

**MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD WITHIN
8/10 NEEDLESS ROAD PERTH, ON WEDNESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2005**

PRESENT: Duncan MacKenzie President (Chair)
 Douglas Scott Chief Executive
 Bruce McCall Minute Secretary

Plus 14 Executive and Ordinary members as detailed below:

Honorary President Arthur Matthew, Jamie Chapman, David Lindsay, Mark Barnett, Adam McLay, Jim Preston, Jack Meade, George Lees, Neil Cameron, Bob Baillie, Alan Kennedy, Hamish Deans, Stuart Christie, Wilson Ferguson.

President Duncan MacKenzie wished all the compliments of the season as this was the first meeting of the New Year.

Duncan said that John Chapman has been in hospital for an operation which went well. He said that a Get Well card would be sent to him on behalf of the Executive.

APOLOGIES: Richard Sneddon, Denis Meney, Jim Hastie, Graham Murdoch, John Chapman, Murray Lauchlan, David Jarron, Billy McFarlane, Stewart Dempsie, Roy Baird.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE MEETING: Stuart Christie approved the Minutes of the previous meeting held in September, seconded by Alan Kennedy.

Douglas mentioned that there was a slight factual correction, which will be altered on the file.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising.

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTY SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: There was no factual correction and Douglas thanked Bruce for producing them quicker than normal.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT: Douglas Scott reported.

His report included the items on the January agenda, which stretched back to October of last year. Douglas attended a free employment law seminar by MacRoberts. It was useful for background information.

MEAT PRODUCT REGULATIONS SEMINAR: This was organised by QMS and took place in the Council buildings in Ayr with at least 100 people in attendance. This included bakers, butchers and enforcement officers from a number of local authorities. Mark Woolfe gave an in depth and complicated view of the Meat Product Regulations. However, he did not in fact tell people what they actually had to do. An Environmental Health Officer from Somerset gave a very interesting talk on interpretation of what visual lean. He had used a grid over the meat and counted every square, which was lean and every square which was fat. This exercise proved that we all underestimate the VL. QMS promised after that meeting to go back and try to produce charts, which we still await.

The Chief Executive had attended an ESF Horizontal Themes Conference and the Guild of Q Butchers Regional Meeting. He had also compiled the recipe instructions and illustrations for the Beef Diamond Product and had met Dynamic Advertising about a possible new SFMTA logo.

ACBI TRADE FAIR & SKILLS COMPETITION: We sent a team comprising of the two winners in the 2004 Scotch Meat Challenge to the Irish Trade Fair to compete in the Celtic Challenge. It was held in City West, which is a hotel on the outskirts of Dublin. The stands were smaller than our show but were very busy. They had a very good registration desk and events were taking place all day. Douglas was asked to help judge the display competition where competing butchers had to build a cabinet display. This was well received and he hoped to incorporate this into our show due to the amount of interest in Ireland. The skills competition was in stages with beef first then lamb, pork and lastly chicken. This was spread out over the day so that there was always something happening and there were many awards to present across the day. Visitors seemed to stay in the trade fair the whole length of the day. They had excellent catering facilities in the foyer outside. Wilson Ferguson asked how many cabinets they had on display? Douglas confirmed that there was two cabinets shared by four butchers 1.4m of refrigeration per butcher. Duncan Mackenzie asked if there was anything outside Meat at the Show? Douglas said there was a wet fish display. There were different stands like safes, which everybody needs and we will try to incorporate as many of these stand types as possible. Douglas said that the Celtic Challenge was a home win but we will have a return competition at our own Trade Fair in May.

PERTH & KINROSS EHOs: Douglas had met with their EHOs and talked them through the Meat Product Regulations. SFMTA were able to assist the local authority with calculations for pre packaged meat products.

IMPROVE (SSC): This is the new sector skills council for food and drink. Jennifer Bryson is the Scottish Manager. The big worry is that it has all the makings of a food, drink and tobacco industry levy. It is a very expensive set up and is likely to overshoot its £6.5 million budget.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE RETAIL FORUM: report was circulated.

SASCOT SKILLS FOR TOMMORROW & OBJECTIVE 3 GOOD PRACTICE AND NETWORKING: Chief Executive attended both in place of Richard Sneddon whose presence was required elsewhere.

MTC REGIONAL MEETING: held in Federation offices.

WORLD SCOTCH PIE COMPETITION: The President and Chief Executive had attended the presentations in Dunfermline. This year we were pleased to celebrate a butcher winning the title for only the second time in the five year history of the event. The winner was Boghall butchers, Bathgate.

This was only the second time a butcher had won the competition.

MEAT TRADES JOURNAL TOP SHOP AWARDS: Douglas reported that MTJ were trying to get his help in getting QMS to sponsor the Top Shop awards for Scotland. At the hugely impressive London presentations held in the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane Gary Parker, their Chief Executive, issued a proposal to take back to QMS. The budget was £40,000 and QMS are considering the merits of a Scottish Top Shop. The criteria was more about telling a good story rather than about pure shop appearance.

ADAS / ENVAR MEETING: Both Douglas and Alistair Donaldson (SAMW) attended meeting to discuss removing the need for blood waste from abattoirs, which is taken down to England for treatment. ENVAR was keen to solve the problem and have it treated in Scotland. Douglas raised our problem regards animal waste and bones with them.

QMS – A meeting was held with to discuss QMS take up of MLC services. Douglas said that Andy was loathed to agree a contract with MLC to fully provide their services. It is understood legal support through Michael Fogden would not be used a great deal and it is hugely expensive. Andy McGowan agreed to forward his responses on FSA consultations to SFMTA.

SAMW – ALISTAIR DONALDSON: Animal Waste & Bones, Butcher Licensing and H123 were discussed. Douglas said that SAMW now spend quite a lot of time making representations in Europe.

QMS / UNITED AUCTIONS ESTIMATED BREEDING VALUES SEMINAR:- The research which was being done was interesting and a report of the seminar held in Perth was tabled.

QC OPINION ON QMS: Opinion had been received on questions about QMS. We asked Counsel's opinion on various topics and set various questions.

Q1. Do we have any right to be on the Board of QMS ? The answer to this question is no. The report stated;

" The Meat & Livestock Commission was directed to delegate to QMS the responsibility for carrying out in Scotland the functions imposed on the Commission under the Agriculture Act 1967, including the sponsoring and operating of a scheme for the imposition and collection of levy.

Under the previous arrangements, the memorialists did not have any statutory right to representation on the MLC Board, its 15 members being persons selected by the appropriate Ministers on the basis of their experience or expertise in various aspects of commerce.

Similarly, there is no statutory right to representation on the QMS Board."

Q2. Any right to have a direct say in the running of the industry?

" Given the way in which the present situation has evolved, the answer to this question is again, No – in that SFMTA are not entitled to any "direct" say – although an obligation to consult SFMTA will arise in certain circumstances.

Even after delegation to QMS, it is the MLC that retains the statutory duty to "promote greater efficiency in the livestock products industry."

Concluding this question;

"That having been said, SFMTA are not precluding from raising concerns with QMS regarding matters affecting them and requiring QMS to take a view as to whether any exercise of any of the functions delegated to them was likely to have a substantial effect on meat retailers' interests, thereby triggering, potentially at least, the obligation to consult with SFMTA."

Q3. Are the current arrangements and constitution of the QMS challengable?

"Although the manner in which functions have been transferred is somewhat unusual, I am of the Opinion that an effective challenge to the present set up is not available. "

Q4. Is the statutory levy currently being paid by members of SFMTA legal ?

Yes

Q5. Who pays under the levy scheme?

"Clearly the intent of the levy scheme is that all who benefit from the role played by the MLC should contribute to that body's expenses. Although, therefore, the immediate point of payment is the slaughterhouse, it is clear from the scheme that the MLC can, and have determined, that such as auctioneers, producers and meat wholesalers/ retailers should meet an appropriate part of the levy. I understand that the factual position is that all interests contribute to MLC/QMS expenses.

It is therefore, disingenuous to suggest, as some of the correspondence does, that SFMTA members are not "levy payers" The fact that their payments are made to and through the principle point of collection on to the MLCF/QMS does not mean that they are not persons who pay under the scheme. The scheme is simply a practical and efficient administrative mechanism for collection."

Douglas suggested the QCs opinion was mainly bad news with one bit of good news at the end regarding levy payers. It was probably an expensive exercise given the result.

Hamish Deans questioned the first page which said "Although I have been unable to obtain the constitutional documents and Articles of Association of QMS Board." He could not understand how this was not available. He further felt the point was missed about our relationship with QMS and the Board had evolved from MLC. A meeting took place with NFU that John Chapman was also in attendance. NFU intended to take up our objections with the QMS Board on how it was set up.

Wilson Ferguson said that we already had a seat on the Board. Hamish Deans wanted to know why Douglas Scott was removed from the Board. Indications were then given at various events that George Jarron was our representative. Mark Barnett said the report had said it was unusual to have the Board set up in that way but it was still legal. Hamish said they should have resolved that problem when the right to extract levy from the meat trade was made at the outset. Mark Barnett said that they could basically hire and fire board members as they want. Wilson Ferguson asked what happens when George Jarron intends to stand down

Duncan MacKenzie asked if they then had to put someone else in place from the retail sector. Hamish Deans said the Auctioneers are in the same position with someone imposed up them when they would rather have their own representative. He then questioned why this situation was not looked at and regulated before QMS was put into place. Wilson Ferguson said it was Jim Walker who invited George Jarron on to the QMS Board. Mark Barnett suggested that when George Jarron steps down that a suitable SFMTA replacement had a seat on the Board.

Mark Barnett said Jan Polley was questioned about the formation of QMS at the Federation AGM. She said it was set up by the NFU, SAMW and The Scottish Office. Mark Barnett said they did not answer his question. The question was, "Were the NFU and SAMW happy that QMS were set up without the two other parts (SFMTA and IAAS) not involved?" Hamish Deans said it was set up by two individuals, not their organisations.

Wilson Ferguson suggested that we could get George Jarron to put forward names of practitioners from our organisation. Douglas Scott suggested we need to have names ready if and when George Jarron steps down. It was agreed to establish the timescale of George Jarron stepping down directly, before we proceed with submitting proposals. Hamish Deans felt George was going to serve his two years in office.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: Douglas Scott reported.

We had a Compliance Audit by Scottish Enterprise Grampian in August and their had been various problems with it. The report was received by the end of December. There are various problems with it, that we are still in discussions about and expect to resolve them in the next month. As a result of that we also have had an audit by Meat Training Council and those who have trainees have been sent a letter saying we are behind on our calls. MTC are not happy with the standard of assessment so the Assessor will be asking more questions and observing more which will benefit both the trainee and the employer. It is going to slow things down. We will need to re write and build Level 2 & Level 3. Level 2 is not a problem, folders have been produced for each candidate with support material no matter what stage they are at in their training. Level 3 is more of a problem as we do not have support material and this will not be acceptable. We will have to work hard to put this together. Both Douglas and Richard are concerned that Level 3 will be too difficult for some trainees.

The second concern is that Highland & Islands and Scottish Enterprise concentrate their funding on Modern Apprenticeships. A Modern Apprenticeship is a Level 2 & 3. To get the bulk of the

funding available and so deliver the most cost effective training programme, it is desirable to achieve the Level 3 SVQ.

George Lees asked how many assessors we have now? Douglas said this was a point raised by MTC and it was agreed that we have 3.5 Assessors to meet the number of trainees we have. This equates to 80 per assessor. Even that is quite high but economically it is impossible to operate with more than four assessors. We have taken on Richard Brown taken on in January, Derek Stahly who is under suspension as a result of Scottish Enterprise Grampian audit. Richard Sneddon is doing Derek's calls at present. The other assessor is John Farquhar. We also have an Internal Verifier called Eleanor Rae who wants to become an assessor when Richard Sneddon becomes our Internal Verifier.

Internal verification is important since we must check paperwork coming in is completed correctly, check registration is correct and check we make claims correctly. These are things thrown up as being problems in the past. We have created an operations flow chart which is on the wall in the assessors room and a different operations chart showing who reports to who. A new post of Compliance Officer has been created and Sandra Lennox has been put in that position. Sandra was an internal verifier in previous employment and knows how the system should operate but she cannot be our Internal Verifier as she has no meat industry background.

It is important we get it right. If we do not achieve this we do not get certification from Meat Training Council and therefore funding from both the funding bodies Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands. In reply to a question from George Lees it was confirmed that we were still working on milestones except in ESF where we are working in units. Wilson Ferguson asked if we need to take on another assessor to release Richard. Douglas said that Eleanor Rae would replace Richard once he becomes the Internal Verifier.

George Lees asked if it was taking much longer to do assessment as the assessor was there for almost four hours to do a Level 2 assessment. Douglas Scott said that MTC were not happy with the quality of the assessments so every milestones has to be checked over with a practical assessment. The internal verifier will not accept just a tick in a box but needs an explanation of what is observed. All the paperwork has changed therefore the first one or two visits will take longer than normal. Hamish Deans said since August there had been a gradual decline in numbers. Douglas said this is partly because we have been told by MTC that we have too many trainees per Assessor so we have not taken any more on. Sandra Lennox has been in the office doing systems and paperwork since August so she has not been out bringing in trainees.

David Lindsay asked if it was now about quality instead of quantity. Douglas said the quality was always important but will now be a lot higher. Wilson Ferguson said would it be possible to take on more staff to get more trainees. Yes but we would need to wait until March to see if MTC will let us certify again.

Douglas read the following report prepared by Richard Sneddon:

SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS CONTRACT 2005/2006: This was submitted to Scottish Enterprise via e-mail and post, along with all evidence required for our submission. Richard contacted Scottish Enterprise recently about our contract for 2005/2006. They will consider our submission this week and get back n due course. The progress that SMT as a team has made since the August audit has been outstanding and this has reflected in the response from both Scottish Enterprise, Meat Training Council and Scottish Qualifications Authority, our awarding bodies. All have said that they see vast improvements.

The Highlands and Islands contract was submitted on the 25th January for re-contracting for the period of 2005/2006. We should hear on the result of this very soon.

FINANCIAL SITUATION: The department has not received any income from Scottish Enterprise since June and has had to ensure that it has operated economically. I expect that we will receive payment for the work we have carried out since our suspension in August 2004 at the end of March 2005, subject to approval from both Scottish Enterprise and Meat Training Council.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND: We are continuing to receive funds from this source. We have, at present, suspend activities due to prioritising staff time in the areas requiring urgent attention, i.e New system implementation, Re-building of all Level II's, Re-training of staff that was previously under the past management, Re-building of Level III, Addressing Action Plans put to us from both Scottish Enterprise and Meat Training Council etc.

Scottish Meat Training has just been awarded a European Social Fund grant for the Highlands and Islands areas. This will allow us to fully employ an assessor in this part of the country so that it can be fully serviced and developed on an on-going basis.

STAFFING LEVELS: Lynn Rettie, administrator left the company at the end of last year. Due to the impending claw back I have not replaced her. I am at present working with one administration person with back up from the Members Services as and when their assistance is required. We currently have someone temporarily making up portfolios.

Sandra Lennox has now become the Compliance Officer. Her primary role is to manage the new system and the assessors/Internal Verifier.

Eleanor Rae, who worked at Brown Brothers, Kirkconnel, as Training Manager and Internal Verifier has come on board, part time, as our internal verifier until I qualify. At this point I will take over this role. She is at present reporting to the Compliance Officer for the technical work.

Richard Brown, ex butcher and Meat Hygiene Officer, has joined the ranks as a new trainee assessor. At present we require three assessors and a part time assessor. We have three at present, including myself.

TRAINEE NUMBERS: Trainee numbers remain static and will do so until both Scottish Enterprise and Meat Training Council lift our suspensions, this I hope will come in to effect by the end of March. Scottish Enterprise will not allow us to start new trainees and Meat Training Council will not allow us to finish anyone off by certification. At present we do have new starts in a pending folder in the hope that we will be given funding to start them in the very near future. Reduction in numbers is due to terminations.

At present all assessors are working on a list given to us by Meat Training Council who, after investigation, require re-observing of trainees as they feel that the assessments carried out in the past number of years has been inadequate. This has resulted in the team falling behind with their normal assessment duties. We expect to have this work completed by the end of February and back on to the mainstream work. A letter has been sent out to employers of trainees advising them that we are striving to get back on schedule as soon as we can.

THE CELTIC CHALLENGE 2004: The two winners from the Meat Skills Under 22's and over 25's age group in, August, went over to southern Ireland in November where they competed against their Celtic colleagues. This was a great experience for them and a chance to show off their skills and to gain extra knowledge. Unfortunately they didn't win but were up there with the best in the competition.

SFMTA CELTIC CHALLENGE: Douglas said if we repeat the challenge at the Trade Fair he hoped that the Welsh promotion body would enter a team. After that there would be a question should invite the English?

MEAT SKILLS 2005: We would expect that QMS would sponsor this at a Scottish Meat Challenge event.

Duncan Mackenzie asked about the Trade Fair competition. If we do in fact invite the English and have a four nations event. We could invite some non meat organisations to do something similar. Douglas asked why they would want to do it. Duncan MacKenzie replied because it was just a venue for them and would boost our numbers. Hamish Deans asked why we should exclude the English and Duncan MacKenzie suggested why we want them there. Hamish Deans felt it would be better for profile than three nations and joiners and plumbers. He said it should be our own trade first. He then suggested the bakers. Mark Barnett asked who runs the four nations competition. Douglas said it was organised by Meat Training Council. Hamish Deans said maybe it would be prudent for just the Irish and ourselves and sow the seed for others in the future. David Lindsay said it was a friendly rivalry at the moment but once more nations are involved then it may not be quite so friendly. Douglas invited the Welsh in December but has not heard back from them, so it might be quite difficult to back track on it.

Jack Meade said that the Scottish Executive had agreed for new superstores to be granted planning permission as part of re-generation and Tesco was opening twelve miles away from him. He felt it was like a cancer spreading. Duncan Mackenzie said he attending a meeting with Wilson Ferguson on the greater Glasgow re-generation. At that time there was a lot of out of town large retail outlets opening up. Tesco, Safeway etc. said it was because there was not enough space available in the city centres. Greater Glasgow said then there will be no more applications for large stores. Mark Barnett said that local planning work on a per head of people. Hamish Deans said we have ASDA coming down and Tesco more than doubling its capacity. Mark Barnett said a few local businesses need to get a hold of the local plan from their local authority. It will say what is allowed or not allowed. Hamish Deans said if a butcher shop is next door to a supermarket they could well be better off considering the footfall involved. David Lindsay suggested that Perth has been through all of this and if another store it would not make any difference as they would just be pinching customers of each other. Stuart Christie said that the public had vetoed the proposal of another store near him although he had been in its favour. Jamie Chapman said they are not creating more jobs as all the manufacturing is done elsewhere with beef coming from Argentina etc but with butchers for everyone serving at the front there are four or five involved in the manufacturing. Arthur Matthew reported that 5 new supermarkets are planned for Dundee. Arthur felt that the rejected ones will be redrawn and submitted again to test the water. Mark Barnett said that the Scottish Executive was looking at the globalising of villages. Local planning people were to look at the amount of stores already in the area. Douglas reported that a newspaper article stated that 50% of people in the UK think that Tesco has too much power

FINANCE REPORT: Douglas Scott reported.

MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT: Subscriptions are now flowing in and the account is looking healthy with no concerns.

SCOTTISH MEAT TRAINING: There has been no income from Scottish Enterprise since August. The ESF project is still paying us but not enough. A Presidents Committee was held earlier in the day to see that we were still happy to continue with the training company despite the financial position. It was agreed that we continue in the knowledge that things would be put in place to restore funding in the very near future.

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT: David Lindsay reported.

Invoices for membership fees were only sent out on the 5th January. Payment summary and membership lists are available at this meeting.

256 members have paid this includes 54 Annual Direct Debits were collected on 28th January. 34 Monthly and 23 Quarterly Direct debits commenced on the 4th February.

A recruitment flyer was sent out at the start of January to 280 businesses. Information packs were sent out to:-

A McCandlish, East Kilbride
Liddle, St Boswells
Douglas Brunton, Lanarkshire
James Brydon Hogg, Galashiels
The Ancrum Butcher
Mr J Climie, Cumnock
E, Williams, Kilbarchan
Skinner, Kippen
G Lang & Sons, Edinburgh
S Henderson, Castle Douglas
Lochalsh Butchers, Kyle
Prime Cut, Leith
W Crawford, Bannockburn
J J Allan, Johnstone
Clippens, Linwood
Gary Gordon, Musselburgh
P Hilley, Coatbridge
Afton Glen Meats, New Cumnock
Blackmount Foods, Biggar
Robertson Fine Foods, Ardrossan

MEMBERS RESIGNED - 5

J T Millar, Gilmerton, Edinburgh
Stewarts of Portsoy
Kennedy, Scone
Wm Allan & Son, Girvan
Scott of Juniper Green

NEW MEMBERS - 6

D & Brunton & Sons, Wishaw
The Ancrum Butcher
Skinner, Kippen
Prime Cut, Leith
James Brydon Hogg, Galashiels
George Cockburn & Sons, Dingwall

CORPORATE MEMBERS: 14 – no payments received yet.

Membership renewal stickers will be sent out as payments are received.

TRADE FAIR

The Trade Fair will be held on the 8th May in Dewars Centre, Perth.
Corporate members were approached first to book stand space.

33 of the 50 units are booked. Early indications are that regular exhibitors are either booking less space or not attending. On the positive side AMKO are returning and Bank of Scotland Merchant Services are attending for the first time.

Hamish Deans asked if the Royal Bank of Scotland were approached. Alan Kennedy agreed to approach the Royal Bank of Scotland about taking a stand.

David Lindsay asked members to let the office know of any of your suppliers that you would think may be interested in attending. We are especially interested in suppliers of products who might not be represented.

A G M

The AGM was held at the Glynhill Hotel in Renfrew on Sunday 20 November. Attendance could have been better with 13 member businesses in attendance. 34 attended the Dinner and 29 attended the AGM and 46 to the lunch. The AGM cost the Federation £1250 (although the Glynhill have yet to process the credit card settlement!).

It may be that since there are more businesses represented at an Executive Meeting that we should consider holding the AGM on a Wednesday in Perth?

Louise Welsh of QMS gave an overview presentation on QMS activities. This was followed by a question and answer session which Jan Polley and June Lomax assisted Louise in answering the questions. Norman Kyle of the National Federation of Meat & Food Traders was in attendance.

Regional Meetings

A list of dates was distributed with the January agenda. Since the list was drawn up it has become clear that there is little business or demonstrations available that would draw members out on a February night.

What we have been able to get is Laurent Vernet from QMS. He gave a very successful meat eating appreciation talk with sampling at the 2004 Royal Highland Show and it is planned to repeat this for SFMTA members at three venues this February. If this is successful then we could maybe try another three venues next February.

The first was held last night in Glasgow in the very smart surroundings of the Oran Mor venue in Great Western Road. Steaks were evaluated but costs meant that attendance would need to be restricted to two per business. 52 members and guests were expected, 44 turned up from as far a field as Tiree and Stornoway. Duncan Mackenzie, Stuart Christie or Jack Meade may like to comment when I'm finished. Feedback from members present seemed to be very favourable.

Laurent is available again on 15th and 21st February when we will hold similar events in Dunfermline and Inverness. These Regional Meetings will be run as workshops financed through ESF and members attending will receive certificates of attendance.

Handbook

Letters were sent out at the end of December to advertise in the Handbook. £ 2900 has been secured as advertising income.

Golf

The Annual Federation Golf competition will be held on Wednesday 27th April 2005 at Gleneagles. Booking forms will be sent out with the next newsletter.

The format for the day would be as follows:- (Based on 2004 golf day)

Tea/Coffee & Bacon Rolls served on arrival in Dormy Suite (From 09:00 am)

Golf on Queen's from 10:00 am

Buffet Lunch served in Dormy Suite

Also included in the above package is:-

Use of the driving range

Longest drive and nearest the pin markers

Use of the Dormy Clubhouse facilities - lockers, bag storage, showers, sauna, turkish bath, bar

Welcome Pack which includes course guide, golf pencil, tee pegs, ball markers

The package price for 2005 will be £80 per person.

Stuart Christie said that the Beef Tasting event was excellent and there was some new things he had learned. He advised members to attend if available.

Hamish Deans asked about the reasons why businesses had resigned from membership

J T Millar, Gilmerton, Edinburgh – shop closed

Stewarts of Portsoy – formerly the second shop of J Stewart and his wives - things are extremely tight at present.

Kennedy, Scone – sold business to another member who has premises across and down road

Wm Allan & Son, Girvan – shop closed

Scott of Juniper Green – business taken over and thinks our fees are too expensive.

David Lindsay suggested that the year where a new President comes in we still have a weekend function and the intervening year would be on a Wednesday Perth. Douglas Scott said that a Wednesday might encourage a higher turnout. Duncan MacKenzie and Mark Barnett suggested a lunch on a Wednesday in a local hotel with the AGM after it. Mark Barnett also said this idea could be incorporated in to the incoming presidents local area. Hamish Deans said it was a good idea to take meetings around the country as we had done previously. Douglas Scott said that we need a decision on this year. Jamie Chapman said it would be a good idea to have it on a Wednesday as there is no change of President to assess attendance. Mark Barnett said even if it was not a success it will save the Federation money.

Duncan Mackenzie said in view of the last AGM costing £1250 the lack of members attending was almost embarrassing. He suggested either have the meeting in a local hotel or in our offices. Douglas Scott said we will have a problem with Wednesdays as the Winter Fair is on and getting the Accounts ready. Douglas agreed to investigate at November AGM date and venue.

LEGISLATION REPORT: Douglas Scott reported.

MEAT HYGIENE POLICY FORUM: Blue paper was circulated in January. These meetings are about policy and the Food Standards Agency. The MHPF tend to take on board and understand industry problems. They are aware of the problems with the Microbiological Testing Regulations proposed and are on the 14th version of the regulations. This is about mince and much debate and argument is still taking place.

The Wall Report was highlighted. This was about 24 – 30 month cattle being tested for BSE and it raised problems with the testing regime and the possibility of things going wrong. There was debate about who the report should go to and it was understood the reporting was to FSA who are responsible for the Meat Hygiene Service.

Food Chain Information is a worrying aspect which means the new rules that the animals arriving at the slaughterhouse should be the same as the information provided 24 hours before arrival. Douglas said that practical people will know that this is impossible. MHPF appreciate the problems and are trying hard to resolve them.

H123 under these proposed regulations catering over 25% require approval. It is still not clear what approval is required. Businesses in that category would not have a problem meeting the Low throughput cutting plant licence. If businesses doing catering trade need approval they are not in that situation at the moment so how will they know how difficult or easy it will be to apply. We already have butcher licensing there may be a case for retaining butcher licensing. The legislation is based on HACCP and H123 is based on HACCP why should the existing licence not be enough and may be the cheaper option as vets not involved. Douglas asked for who are not currently low throughput cutting plants but would probably fall under this category members to be put forward for advisory approval appraisals. MHS is currently reviewing existing cutting plants to see if they can meet the requirements. Hamish Deans said the majority of butchers would be over 25%. Hamish said the biggest mistake was not making a sensible lower floor limit saying this would take out a lot of the debate in the issue. He said there are not enough vets and the last thing MHS needs is more work being transferred from local authorities to themselves. Alan Kennedy asked if the 25% floor limit is this on weight or value. Douglas Scott replied that it was on weight. Alan

Kennedy said this was better. He said both the local authorities he deals with think they are going to be responsible for approval. Hamish Deans said that it was just going back to where we were 8 or 9 years ago. Duncan Mackenzie asked how much a vet will cost. Alan Kennedy thought it was £6 per visit. Hamish Deans suggested at that cost he would only be there for 5 minutes. If it goes above a set limit the costs start to spiral.

BUTCHER LICENSING: Douglas said in his opinion we need to know more about H123 before anything else is debated. Hamish Deans said we need to be aware of the costs involved in particular to the smallest of our members. Duncan Mackenzie said a number of the businesses he is supplying are being sent on HACCP courses which require two meetings and that is all. Douglas Scott said in 2006 all food businesses will have to operate HACCP. Stuart Christie said that a place he supplied had been given a chicken fillet with an abscess in it. He said according to EHO all chickens are given a jab for penicillin every two weeks to stop them taking on any diseases.

MEAT PRODUCT REGULATIONS: Douglas said we are continuing to provide calculations for free to members.

LIVESTOCK REPORT: Duncan MacKenzie welcomed Stuart Christie as the new Convenor and he reported.

Over the Christmas period plenty of cattle, sheep and pigs. No great increase in prices farmers were trying to get as many cattle away before the £ 50 Beef Premium scheme stopped at the end of the year.

Now a different scenario is involved. It's early yet not many sales with cattle short of supply and prices rising. Irish importers are not quoting advance prices but on a day to day basis. The farmers are looking to the trade to make up the £ 50. He was surprised by the low cost of some of the items in Sainsburys. In Safeways they were selling sirloin steaks in pre packs at £11 per kilo and market as British.

Hides are slipping back to about £ 22 - £ 24. Sheepskins are as little as 95p. Most abattoirs have increased killing charges (cattle up 10% to £ 5, sheep 14 % up 90p and pigs £ 2.60 25%) mainly because of the costs from Forrest to uplift waste. Which is up 75% since September.

Along with J Chapman, G Jarron and H Deans I had a e-mail from Eleanor Scott, Green Party MSP about the decline in rural abattoirs. I spoke to Jamie Chapman and phoned Miss Scott. Very interesting conversation, mother stays in Wimpy and is customer of mine. Agreed with what she says told her about Arran and Islay. She had been to Munro of Dingwall & Mull slaughterhouses.

The derogation the islands have got for dumping bones will stop. One of the problems is bones, Caledonian McBrayne won't take them on ferries. Offal into landfill £ 60 per tonne freight charge. Scottish Farmer reported on it. The Scottish Farmer reported on both of these items

Douglas Scott reported that the Scottish Parliament debate was started with SFMTA being mentioned. He said it was difficult enough to run the existing abattoirs economically without there being more small abattoirs. It was clearly the intent of the Green Party to have more smaller ones but economically it was not on.

Douglas highlighted the blue paper circulated which is Jim Walker letter and the FSA reply. In Ross Finnie's letter to Jim Walker referred to the current EU requirement to remove spinal column from cattle aged over 12 months that is the new requirement. He was aware the imposition of this on the UK will represent costs and other difficulties to industry and assured that UK industry will seek to avoid this where possible. Any negotiations involving difficult negotiations with Brussels when the outcome is far from certain. Douglas said that this would mean that you would

no longer be able to supply T Bone steaks. This currently applies in Ireland. The Irish removed it in the shop and stained it to be collected as SRM but when asked what happens in rural areas then the arguments go out the window. FSA letter highlights that they are aware of the difficulties. Douglas what is concerning people is that OTM cattle will be introduced before we get a chance to change this legislation. Stuart Christie thought OTM cattle would be have to boned out before they are exported when the ban is lifted. He said that it is a problem and that it again was about harmonising existing EU legislation. Douglas had only received this the day before but was looking to respond about our concerns. Hamish Deans said we do not want to fall down just to get the export lifted to fall in line with the continent. Duncan Mackenzie asked if we were any further forward in getting the boxes marked by the wholesalers. Some suggested they would not do this on a voluntary basis.

Jamie Chapman highlighted that Woodhead were buying at market for Morrisons. He said his cattle last week were at Christmas show prices. Hamish Deans said this was a good thing to flag up. Morrisons are the one at present who are going down line as they own their own abattoir now are likely to be more competition than the other supermarkets. He said they are only rationalising their business at the moment but once they get behind it their will be fierce competition. Alan Kennedy said they employ their own butchers so they will have comparable product to what we sell in the shops. Hamish Deans said they are worse competition because they are trying to do what we do. Tesco just buy of wholesalers to a certain extent. Jamie Chapman said it will be a problem once Morrisons put their advertising budget behind it. They are buying, wholesaling, slaughtering, processing job and sales. This is why Morrisons could be bigger competition in the future.

PROMOTION REPORT: Mark Barnett was welcomed as the new convenor and reported.

With the first mail of the new year, Haggis **Posters** and leaflets were distributed for Burns Night. Requests have been coming in for more posters and leaflets. There was a new design for the Burns Night poster featuring more on the haggis. Feedback from members so far suggests that they preferred the classier traditional Burns look.

The recipe and poster for Honey Mustard and Pork Loin with Apricots that won **Diamond** for Douglas Graham in the last Make it with Meat Awards will be despatched on Monday 14th February.

CRAFT BUTCHERS: In his speech at the AGM Mark said that he felt he had failed and the executive had failed the membership in not making a decision on this. The discussions from the October Executive meeting have been fairly fully recorded in the minutes of that meeting. The designers were forwarded your comments but really need a much clearer brief before we should allow them to continue since every time they re-draw a design it is costing money.

Firstly he asked for agreement on change of name.

Scottish Federation of Craft Butchers

to replace

Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Associations

Should the Executive decide or should there be a referendum of members?

A show of hands had a majority in favour. Douglas Scott said a formal motion had to be put forward. Hamish Deans agreed that a formal proposal was to be made at the next meeting to ensure non attendees could comment. Mark Barnett said that a formal proposal as above would be made to the next meeting. Stuart Christie was in favour of cutting it down a bit.

Secondly Mark asked should we ask members for ideas for logo design?

Should we take on the idea of a competition?

Should we incorporate the new name in the old logo?

Thirdly what do we want on the logo?

Failing all this would we want to use the strapline Craft Butcher?

Mark Barnett said all of this would be taken up at the next meeting and we had missed a big opportunity not sorting this out before now. Jamie Chapman said we spent more money than ever last year promoting ourselves as SFMTA. Mark Barnett said that Wilson Ferguson brought up the idea that we had a logo for the shops as a marketing tool. The existing logo would be used as a corporate image to the Scottish Executive etc. At the end of that meeting Alan Kennedy approached him that large companies take this approach. Mark feels we have a company name.

QMS: Douglas said the tone of the meeting was much more friendly than it had ever been. The discussions were about what they could do for us and what we wanted. The issue of representation was not discussed. They will continue to help with the Make it With Meat Awards, three butchers per year including Simon Taylor poster. Other than this butchers would need to buy into the QMS Scotch Butchers Club.

Duncan Mackenzie mentioned Pork promotions being discussed with BPEX. They are slightly annoyed that we are not allowed to use a lot of what BPEX produce despite BPEX being give £ 300,000. It appears to be a sticking point between BPEX and QMS which they need to sort out. Jamie Chapman asked if the sum was in levy money. Douglas suggested the MLC gives the money to QMS and then it comes back to BPEX. There is no PGI for Pork so they may just buy into the promotion. Douglas said we did not see any of the 96 poster material in January and we do not get the sausage material in October. SFMTA had made approaches to BPEX to buy into it but BPEX said any approach needs to come through QMS. Hamish Deans said we should apply direct to MLC with short sharp approach to get some action. Jack Meade said the 96 poster was a con because you cannot buy it as the pork is injected with fluid to tenderise it. His opinion was the pig trade is ruined with no one standing up to it. He said the heavyweights argument is it is produced in that way from a welfare perspective. Hamish Deans said the welfare aspect is a joke when he asked about not being able to get Hog pigs he was told they were trying to promote a standard product. It is ruining it for independent butchers. He and John Chapman suggested instead of A or B a star would go on it to show it was boar pork. This could easily be done as a star rating to show it is boar pork. Douglas agreed to write to BPEX to get some more material.

LABOUR CONDITIONS: Douglas Scott reported.

Low Pay Commission: no one could attend but Bruce McCall attend. Other organisations had high power people there and the grocers had a full report on front page of their magazine. Our concerns were the level of wage coming up and the differential between the skilled and unskilled level closing. They did take on board views from newsagents, bakers grocers and licensed trade. The conclusion was that the level set would be a political one.

ACAS Disciplinary Procedure & Code of Practice are now issued to members who have employment law queries. Jamie Chapman asked for us to have a link from our website to their website. Douglas agreed to action.

There is currently an issue with manual handling. Although our staff rules and procedures suggests a risk assessment is carried out no one is doing it. If it is not written down it will be a difficult situation to defend. A leaflet on manual handling was and is being handed out at the regional meetings which started last night. Stuart Christie asked what the maximum weight allowed for manual handling. Douglas agreed to find this out. Douglas has approach the Health & Safety inspector who came to us to put in a service to members in a similar way to how the

Employment law service from Kerr-Smith Associates. This had previously been raised at an AGM by David Lindsay a number of years ago. Hamish Deans said the biggest problem in health & Safety is now stress. Jamie Chapman said one of their cleaners had a problem with the Family Credit so the citizens advice said to get signed off with stress and their rent would be paid for.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:

George Lees said that he had information about selling meat from a stall less than 100 metres from your premises. Street traders cannot operate within 100 metres from your shop. He thought that farmers markets were exempt.

Alan Kennedy said that a lot of ready meals he sells to elderly that they can put in the microwave. If these are packaged home helps will not buy them unless they have cooking instructions on them. This has caused him a bit of a problem. Mark Barnett said the Fife Council Home Helps are not allowed to use local shops as it takes too much time and hassle.

Stuart Christie mentioned about a Health & Safety scam that will be brought to members attentions.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 9 March 2005.

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

