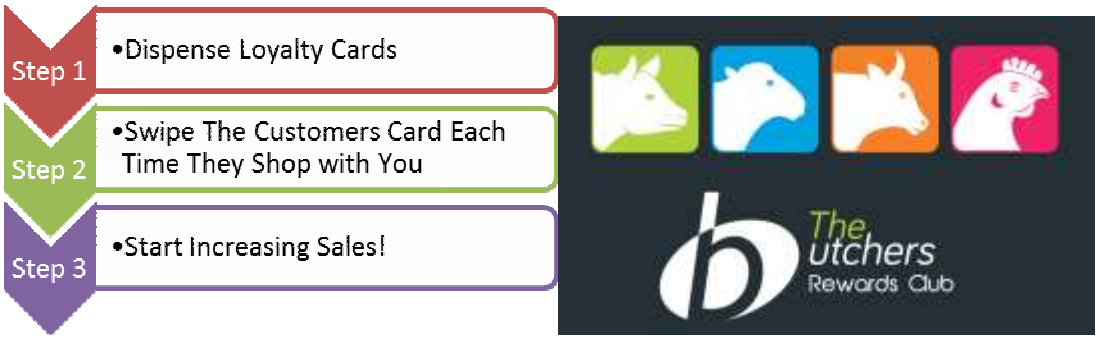
At Customer Connect Loyalty we have proven with our existing clients that your own customers have the ability to grow your business substantially by implementing a fully managed loyalty system from Customer Connect Loyalty.

We are now working with over 100 independent butchers, all of different sizes, and every single one of them, without exception, is not just maintaining their customer base, they're winning back customers and their customers are buying more frequently from their businesses.

The key to running the customer communication and reward system is that it has to be easy to use, not expensive and it must deliver results, so what I'll say to you is this... **for the system to pay for itself you'll need an increase of 5 average transactions per week**, which is very low especially when you consider the 100 plus Butchers we currently are working with, currently experience growth between over 50 to 100 additional transaction per week and that is growing all the time...

Actually the solution is simple, easy to implement and as mentioned before, it's not expensive, and it's all about having an automated communication and co-ordinated incentive and reward programme, that we organise for you, all you have to do is to follow the system...it doesn't damage your profit margins, it's controlled, and it wins you more customers and gets your existing customers buying more from you and more often, but even better than that, it provides you with vital information about your customers and your business, that's just not been available before.

So How does it all work? We install the loyalty system terminal into your shop. We design for you and provide you with the loyalty cards that you issue to your customers. Each time your customers come into your shop the loyalty card is swiped and our 'Unique' system will manage everything else including customer contact, promotions, offers and much more, however don't worry, that's our job to manage that.



What Next;
Why not give us a call and we can discuss all aspects of a loyalty programme and give you some more detail. Also if you go to our website you can view our detailed information booklet.

Contact details
www.customerconnectloyalty.co.uk
Phone 00353 87 2368956 Email finbarr@customerconnectireland.com

Wanted
Modern Apprentices

Scottish Meat Training still has vacancies available on their Modern Apprenticeship training programme for 2012-13

Available for ALL age groups and for ALL staff – new and old

And it's FREE. Skills Development Scotland fully fund the training for Level 2 and Level 3 Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland.

Do not miss out on this opportunity to invest in your workforce
Contact: Claire on 01738 637785 or email **claire@meattraining.net**

Why you should act now

Each year Scottish Meat Training contracts for places for funded Modern Apprenticeship places through Skills Development Scotland. The contract year runs from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. They were awarded 195 places to cover all age groups and areas of Scotland. These have been slow to fill for a number of reasons mainly to do with the economy but also because employers held off in 2012 to see if there would be an Employer Recruitment Incentive announced in December as had come along on 2011 and 2012. This did not happen since enrolment in other industry sectors had increased and the Scottish Government were content that they were going to meet their targets.

So far only 63 places have been filled and although we have applied for another contract to commence on 1st April 2013 but there is no guarantee that we will be granted a new contract and if we do whether that would cover all age groups, i.e. 16-19 year olds, 19-24 year olds and 25 years +.
The only group that is certain to get supported is the 16-19 year olds but even then we do need to secure a contract first. In addition the number of places on the new contract could well be trimmed back if, as currently looks likely, the uptake in 2012-13 ends up well below target.

Message is – if you have employees to come on training for a Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Processing or Butchery Retail Skills please let us know by 28th February so that registrations and inductions can be carried out before the end of March.
Telephone Claire on 01738 637785 or email **Claire@meattraining.net**

Certain areas have support for wage subsidy of trainees taken out of unemployment of at least 6 months and are on the Work Programme. Claire can assist with this once we know that you have a place.

2013 Legislation Changes

2013 is expected to be a busy year in employment law with changes expected that will have an impact right the way through the employment relationship from recruitment to termination, including the way that large scale redundancies are dealt with, and a new type of employment contract being introduced.

Here is a table showing the actual or expected date of implementation of these changes.

February	Annual increases to Tribunal awards. The upper limit of unfair dismissal claims will be £87,700; the maximum statutory redundancy pay will be £13,500. The uprating system will also be amended to introduce a common rounding system for calculating the uprating adjustments
March	Parental leave increases from 13 weeks to 18 weeks
March	Online criminal records checks will be available so that once a check has been done, the results will be available and instantly accessible online so that employers can check whether any information has been added since the check was conducted. For a small fee, the check will be kept up to date, ending repeated applications. (The Criminal Records Bureau is now known as the DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service)
March	3rd party harassment provisions which make employers liable for discrimination against their staff by third parties e.g. customers or suppliers; and statutory discrimination questionnaires will be removed
April	Rates of statutory maternity/paternity/additional paternity/adoption pay to increase from £135.45 to £136.78. Statutory sick pay will increase from £85.85 to £86.70
April	Minimum collective redundancy consultation period where 100 or more redundancies are proposed will be halved from 90 days to 45 days and a non-statutory code of practice will be created
April	Employers will be able to offer employment on a 'employee shareholder' basis where employee will be given shares in the company but will lose certain employment rights e.g. the right to claim unfair dismissal
April	New Tribunal rules will come into force to manage cases more effectively
April	Whistleblowing legislation will be tightened to ensure that protection is only given to employees who make a disclosure that is in the public interest
April	Under 18 year olds will no longer be prohibited from working at venues which have betting premises
April	Rehabilitation periods for ex-offenders after which a conviction is deemed as 'spent' will be reduced
Summer	Introduction of fee charging to bring a Tribunal claim
October	Increases to National Minimum Wage (subject to confirmation)

Employment Law advice is available 24/7 for all SFMTA members from
Peninsula Business Services

Members should call 0161 834 2255
You will be asked for a Client number, password and postcode.
If you have forgotten these details please contact SFMTA

Scotch Pie Club Awards 2013

Following the busiest judging day ever, the Scotch Pie Club selected winners of the Scotch Pie Club Awards 2013. Winners were announced on 9th January at Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline.

The annual competition, which has run for 14 years, aims to highlight that bakers and butchers create high quality artisan pastry products. The competition attracted a record entry this year with more than 100 butchers and bakers entering some 500 pies, pasties, sausage rolls, bridies and savouries into the competition.

The World Scotch Pie Championships provides butchers and bakers across Scotland with the opportunity to become recognised as producing the highest quality savoury products with awards given to those producing the best products in each category. The winner of the Scotch Pie category JB Christie, Bakers in Airdrie was declare the 2013 WORLD CHAMPION

Butchers came out top in five of the nine categories. Rory MacDonald from MacDonald Brothers Butchers in Pitlochry completed a remarkable hat trick winning the title of Best Sausage Roll in Scotland for the third year in succession.

The best Vegetarian Pie and best Fish Pies were also won by butchers! Paul Boyle from Boghall Butchers in Bathgate was judged the best for his Mediterranean Vegetable Pie and MacDonalds also won Diamond for their Salmon, Prawn & Broccoli Bake.

The best hand held Steak Pie was judged to be from T&R Skinner in Kippen and the best Football Pie was deemed to be that supplied to Forres Mechanics by Murdoch Brothers.

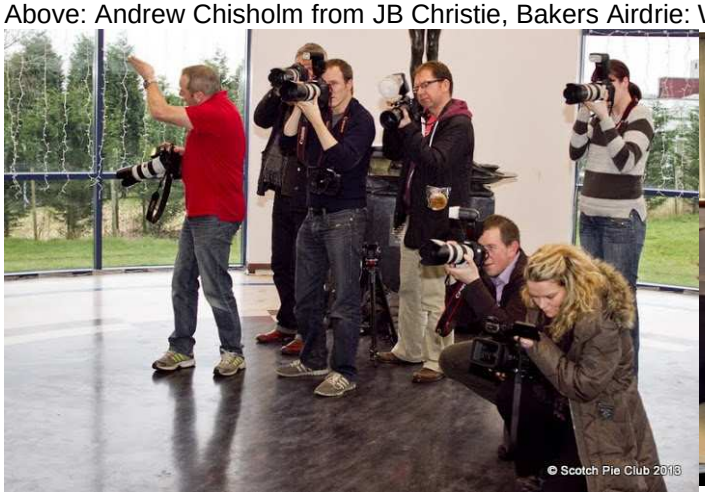
The competition is supported by Scottish Bakers and the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders. Both trade associations actively support and promote bakers and butchers in Scotland by encouraging and sharing best practise.

Scotch Pie Club Awards 2013

BAKO Northern & Scotland
"The key ingredient to the food industry"

Scotch Pie Club Awards 2013

Above: Andrew Chisholm from JB Christie, Bakers Airdrie: World Scotch Pie Champion 2013



Scotch Pie Club Awards 2013

The competition was sponsored by wholesaler to the food industry, Bako Northern and Scotland.
http://www.bakoscotland.co.uk/

Award	Butchers Name
SCOTCH PIE	
Gold	J B Houston Butchers, Dumfries
Gold	S Collins & Son, Muirhead
Gold	T & R Skinner, Kippen
Silver	W F Stark, Buckhaven
Silver	W Wylie Butchers, Kelso
Bronze	A J Learmonth Butchers, Jedburgh
Bronze	Alex Mitchell Butchers, Glenrothes
Bronze	J C Douglas Butchers, St Boswells
Bronze	James Pringle, Hawick
BRIDIES	
Gold	Allan Elliot Butchers Ltd. Lanark
Gold	Ann Davidson Butchers, Scone
Gold	Boghall Butchers, Bathgate
Gold	W Wylie Butchers, Kelso
Silver	John Lawson Butchers, Uphall
Silver	Murdoch Brothers Butchers, Forres
Silver	Scott Brothers Butchers, Dundee
Silver	Tom Courts Quality Foods Ltd, Cowdenbeath
Bronze	Alex Jack (Butchers) Ltd, Stranraer
Bronze	James Moffat Quality Butchers Ltd, Shotts
Bronze	Stuart's of Buckhaven
SAUSAGE ROLLS	
Diamond & Overall Winner	MacDonald Bros Butchers, Pitlochry
Gold	Alex Mitchell Butchers, Glenrothes
Silver	Ann Davidson Butchers, Scone
Silver	Bert Fowlie, Strichen
Silver	Kelly of Cults Ltd
Silver	Kenneth Allan t/a HW Irvine, Blairgowrie
Silver	Thomas Johnston, Falkirk
Bronze	David Stein Butchers Ltd, Blackburn
Bronze	Scott Brothers Butchers, Dundee
Bronze	Tom Courts Quality Foods Ltd, Cowdenbeath

STEAK PIES (HAND HELD)

Diamond & Overall Winner	T & R Skinner, Kippen
Gold	Kenneth Allan t/a HW Irvine
Gold	Bruce of the Broch, Fraserburgh
Gold	Kelly of Cults Ltd
Gold	Stuart's of Buckhaven
Silver	Thomas Johnston, Falkirk
Silver	W F Stark, Buckhaven
Silver	A & G Collie, Kemnay
Bronze	Ann Davidson Butchers
Bronze	Bert Fowlie, Strichen
Bronze	Hunters of Kinross
Bronze	D G Lindsay. Perth
Bronze	James Chapman (Butchers) Ltd, Wishaw
Bronze	Alex Mitchell Butchers, Glenrothes

FOOTBALL PIES

Overall Winner	Forres Mechanics	Murdoch Brothers Butchers, Forres
Gold	Fraserburgh United Junior FC	Bruce of the Broch, Fraserburgh

HOT SAVOURY

Gold	Duck with Black Cherries & Kirsch Pie	Boghall Butchers, Bathgate
Gold	Steak Bake	Damn Delicious Ltd, Lanark
Gold	Steak Mince Pie	Charles Duncan, Troon
Silver	Creamy Chicken Pie	Charles Duncan,Troon
Silver	Haggis & Mince Pie	Donaldson's of Orkney
Silver	Steak & Kidney Pie	A&I Quality Butchers, Culloden
Silver	Steak Curry Pie	John Lawson Butchers, Uphall
Silver	Smoked Salmon Pie	John Lawson Butchers, Uphall
Silver	Steak Mince Pie	David Stein Butchers Ltd, Bathgate
Bronze	Chicken & Ham Pie	Shaws Fine Meats. Lauder
Bronze	Haggis & Gravy Pie	Wm McCafferty Butchers Ltd, Forth
Bronze	Hot Pot Pie	Kenneth Allan t/a HW Irvine, Blairgowrie
Bronze	Mince & Tattie Pie	Kenneth Allan t/a HW Irvine, Blairgowrie
Bronze	Beef Bourguignon Pie	D H Robertson, Arbroath

FISH PIES

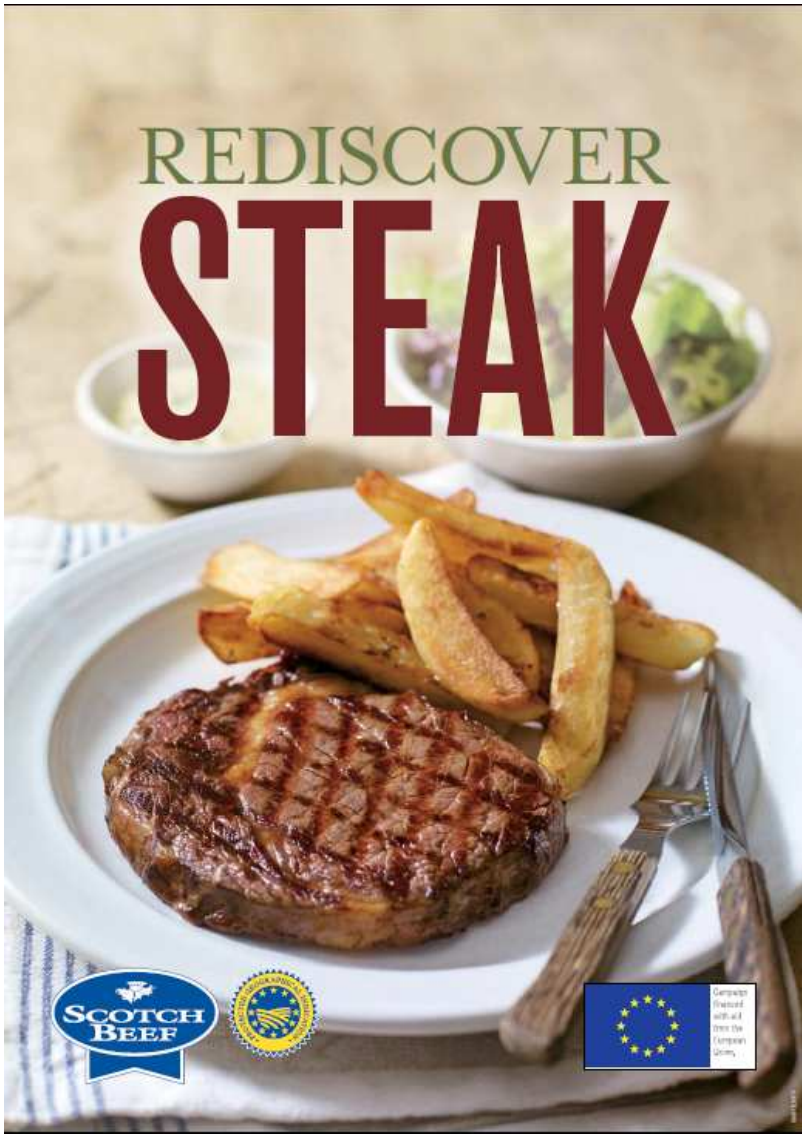
Diamond & Overall Winner	Salmon, Prawn & Broccoli Bake	MacDonald Bros Butchers, Pitlochry
Silver	Smoked Salmon & Spinach Pie	Hillfoots Country Butchers & Farm Shop

VEGETARIAN SAVOURY

Diamond & Overall Winner	Mediterranean Vegetable Pie	Boghall Butchers, Bathgate

Rediscover Steak

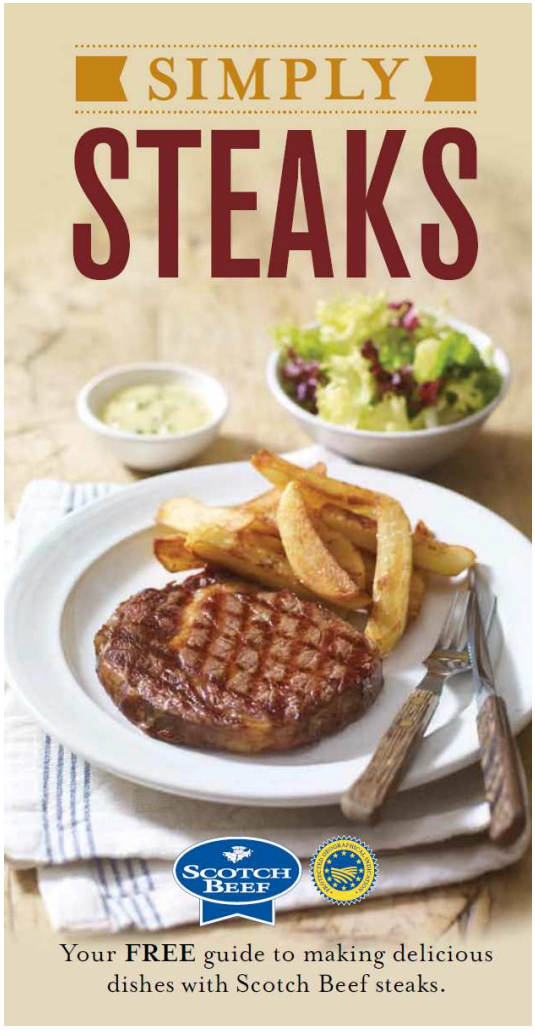
Next Scotch Butchers Club Campaign –



QMS will launch the latest Scotch Butchers Club promotional kit **w/c 4th February 2013** to promote Scotch Beef Steaks.

The campaign will be **distributed to all members of the Scotch Butchers Club across the UK** and work to encourage sales of Scotch Beef Steaks, by communicating the variety and versatility of the different steaks available.

The promotional kit includes:-
an A2 feature poster titled "Rediscover Steak",
a recipe booklet (below) and strut card.



Please note that this promotional kit is only available to current members of the Scotch Butchers Club. If you need any further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind Regards

Jack Broussine
Marketing Executive
Quality Meat Scotland

Direct Dial: 0131 472 4042

Why did the chicken cross the continent? So it could go cheap, cheap, cheap

It seems to me that behind much of the nervous tittering brought on by last month's revelation that Tesco's Value Range beefburgers contained up to 29 per cent horsemeat, there was more than a hint of snobbery. In some quarters, including on social media, the unspoken consensus seemed to be that anyone mad enough to buy cheap burger products got what they deserved. So wrote Jennifer O'Connell in the *Irish Times*.

But if people think that – just because they can afford to buy top-notch burgers – they are guaranteed food of sound origin, think again. Even if you avoid supermarkets and buy all your meat from craft butchers, even if you never eat processed foods and read your kids Jamie Oliver books at bedtime, how smug can you really afford to be about the provenance of the food you eat?

In a survey by Safefood carried out nearly five years ago, Irish consumers listed the country of origin of their food as one of their top-five concerns when shopping. And yet, until 2011, if you bought an "Irish" labelled chicken fillet marinaded in spices and ready to be popped in the oven, it might just as easily have taken its first breath in Thailand as in Tipperary.

For more than 15 years, supermarkets and butchers had been – perfectly legally – buying cheap meat products (other than beef) from countries such as Thailand and Brazil, sprinkling them with spice or breadcrumbs, and re-labelling them as "Irish".

Following years of protest from consumer organisations, the EU got its act together in 2011 and issued a directive stating that the country of origin must be included on all poultry, pig, goat and sheep products.

When this measure is implemented into law next year, it will apply at butchers' counters and shops, as well as in supermarkets.

But at the moment, it remains a guessing game. Earlier this week, I found myself in my local craft butcher shop, on the hunt for something for dinner. (By "something", I invariably mean chicken; according to Safefood, it is "the Irish consumer's protein of choice".)

There was no shortage of it on display in this clean, attractive little shop: there were chicken legs, chicken thighs, chicken kievs, stuffed chickens, rolled chickens, whole chickens and chicken-breast fillets. The fillets were lean and plump and on offer at a bargain four for €5.

Nearby was a tray of identical looking fillets – except they cost €6.50 for four. The difference was that the €6.50 fillets were branded Irish and the other, unlabelled ones were Dutch, the butcher explained. But he couldn't enlighten me on why they were cheaper than home-produced ones, despite having been shipped here from Holland, which is an import hub for meat products from outside the EU.

At the butcher's shop over the road, Irish chicken fillets were on sale alongside chicken kievs of no stated nationality. In the third butcher's I tried, the chicken fillets were described as Irish; the chicken carcasses on sale beside them had no country of origin displayed.

By contrast, all the meat in my local Tesco was branded with its country of origin, including a pack of chicken fillets in breadcrumbs, which came from somewhere called "the EU and Thailand".

At Supervalu, the butcher confidently informed me that all his chicken was Irish, but several products were being sold in packaging that offered no clue as to the country of origin.

Should consumers care where their meat comes from? That's a matter of personal taste. The 2012 Safefood report on the chicken industry says there is no health issue with meat being shipped in from overseas; the primary concern is the impact on domestic producers.

I'm not sure that the impact on domestic producers would be my top concern – at least, not having read this extract from the report describing the processes chicken fillets go through as they make their way from Thailand or Brazil to Ireland.

"On import, European processors tumble or inject defrosted imported chicken fillets with water and binding agents such as animal proteins . . . (including gelatine, blood, whey protein, spray-dried beef and pork protein, some of which may be mechanically recovered).

"The chicken breasts are packed into 10kg boxes and frozen prior to distribution throughout the EU, including ROI and NI . . . In butcher shops, it is possible that these products could be sold directly to consumers as raw chicken breast fillets, either in a frozen or unfrozen state."

It goes on: "Fillets with added ingredients that have been frozen and refrozen at different stages in the food chain may be sold in establishments as 'fresh chicken'.''

Not all that appetising, is it? But if you've dined out recently and chosen chicken from the menu, chances are it was one of these frozen, defrosted, tumbled, injected, frozen and defrosted fillets you tucked into: 90 per cent of all chicken meat used in the catering industry originates in this way.

The report highlights other, less-than-edifying industry practices, including the "re-labelling" of meat to change the use-by date, sometimes more than once. This is not illegal, provided it is done safely. However, a 2010 survey by Safefood found that 8 per cent of butchers couldn't actually give a use-by date; 23 per cent offered dates for which they had no basis; and the same proportion gave a use-by date that was unrealistic.

In the short term, what the great horsemeat scandal of 2013 has done – besides littering newspapers, websites and the airwaves with the obligatory Black Beauty jokes – is to hit sales of cheap supermarket burgers.

What it should do in the longer term is serve as a reminder of how big supermarkets have changed the way we all eat – even those of us who never shop in them. No matter where we shop or what we spend, we have a right to know what we're buying. Otherwise, the joke is firmly on us.

Wanted: Butchers Shops to feature

There is not a feature on a member in this newsletter but if any SFMTA member would like a feature written for inclusion please contact Bruce on 01738 637472. Benefit to members – a disc of photos, pdf of the article and 100 copies of article in A5 colour booklet for use in the member's shop.

Regional Meetings – February to March

The Federation Regional Meetings to be held during the first three months of 2013 will take the popular form of round the table discussions over a two course meal. Members are asked to choose at which venue they would like to attend and book a place or places by telephoning Bruce on 01738 637472.

These meetings are for business owners and key members of staff. They will start at 7.00pm and end at 9.00pm. Those attending are asked to meet from 6.30pm onwards.

Date	Venue
Monday 4th February	Garfield House Hotel, Stepps
Wednesday 6th February	Queensferry Hotel, North Queensferry
Monday 25th February	Inchture Hotel, between Perth & Dundee
Monday 4th March	Coast Restaurant, Oban
Tuesday 12th March	Kings Arms Hotel, Castle Douglas
Tuesday 19th March	The Redgarth Hotel, Oldmeldrum
Wednesday 20th March	Waterside Hotel, Inverness

Meetings in Northern Isles and Western Isles will be arranged later in the year.

Businesses attending at
Ayr on Monday 28th January – David Faulds, Kilmarnock, Alex Bickett Ltd. Kilwinning, T Baillie & Son, Saltcoats; Charles Duncan, Troon, D Barclay & Sons, Stevenson, J&M Paterson, Dalmellington; A Picken & Sons, Ayr; Connor Butchers, Troon.
Selkirk on Tuesday 29th January – JC Douglas, Selkirk; Shaws Fine Meats, Lauder; Halliwells, Selkirk W Wylie, Kelso;, Robert Pringle, Hawick, Sanderson, Coldstream, WTS Forsyth & Sons, Peebles.

MYTH BUSTING

National Health & Safety Company Ltd

Are you fed up with trying to sort out the truth from the fact in health & safety?

We have all heard the various excuses for not doing certain tasks because of health & safety rules and regulations - yet how many are actual facts?

Come along to this free informal seminar and find out the truth.

Ask your questions and be given correct sensible answers without any of the hype, scaremongering or sales patter.

Suitable for any size of business. Get your questions answered.

Disability - Fire - Risk Assessments - Ladders - Young People - Asbestos – Hot Drinks, plus many more.

- ***When?*** ***Wednesday 6th February 2013***
- ***Time?*** ***9.30 - 12.00***
- ***Where?*** ***Nhasco offices, 12-14 Uphall Business Park, Loaninghill, Uphall, Broxburn, EH52 5NT.***
- ***Cost?*** ***FREE***

If you would like to attend, kindly send an email to jamesd@nhasco.com or call 0845 0091711

Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers Seminar

King James Hotel, Edinburgh

SAMW had a company of 53 for their post festive period seminar and New Year lunch on Friday 11th January. President Ian Faulds and CE Douglas Scott attended.

Main speakers were Stuart Ashworth from QMS and Ian McWatt from FSA (Scotland). President Alan McNaughton described the day as a gentle introduction into the year ahead. It was an extremely useful networking event with representatives of the entire Scottish meat industry.

SAMW claimed various fruits of their recent lobbying with the relaxing of testing for BSE in healthy cattle and moves to encourage the decline in livestock numbers. Alan McNaughton praised the collaborative work of industry organisations in Scotland. Going forward everybody will be involved in the shaping of the New Food Body for Scotland and SFMTA had approaches on the day by both Ian McWatt and his director, Charles Milne to come and meet them.

First speaker QMS economist Stuart Ashworth. Given that slaughtering s in Scotland in 2012 were down by 10% he entitled his presentation "Where`s the Beef?" He said that GB Calf registrations troughed in 2009 and given that the average age of slaughter of prime cattle is 22 months things should get better in 2013. UK figures for 2012 see calf registrations up 0.5% but Scotland was 0.8%.

Cross border trade to England & Wales was 86,000 head in 2010, 110,000 in 2011 and although not finalised possible up again by 3% in 2012. Only 9000 prime head of cattle appears to go to abattoirs in England & Wales but most of the cattle going to abattoirs are cows over 30 months. The other main destination of Scottish stock is holdings. Only 10% goes to English auctions or dairy calves for export.

Stuart stated that we might be at the bottom in terms of tightness of supply. He felt that little would change in 2013, there would be stability but not awash with cattle. There were still concerns over store cattle going south and TB and BVD there was making Scottish stock with high health status was a more attractive buy.

Not much was said about lamb but it was felt that cheaper New Zealand would continue to suppress price.

Ian McWatt said that the New Food Body (NFB) in Scotland was not now a matter of if but of when. Planning is underway but this is a Scottish Government programme and not an FSA one. The set up would include a complete review of delivery of meat controls. The programme would work with other bodies to scope

- Relationships with SEPA, HSE and local authorities.
- Explore provision of advice including cross border issues to FSA.

Again the earliest legislation was expected was claimed to be summer of 2013 with a vesting day in Oct 2014. SFMTA attended the Stakeholder Scoping Day on 21/11/12 and subsequent consultation will be forthcoming in which SFMTA need to engage.

Ian McWatt also addressed the meeting about FSA operations in Scotland. There had been significant reductions in staffing. Now there are less than 80 meat inspectors covering the whole of Scotland; this is a 50% reduction since 2003. This means he suggested that there are actually now less opportunities to find further efficiencies in the NFB.

In October 2012 line management of meat hygiene in Scotland moved from York to Aberdeen with a Scottish Delivery Group being set up. This would focus on operational delivery in Scotland. Ian also asked for the assistance of the industry with regard to contracted hours. Since 2006 in Scotland there are 15% more cutting plants, 17% less slaughterhouses and 57% more game handling establishments. Throughput showed 40% increases in game, 9% more poultry but 10% less red meat. This is not really mirrored in efficiency markers. What he termed IUWT hours - hours not worked but paid for - between April and December 2012 this totalled 56406 hours in GB. This is 27% up on previous year and represents a cost of £1.8m of which industry is paying £1m for staff doing nothing. Ian said that we all need to get better at predicting usage although he did add that estimates were much better in Scotland than in the UK overall.

EXCELLENCE AWARDS OPEN FOR ENTRIES

The Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards, run in partnership with the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, are now open for entries.

The awards have been rewarding the very best in Scottish food and drink for many years. 17 awards recognise excellence in products and businesses across a diverse range of areas including skills, research, sustainability, healthy eating, foodservice and seven retail categories. Two of the 2012 awards that were meat related were:

- Meat (Red, White & Game) - sponsored by ASDA
  Macsween of Edinburgh - Macsween microwaveable range: '60-second' haggis and '90-second' black pudding
- New Product Marketing - sponsored by Johnston Carmichael
  Shetland Livestock Marketing Group (SLMG) - Native Shetland Lamb

Scotland Food & Drink Chief Executive James Withers comments:

"The Scottish food and drink industry is in fantastic shape and the Excellence Awards recognise the best products, businesses, outstanding individuals and industry achievement. There is real value in entering the awards- last year's winners enjoyed tangible benefits including publicity, new opportunities and a boost to sales.

"Internationally recognised as a Land of Food and Drink, Scotland has a deservedly great reputation for quality produce and the awards celebrate the best of what we have to offer. We have any number of successes in our industry and I would encourage companies of all types and sizes to seek the recognition they deserve."

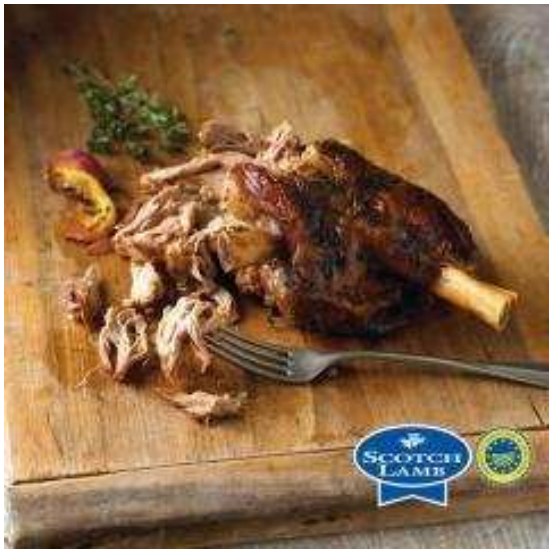
Further information and application forms are at
http://www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org/events/excellence-awards.aspx

The awards are open for entries until Friday 29th March. Entry is £25+VAT for members of Scotland Food & Drink and RHASS, £45+VAT for non-members.

Paper judging will take place in April, the awards shortlist will be announced at the beginning of May following the tasting and the awards ceremony itself will take place on Thursday 30th May at The Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh.

Tickets for the event are available to buy from Linda Chirnside
phone 0131 335 0940

Borders Shoppers Get a Taste of Scotch Lamb



Shoppers out and about in Galashiels on Saturday (26 January) were to be tempted with fresh, tasty Scotch Lamb.

Sheep farmers from the Lothians and the Borders visited Tesco and Asda stores in the town reminding those visiting the stores that Scottish farmers produce some of the best tasting lamb in the world, and it's right on their doorstep! To back up the message to buy Scottish, samples of tasty roast lamb were given out free to hundreds of consumers.

The lamb was bought from local farmers through John Swan's Auction Mart at Newton St Boswells, slaughtered at Shotts abattoir and was cooked by local caterer Ben Douglas. Speaking ahead of the event local farmer Stephen Withers, who sits on NFU Scotland's livestock committee said:

"Scotch Lamb is amongst the finest in the world and in the Lothians and the Borders, we believe we produce some of the best.

"We want to share that with shoppers, give them a taste of the great produce that is on their doorstep and encourage them to put more Scotch Lamb in their basket when doing their weekly shop.

"For consumers, Scotch Lamb ticks all the right boxes. It is naturally reared, produced locally, is packed full of nutrition, tastes great and offers great value. It is a product that can meet the demands of all households, whether they need a quick and easy midweek meal or a Sunday roast – Scotch Lamb has it all.

"For us as sheep farmers, the message on Saturday will be simple. We believe we are producing a top quality product to very high standards and by giving the public a taste, we hope they will support local farmers by buying a bit more Scotch lamb in the future.

"Consumers already have a tremendous appreciation of what a difficult year this has been weather-wise for farmers in the area. That has brought extra cost and a lot more time and effort on farm getting lambs ready for the market. The good news is that lots of Scotch Lamb will be available in the coming weeks and the support of shoppers and their supermarkets at this time would be just the tonic in a difficult year. It would give local farmers a real boost before lambing starts again later this spring."

Editor: Just a pity the most loyal stockists of Scotch Lamb – local butchers – do not seem to worthy of similar support or even a mention.

SFMTA knows that this upsets members so any wishing to raise this with NFUS please contact NFU Scotland Livestock Policy Manager John Sleigh – 07827 910624 or **john.sleigh@nfus.org.uk** – or Lothian and Borders Livestock committee representative and local farmer Stephen Withers – 07986 653391.

Hogg Prices Show Modest Improvement

QMS Market Commentary:

The price of hoggs sold through auction markets has shown a modest improvement in the week ending 26th January, with the lift greater in Scotland than across GB as a whole.

Despite the snow in many parts of the country, the number of lambs sold through the auction markets in the first half of the week was higher than last week. This continues a trend which started in December.

"December was the first month since June that UK lamb slaughterings were higher than the year before, although in Scotland the kill remained lower," said Stuart Ashworth, Head of Economics Services, Quality Meat Scotland. "As January settles down after the holiday disruption the volume of hoggs reaching the market is continuing to run ahead of last year."

A higher volume of hoggs and a better price suggests an underlying improvement in the market conditions. However, despite the improvement, prices still languish some 50p/kg lwt lower than twelve months ago.

Deadweight price reporting abattoirs show some improvement in the quality of lambs/hoggs handled between December and January. This, said Mr Ashworth, combined with the weakening of Sterling from 81p to a Euro in mid-December to 84p in mid-January, will have offered some support to hogg prices through January. Nevertheless, the export market, particularly in France remains tough.

In the Southern Hemisphere slaughter volumes are running ahead of last year. "In New Zealand slaughter numbers in October and November were 15% higher than last year, a greater increase than would be expected from the 5-6% increase in lamb crop," said Mr Ashworth. "Poor producer prices and a strong currency, offering little prospect of improved prices in the near future, are encouraging earlier marketing of New Zealand lamb at lower weights."

This increased production has led to a growth in exports to Europe in the final quarter of 2012 but also growth in New Zealand exports to China. However, he observed, New Zealand lamb slaughterings usually peak in February or March.

"This year, with Easter being early and New Zealand lambs continuing to come forward more quickly than last year, it seems likely that first quarter deliveries from New Zealand will be higher than last year although growth in sales to China may temper this," Mr Ashworth added. "However, earlier slaughtering will mean that as the New Zealand season progresses things may slow down."

Looking at the domestic market, an early Easter and reported problems from Schmallenberg among early lambing flocks in southern England will mean less competition from UK new season lamb. This is likely to offer some support for hogg prices at this time.

On the exchange rate front, money market sentiment is currently swaying towards a general weakness of Sterling which will help sheep meat exporters and hopefully producer prices.

Supermarkets are Set Traceability Challenge on Imported Pork

NFU Scotland has set major supermarkets a traceability challenge to reassure consumers and the industry that no illegally produced imported pork is appearing on their shelves.

Major changes to pig welfare standards were introduced across Europe at the start of this year that significantly restrict the use of sow stalls on farms. The UK banned the use of such stalls 13 years ago and, since that time, all Scottish or UK pork, bacon and ham has been produced to this higher welfare standard.

However, only four other Members States are known to have met the 31 December 2012 deadline on new requirements and 13 European countries are believed to be some considerable way from complying with the new sow stall rules. As a result, thousands of pigs across Europe are still being produced every day in systems that have been outlawed.

In support of UK producers, major retailers have stated their intention not to stock imported pigmeat produced on non-compliant European farms.

On Monday 14 January, NFU Scotland bought a selection of imported and UK pork products at Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's stores. No imported produce was found in M&S but imported pork from Denmark, Holland, France and Germany was available elsewhere. It returned to those stores selling imports and asked store managers to start an audit trail to trace those products back to farms in their country of origin. The Union has asked supermarkets to report back with their findings. Several have already been back in touch to let us know the action they are undertaking.

NFU Scotland's Pigs Committee Chairman, Phil Sleigh said:

"Last month's furore around the production of beef burgers firmly underlines that all parts of the food chain are required to meet very high standards regarding the quality, traceability and labelling of fresh meat and processed products. Consumers expect no less.

"As of 31 December 2012, all pig farmers in Europe are required to comply with new welfare rules that restrict the use of sow stalls on farms. Those are standards that we have been meeting in Scotland and the rest of the UK for more than 13 years. However, we are aware that there is a significant level of non-compliance in many other Member States.

"To their credit, major supermarkets have give UK pig farmers reassurances that where they choose to import pork, bacon or ham, they will only stock from European farms that comply with the new rules and that no illegally produced products would appear on shop shelves.

"This is an opportunity for retailers to back up that reassurance with firm evidence by tracking imported products bought in individual stores all the way back to the farm of origin. If that were the case, it would send out a very positive message and we think a week is a reasonable time to complete that investigation.

"Given last week's revelations and questions on traceability, being able to provide an audit of the whole supply chain would show supermarkets to be delivering on their pledge and ensure that pig farmers - whether in Scotland or in Europe - are competing for shelf space in Scottish supermarkets on an equal footing."

Imported Pork

On Monday, 14 January, NFU Scotland Chief Executive Scott Walker and NFU Scotland Pigs Committee Chairman Philip Sleigh visited Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Marks & Spencer stores.
No imported pork, bacon or ham was found in the Marks & Spencer store at The Gyle, near Edinburgh.
At the Asda store at Huntly, Aberdeenshire, NFUS bought pork loin steaks imported from France and Germany.
At the Tesco store in Huntly, NFUS bought pork chops from Denmark and pork loin steaks from Holland.
At the Sainsbury's store at Kinross, NFUS bought boneless loin steaks from Denmark.
At the Morrisons store at The Gyle, near Edinburgh NFUS bought unsmoked gammon grills labelled as being produced in the EU from EU pork.
NFUS has since met with store managers at the above supermarkets and asked them to instigate an audit of the supply chain from the store back to the farm of origin. Retailer head offices have been informed of the request.

Diary Date

The Scottish Meat Trade Fair will be held at the Dewars Centre, Perth on Sunday 12th May 2013 – please put this date into your new diary.

For Sale - Watt The Butcher Ltd, 39-41 Murray Street, Montrose.

Turnover in excess of £500,000 per annum. Fixed Price of £95,000 as a going concern with fixtures and all equipment and stock at valuation. Also to include the lease of Unit 6 & 12 Broomfield Business Centre. Fully fitted EC approved premises and yard plus s.a.v. or fixed price of £85,000 for shop premises only. Contact: Neil Watt on 01674 672777

For Sale – Butchers shop for sale on Isle of Bute

Opportunity to buy a long established family butchers. Profitable business in town centre location turning over £475,000 pa. Freehold, walk in chill, separate pastry and cooked meat prep areas. Offers in region of £199,000.
Contact: Martin Thurman, RH McIntyre, Gallowgate, Rothesay. Tel: 01700 505962

Shop For Lease

A shop in Glasgow area is available to lease.
For further details contact SFMTA. Tel: 01738 637472

For Sale - Family run Butchers in Cowdenbeath, Fife – Freehold

Successful family run butchers established in 1967 in the centre of Cowdenbeath, Fife.
Important: Viewing is by appointment only. Tel: 01383 510653

For Sale

Long established family Butchers/Deli business for sale/lease in Falkirk District area.
Please contact 01506 824597.

For Sale

Busy Butchers shop in Airdrie; Contact: Moira Bennett Tel: 07843994600

Corporate Member Focus

Walkers Facts
Walkers Shortbread is an independent 100% family owned company that was founded in 1888 having borrowed £50 to set up the business. They moved to Aberlour and to the shop in the High Street in 1910 and opened their first factory in 1977 "Shortbread 1", followed by "Biscuits" in 1981, "Shortbread 2" in 1986 and finally two more in Elgin in 1990 and 2005 but there's another currently under construction at Aberlour.

The UK's largest family owned biscuit maker Walkers employ 1400 staff in peak season and export to over 80 countries worldwide. They have won the Queens Award for export a record 4 times, the only British food manufacture in the UK to do so. They are Scotland's biggest food exporter

Why successful….
The Family Business claim Quality, Quality, Quality. Shortbread – flour, butter, sugar salt – only 4 ingredients … No additives, preservatives and made from the best ingredients available. They have stuck to traditional recipes, methods, machinery – based on old stuff. Along the way they have learnt small tricks that ensure consistency. Shortbread is their focus, and the success comes with no advertising and little marketing.

Walkers Statistics
977,000 fingers made on one line per day – so in one factory alone, over 2 million biscuits a day.
Export to 86 countries worldwide – exporting to Mongolia, Nepal, Maldives, New Zealand, India and South America.
Not just shortbread – 32 million meringues made last year
Walkers produce 30,000 tonnes of products a year with 25,000 of that Shortbread.
This requires a weekly shopping list of 150 tonnes or 6000 boxes of butter (1200 a day), 70 tons of sugar a week and 250 tons of flour.
30 Million packets of shortbread were sold in the last three years.

WALKERS SHORTBREAD

Aberlour House, Aberlour-On-Spey, AB38 9LD Tel: 01340 871555
enquiries@walkers-shortbread.co.uk www.walkersshortbread.com

Retail Prices for w/e 26/01/13

	SFMTA AVERAGE JANUARY	SFMTA AVERAGE NOVEMBER	QMS AVERAGE JANUARY	QMS AVERAGE NOVEMBER
SCOTCH BEEF				
Fillet Steak	3641	3625	3707	3647
Sirloin Steak	2540	2498	2651	2633
Rolled Rib Roast	1995	1977		
Popeseye Steak	1626	1621	1634	1616
Topside	1326	1316	1164	1212
Round / Rump Steak	1274	1269		
Diced Stewing Steak	1056	1054	1099	1079
Rolled Brisket	1010	1014		
Steak Mince	913	909	814	763
Boiling Beef Bone In	663	659		
DOMESTIC LAMB				
Whole Leg of Lamb	1291	1297	1222	1212
Centre Cut Leg Bone In	1520	1502		
Gigot Lamb Chops	1658	1644		
Lamb Leg Steaks	1757	1757	1825	1849
Chump Lamb Chops	1626	1626		
Double Loin Lamb Chops	1681	1688	1645	1645
Single Loin Lamb Chops	1540	1546	1558	1609
Rolled Shoulder Lamb	1117	1120		
Lamb Shanks	687	687		
Diced Lamb	1347	1353	1360	1354
Minced Lamb	1156	1170	1281	1281
PORK				
Pork Tenderloin (Fillet)	1181	1185	1114	1116
Pork Leg Steaks	965	965		
Double Loin Pork Chops	858	855	724	735
Single Loin Pork Chops	836	833		
Rolled Shoulder of Pork	701	699	784	768
Belly Pork	642	655		
Pork Loin Steaks	1012	1016	1059	992
Diced Pork	797	796	779	801
PRODUCTS				
Beef Link Sausages	738	736		
Pork Link Sausages	737	734	763	763
Speciality Pork Sausages	791	787		
Sliced Beef Sausage	659	659		
Sliced Black Pudding	614	615		
Ball Haggis	738	741		
Scotch Pie	93	93		

If you would like to contribute your prices to this anonymous monthly survey, please contact SFMTA by telephoning 01738 637472.

Livestock Prices

Data collection co-ordinated by AHDB Meat Services (Economics) on behalf of QMS, price updates available at www.qmscotland.co.uk

BEEF PRICES	W/E 19/01/13	Previous week	Previous year
Scottish Abattoirs			
Steers dwt	374.3 p/kg	374.3 p/kg	342.5 p/kg
Heifers dwt	369.4 p/kg	369.7 p/kg	341.2 p/kg
Young Bulls dwt	345.0 p/kg	341.9 p/kg	313.3 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	3899	3796	3584
Heifers	3195	3037	3299
Young Bulls	385	327	285

BEEF PRICES	W/E 16/01/13	Previous week	Previous year
Scottish Auctions			
Steers lwt	206.58 p/kg	206.67 p/kg	192.70 p/kg
Heifers lwt	202.68 p/kg	208.29 p/kg	193.99 p/kg
Young bulls lwt	159.37 p/kg	197.61 p/kg	161.86 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	186	189	256
Heifers	332	297	345
Young bulls	33	15	25

Deadweight cattle week ending 19th January 2013								
	All steers p/kg			All heifers p/kg			All Young bulls p/kg	
	3	4L	4H	3	4L	4H	3	4L
-U	376.2	377.8	376.2	373.7	377.2	375.5	363.8	361.4
R	376.2	378.3	377.3	371.6	373.1	372.8	358.9	353.6
O+	369.6	378.4	378.9	354.9	371.2	370.4	350.8	352.8
-O	347.3	351.0	350.0	317.7	332.7	317.2	331.4	n/a

While deadweight steers and heifers have been relatively stable over the past month or so, the value of young bulls has been fluctuating. Compared with the same week last year steers were 8% higher, heifers 9% higher and young bulls were up by 10%. Prices are trading at a premium to last year despite higher volumes. At Scottish auctions, numbers appear to have been stymied by the cold snap and this helped the prime cattle average lift by a penny to 202.6p/kg. Steers and heifers were 5% and 6% more expensive than in the same week of 2012. By contrast, young bulls were up 11% year-on-year having traded slightly lower in the previous week. This reflects thin volumes which leads to significant volatility in pricing from week-to-week.

For Sale

Trief Derby Dicer, new head fitted by manufacturer £3750 ono
True Pizza/Sandwich prep counter complete with worktop and 2 door refrigerated ingredient holding unit £375. Contact: Karen Connolly on 01506 651460

. SHEEP PRICES	W/E 16/01/13	Previous week	Previous year
Scottish Auctions			
Lamb SQQ lwt	145.13 p/kg	142.24 p/kg	198.14 p/kg
Ewes lwt	£44.65 /hd	£49.67 /hd	£74.89 /hd
Sheep numbers			
Scottish Auctions			
Lamb SQQ	12734	17927	15645
Ewes	5830	7072	5035

SHEEP PRICES		W/E 19/01/13	Previous week	Previous year
GB Abattoirs				
New season SQQ dwt		327.2 p/kg	332.6 p/kg	438.5 p/kg
Deadweight sheep week ending **19th January 2013** p/kg				
	U	340.6	341.1	333.0
	R	330.1	330.3	326.9
	O	314.0	318.5	315.3

Deadweight hogg prices softened for a sixth week in succession and remained one-quarter below their end of January 2012 level. The deadweight sample size was significantly higher on the year and may have played a part in suppressing the market price along with a greater proportion of the sample falling into the lighter weight category. By contrast, some forwards momentum returned to the live market and prices reached a 7-week high as favourable currency movements began to underpin prices. However there was a wide range in price across the different sales. Whereas Dumfries and Newton Stewart saw prices trade around the 140p/kg mark, hoggs sold for nearly 170p/kg at Lanark. The recent weakness in the market for cull ewes remained with prices £30 a head lower than at this time last year.

PIG PRICES	W/E 19/01/13	Previous week	Previous year
GB Abattoirs			
All pigs DAPP	159.84 p/kg	160.42 p/kg	143.35 p/kg

GB deadweight pigs ending **19th January 2013** – p/kg					
	Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change		Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change
Up to 59.9 kg	147.38	+0.83	80.0 – 89.9 kg	160.60	-0.58
60.0 – 69.9 kg	161.61	-0.24	90 kg and over	149.96	-2.20
70-0 – 79.9 kg	161.53	-0.40			

Data collection coordinated by AHDB Meat Services (Economics) on behalf of QMS, price updates available at **www.qmscotland.co.uk**

The seasonal decline in pig prices continued and industry sources have reported sluggish demand. However, the move in the Euro to 86p from 81p at the turn of the year is likely to generate some export demand as GB prices have become more competitive on the continent. Likewise, currency movements have made imports more expensive and the competitiveness of home-produced pigmeat in the domestic market has also improved.

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