FEDERATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SCOTLAND'S CRAFT BUTCHERS







SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF MEAT TRADERS

JANUARY 2006

2006 Here it Comes

President Duncan MacKenzie wishes all the members and friends of the Federation a very Happy and Prosperous New Year



This Month

AGM News

2006 Regs

Butcher Feature from Dalbeattie

Christmas Black Out in West Fife

Burns Night Promotion

AGM Reports II

Recruit an Albanian

Scottish Market Prices

Europe and Scotland
Making it **work together**

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Beef Ban on Track to be lifted in April

Quality Meat Scotland has welcomed confirmation from the Scottish Executive that the ban on exports of beef should be lifted in early April.

Rural Development Minister Ross Finnie said on Thursday 22nd December that barring unforeseen delays the timetable set out by the European Commission indicates that the process to remove restrictions will be completed in April.

Commenting on the announcement QMS Interim Chairman Donald Biggar said: "There had been fears within the industry that the date for a resumption of beef exports was in danger of slipping back to May, or possibly even later, so confirmation from the Scottish Executive that everything is on track for early April is most welcome.

"In the meantime we will continue to press for the gap between the ending of the OTMS scheme and the lifting of the ban to kept as the small as possible to help avoid the potential of market dislocation."

The issue of a resumption of exports will be raised at January's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) at the European Commission. According to SEERAD's timetable, subject to the usual formalities, this puts the lifting of the ban on course for completion in early April.

The Scottish industry has two dedicated agents already working in Europe and the Benelux to build new markets for Scottish red meat companies on the continent.

FSA meet SFMTA on Salt / Fat

Representatives of the FSA (Scotland) will meet with SFMTA in Perth on Wednesday 18th January to discuss FSA targets to reduce salt / fat intake. They are particularly interested in meat products such as sausages, pies etc. which can be quite high in salt/fat. If some of your members produce their own meat products, and especially if they have been trying to make lower salt/fat versions, then it would be very useful if they could attend the meeting.
Any member who would like to attend or has views on this please contact SFMTA. 01738 637472

UK welcomes adoption of avian flu directive

Official DEFRA release 22 December 2005

Mrs Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said the Directive strengthened the EU's ability to better tackle any outbreak in birds should it occur. The Directive, which updates an existing document, introduces a number of new powers and disease surveillance measures.

New measures include:-

- Allowing member states to slaughter birds found to have a low pathogenic virus and introduce movement controls around the affected area.
- Boosting surveillance for the disease with programmes for sampling of flocks Introducing powers to restrict movements on suspicion of disease and national or regional movement restrictions after disease is confirmed
- Allowing state vets to apply controls flexibly to keep industry operating in a biosecure way Requiring Member States to keep a central register of commercial poultry keepers

The new Directive will allow exemptions, for example, for rare species but only if disease control is not jeopardised. Margaret Beckett said: "This Directive strengthens a Member State's hand when tackling an outbreak of avian influenza should it occur. "It introduces new powers, greater surveillance and a degree of flexibility which makes the UK and Europe better prepared to control the disease in birds and I welcome its adoption."

The West Fife Story

Christmas trade was brisk in most butchers' shops. Shoppers seem to have been out in force on both the 23rd and 24th. Sanity ruled and there were very few signs of reticence over purchases of turkey.

This Christmas Eve the SFMTA Newsletter's spotlight was placed on West Fife.



At 8.30 in the morning SM Bayne in Rosyth had a constant flow of early customers and the team of staff were able to contain the queue inside the door.

On to Cowdenbeath next and a look at the three SFMTA members there. First impression was that Lindsay Noble had closed! His windows were clouded over and the shop was in darkness. It then emerged that the south end of Cowdenbeath High Street had been struck by a power cut. Of all the days for that to happen!



Lindsay Noble dries the condensation off the inside of his windows while waiting the return of power



Lindsay with his assistant, Marion put on a brave face during their hour long power cut.

Meanwhile the smell of steak pies wafted out into the crisp spring-like morning at the other end of the High Street where, with power, Alan Bauld and his staff were coping well with their steady stream of customers.







Back in September when Tom Courts new shop was featured he invited us back to see how he would cope at Christmas time. The trained accountant who had turned his back on the police service was really well organised and geared up to maximise his sales, that is until Scottish Power pulled the plug on his area of Cowdenbeath. He could not have predicted the problem that started at 8.30am on Christmas Eve. With customers queuing outside the shop the 16 strong staff waited in frustration until the power was restored.

Faced with no further action to photograph in Cowdenbeath a trip to Burntisland was called for. There Neil Cameron's shop had a healthy queue with customers collecting their Copas Turkeys and award winning Steak Pies.

Neil said that this Christmas had seen "excellent trade" with sales up between 20 and 25%. This was beyond expectations and he just wondered from where all the customers appeared.





His Copas Turkeys proved to be even more popular this year and he noticed a fair interest in Legs of Lamb as well.

Both Friday 23rd and Christmas Eve were busy days and New Year week is likely to be just as successful.







The power cut in Cowdenbeath last exactly an hour and by 11.00am Tom Courts' shop was in full flow. 50 customers queued as the staff performed superfast service ensuring a swift turn around. It





Even the customers wanted photographed!

all looked very much under control and remarkably every customer seemed to be being greeted with their first name.



Annual General Meeting - Promotions Report

Convenor Mark Barnett

"During the year the Executive Committee, after much deliberation, agreed to project a new image to the marketing arm for the Federation under the title – "Scottish Craft Butchers". In future all consumer facing material will be so branded with SFMTA retained as the representative face.

"Everybody will have a personal opinion of what has been done concerning this new image of the federation and of the new logo that has been adopted. There is nothing wrong with this, time will tell whether this works or not, but I do feel that a little bit of background should be given as to how the executive came to vote for the whole concept.

"In my own personal opinion, a new image that could be used to combat the multiples has been sorely needed. Time and again I have spoken to butchers who have seen their trade whittled away by new supermarket developments, who have felt powerless to respond and who have only their own good name to trade on.

"When QMS came up with the Scotch Butcher Club, some of us used this to further enhance our businesses and promotions. As the supermarkets moved into the area of specially select scotch beef many butchers complained that they did not want to use the same promotional material as the supermarkets.

"They did not want to be labelled the same as them, and quite rightly so. QMS were not prepared to do a separate scheme for retail butchers on the scale that we wanted and the change to the PGI only helped in making the specially select route more of an exclusive scheme whereas I felt we needed a more inclusive scheme. One that everybody could benefit from and counteract any forms of elitism. Schemes should never be spawned that pit butcher against butcher. We are all in the same boat and need to fight against our common enemy - the major multiples.

"There seemed to be a void that needed to be filled, that is where the idea of our new image came from. Something that our members could use that could not be hijacked by the supermarkets. Something that could give us an edge.

"This idea started almost four years ago. At first it caused quite a stir round the executive table but as time passed and more thought and effort were applied people started to come round to the idea. I do realise there will be people against the whole idea and at no time is this intended to upset members but I do not believe that we can rest on our laurels. I also realise that a lot of people are comfortable with, and have a lot of respect for the old logo but you tend to find that these are industry based people, **not** the ordinary customer in the street.

"Hence the reason that the new logo and new Scottish Craft Butcher image, will **only** be used for marketing and promotions and all industry based work will continue to use our original SFMTA logo - a compromise to appease all round the table.

"Whether I like the logo or not, or other members like the logo or not, we have to realise that we in the industry will not be the ones who decide if this venture is successful or not. Our everyday valued customers and hopefully new customers will be the ones who decide its fate, but if it is successful and it helps even a few members in the trade, if it even gives a few a little inspiration within their own business then it will be worth all the hard work that has been done around the executive table, the promotions committee, membership committee and finance committee."

Mark led the meeting through the promotional activity carried out by the Federation in 2005. That included Make it With Meat Awards, Steak Pie Evaluation, Haggis Posters for Burns Night and Diamond award winning product promotions. He added "We hope to produce chicken product posters and recipes in the same way as we have been doing with the Diamond Award Products. These will be forthcoming in April and May."

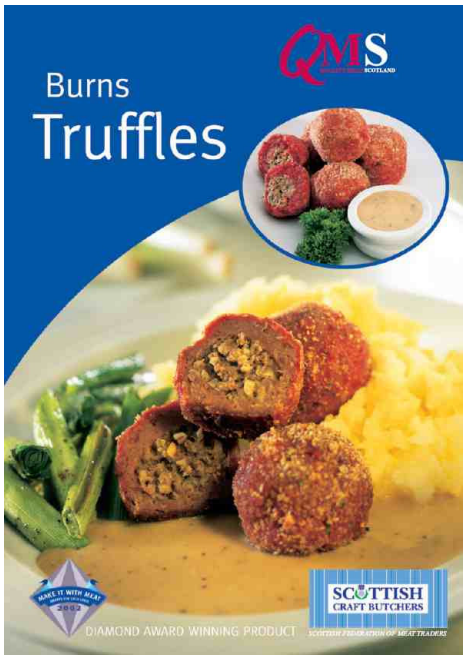
Burns Night Promotion



Butchers need little reminding that Burns Night is the next festival on the horizon. It is no surprise that Scotland's national dish enjoys such popularity in January since cash strapped customers who have overspent at Christmas or New Year are as keen as the producers to perpetuate the memory of Robert Burns through Burns Suppers of any shape or form.

Haggis is synonymous with January. Butchers should experience significant sales of haggis. There are opportunities to make Haggis Pies with Neeps and Tatties and the chance to bring back the most successful Diamond award winning – Burns Truffles. The recipe and new posters for these tasty meat products will be with you in the first post of 2006.

Also in the mail shot will be a new Burns Night poster to help draw customer attention to Burns Night and 100 haggis leaflets. If you require further leaflets these are available at a cost of £30 per thousand + VAT (inc delivery).



Wholesaling Haggis

This updated information from the Food Standards Agency did not arrive in time to be included in the mailshot but is printed here for you information.

The Meat Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1994 will be revoked from 1st January 2006, when the new EU Food Hygiene Regulations come into effect. The new Regulations require butchers who are supplying meat products other than to the final consumer to seek approval from their local Environmental Health Department. Caterers are not deemed to be final consumers under the new Regulations, so if you are supplying other establishments including hotels and restaurants, and/or other shops including shops under the same ownership, you may need to seek approval. Your EHO should be able to advise.

There is an exemption from approval for those butchers supplying quantities of meat (including meat products), which do not exceed 25% of their total food business, to other premises which themselves supply the final consumer. The other premises must be located within the boundaries of your local authority plus the neighbouring local authorities, or within 30 miles of the boundary of your local authority, whichever distance is the greater.

You should be aware of these regulations and if necessary contact your local Environmental Health Department to seek approval. Where approval is required, you will be permitted to trade as previously until the approval procedure is completed.

Annual General Meeting - Legislation Report

Chief Executive Douglas Scott

"This time last year we were concerned about H123. This new EU legislation is about to descend upon us and in the last year thankfully the Food Standards Agency have taken a practical approach to compliance whilst not jeopardising consumer safety. Our biggest concern – the need for approval for Catering butchers following the re-defining of the ultimate consumer – has been taken out of the remit of most of our members by the definition of marginal as under two metric tonnes per week.

"I am told that hotel/restaurant/catering customers generally buy 30 to 80kg per week. Assuming an average of say 60kg, a butcher would need 34 hotel customers to reach the 2000kg limit. To service the needs of 34 hotel customers in addition to "final consumer" trade, the butcher would need a sizeable fridge, several staff and larger premises. He would be invoicing at an approximate average price of £6.00 per kg, earning revenue of £12,000 per week or £624,000 per annum.

"Operators at this level in the sector i.e other than over the counter – should not find approval requirements too daunting. But it does leave us watching closely since a butcher in a marginal position requiring approval should not be disadvantaged over another butcher just because of excessive costs arising from Meat Hygiene service presence.

"Of course the major surgery that accompanies the new regulations is the removal of Butchers Licensing. Whilst we should celebrate the eventually arrival of the bulldozers to create a level playing field in the food industry with the removal of licensing that was imposed following the John Barr incident and the subsequent Pennington Report, the retail meat industry should aim to maintain its position at the forefront of food safety measures.

"HACCP principles are now extended to all food businesses. Where butchers followed the separation route to Butchers Licensing we at SFMTA have been assisting members into using HACCP. With Butchers Licensing going so too does the requirement for a staff member trained to Intermediate Hygiene Certificate. In its place the requirement is for training commensurate with the responsibility within the business. We have already identified and had confirmed from the Meat Training Council and from the Food Standards Agency that Intermediate HACCP training would be the most appropriate for us to offer to our members. Although the November courses in this qualification were postponed at late notice this was not because we had a lack of takers. The courses will be re-organised for February and we expect a good number of candidates in all three of the venues that we had originally planned and maybe a few more.

"Elementary Food Training for staff in butchers shops is also no longer a statutory requirement but we will continue to certificate trainees coming on to formal SVQ training with Scottish Meat Training and encourage our members to maintain high standards. There is no way that we are going to allow our now high standards to fall. We must stay ahead of the field.

"With the return of OTM (Over Thirty Month) cattle to the food chain and the likelihood of the export market for Scotch Beef re-opening after a nine year gap, harmonisation of EU legislation will require the removal of the vertebral column (VC) from all beef animals over the age of 24 months. This move was opposed by the UK Food Standards Agency who fought very hard to have the threshold raised to thirty months. Faced with the possibility of losing the case to raise the requirement from the existing 12 months, the UK representatives had to settle at 24 months.
With this move comes several problems for butchers, farmers and abattoirs who don't have the facilities to remove the vertebral column in a licensed cutting plant. We will support the option to permit butchers to remove the VC in butchers' shops. That in itself creates further problems with VC having to be treated as SRM and proposals for this SRM to be stained. Anyone who has

experience of staining will tell you that this is not a process that should be anywhere near meat that is fit for human consumption.

"After nine years of controls during which Scottish butchers could happily bone the VC from beef carcases from cattle under thirty months, we now have the backward step, thanks to Europe, whereby VC is suddenly outlawed. There is no scientific reason for the VC removal but what has science to do with anything where European politics is concerned?

"SFMTA will make these points in the consultation that closes in December but faced with charges for SRM removal and potentially higher prices for the undoubtedly greater demanded under 24 month cattle, our members will be further disadvantaged if they cannot fined a solution that will allow them to purchase bone in beef over 24 months. The impact at auction mart, farm gate and abattoirs without facilities to remove VC will be a restriction in their trade. With a smaller market for 24 to 30 month cattle one could expect meat processors who have the capability to remove VC to make the best of the situation.

"As always there is plenty legislation that could be aired at our AGM but the final piece of that I will comment on is the even more ridiculous regulations that are supposed to simplify meat product declarations.

"We have repeatedly criticised the ridiculously elaborate calculations required in order to make a declaration on the ticket or pack of a meat product. There is a saying "rubbish in, rubbish out". The basis is all meat content calculations changed with these Meat Products (Scotland) 2004, is an estimation of the visual lean being put in the product.

"Results from EHO testing strongly suggest that estimates of VL vary drastically. Why should anyone be asked to attempt the mathematics required to achieve an answer for meat content when the starting point for that is a guestimate of VL.

"We are very pleased to hear that FSA will be launching an inquiry in 2006 into the accuracy and effectiveness of these Meat Product regulations. Not before time but if they had listened to us in the first place then they would not have got themselves into the situation where neither butchers, enforcers or consumers understand what the label declarations mean.

"Despite all I have said about these regulations members have been working hard to comply and SFMTA continue to work out the answers for members who send in their meat product details to make use of this free service to members."

Food Retailing - UK

Consumer spending on food, drink and tobacco amounted to some £93.5 billion in 2004 and has grown by 12.5% in the last 5 years. Meanwhile food retailers' sales, which include substantial non-food revenues, amounted to £102.7 billion. This figure is forecast to increase at a slower rate over the next five years. However, food retailers are expected to continue to increase their share of all retail sales with their compelling mix of low prices, ever widening non-food ranges, product innovation, convenience and service.

Food packaging in a modern world

Food packaging growth and technological development is intrinsically linked to the growth of, and demand for, supermarkets. This growth is driven by changing lifestyles and the move to convenience foods, where packaging forms an essential part of the product offering. Industrialised societies – Europe, US, Japan etc – have led this trend over the last 30 years. However, other areas of the world are catching up, notably China and Asia, but poor infrastructure still makes supermarket supply all but impossible and there is little or no demand for anything beyond the most basic food packaging.

2006 EU Hygiene Regs



New food hygiene regulations apply in the UK and the rest of the European Union (EU) from 1 January 2006.

The requirements of the new legislation are, in many cases, the same as those of the current regulations, but the new legislation consolidates, replaces and simplifies the 17 existing food hygiene directives with three regulations.

The main new requirement for most food businesses (except primary producers) is to put in place 'food safety management procedures' based on the principles of HACCP (hazard analysis critical control point) including the keeping of relevant records.

The legislation is structured so that it can be applied flexibly, in proportion to the size of the business and the work it does. The new EU regulations are:
Regulation 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs
Regulation 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.
Regulation 854/2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption.

Most food businesses will need to register all of their premises with their local authority before they open (or before starting to use new premises). At the moment this is required under the Food Premises (Registration) Regulations 1991. From January 2006, this will be required under EU regulations.

Food business operators whose establishments are required to be registered should approach the relevant local authority. If you have registered your premises already and have not changed the type of work you do, you **don't** need to register them again.

The premises for certain types of businesses need to be approved, rather than registered, including those producing the following foods:

- meat and meat products (selling over two tonnes per week to other than the ultimate consumer)
- eggs
- milk and dairy products
- fish and fish products

The approval requirements do not apply to primary producers.

What training do staff need?
Food handlers must receive adequate instruction and/or training in food hygiene to enable them to handle food safely. Those responsible for the HACCP-based procedures in the business must have enough relevant knowledge and understanding to ensure the procedures are operated effectively. There is no legal requirement to attend a formal training course or get a qualification, although many businesses may want their staff to do so. The necessary skills may be obtained in other ways, such as through on-the-job training, self-study or relevant prior experience. The owner of the food business is responsible for ensuring this happens.

Why is EU food hygiene legislation being changed?
The legislation is being changed to set out more clearly the duty of food businesses to produce food safely and to achieve consistency. The legislation includes most areas of farming for the first time, so it covers the whole food chain from 'farm to fork'.

What guidance is available on the new food hygiene laws?
The FSA has produced a draft guidance document for all sectors and three summary guides for different types of small businesses. This guidance focuses on what the legislation says, rather than how to comply with it. The guidance is being refined following comments from stakeholders during consultation.

The European Commission is also producing guidance material on the new EC Regulations, in consultation with EU Member States and European stakeholder organisations.

Is any current EU legislation being removed as a result of the new food hygiene regulations?
Yes, the new EU food hygiene regulations effectively consolidate 17 existing EU measures in the food hygiene area into just two. The revocation of the current 17 measures from 1 January 2006 will remove the duplication and inconsistencies in approach that can cause difficulties both for businesses and enforcement authorities.

Is any UK legislation being removed from 1 January 2006?
From 1 January 2006, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2005 in England (and similar legislation in Scotland and Wales) will revoke and replace most of the existing food hygiene national legislation. **This includes the removal of Butchers Licensing**.

Time Off to Change Nappies!

The new "family friendly" laws (designed to woo women voters) will give fathers the right to take 6 months off work when their baby is born. Small business in particular will suffer, especially in our industry, it is not easy getting staff let alone looking for temporary staff to cover paternity leave.

How it works now 2005

Fathers get
Two weeks paternity leave at £106.00 a week.

Mothers get
All mothers can take a year off 90% pay for first six weeks, then £106.00 a week for 20 weeks. In certain circumstances a further 26 weeks (unpaid) maybe taken

Leave
Either parent can also take 13 weeks' unpaid leave in first 5 years.
Parents with disabled children can take parental leave up to 18th birthday.

From 2007

Fathers will have two weeks' paternity pay at 90% pay plus
Five and half months unpaid
Can only take time off if a partner is back at work.

From 2007

All mothers will get statutory maternity pay of £106.00 per week for 9 months, expected to rise to 12 months in 2009.

There will be problems as to who will police the new system, employers say they are not prepared for picking up the bill for checking whether a mother has returned to work elsewhere before granting a father maternity leave.

Carson City

The state capital of Nevada sprang up when gold and silver was discovered locally. It was named after frontiersman Kit Carson a trapper and hunter from Kentucky. In Dumfries and Galloway his namesake is breaking new frontiers in selling organic meat, hunting and trapping the best that is produced.



Scott Carson now heads the family firm of T.H. Carson at the Cross in Dalbeattie, supplying traditional Scottish fresh and cooked meats. Like his father Stewart Carson before him Scott is well known for their excellent ham, roast beef, freshly cooked chicken, pies and haggis.

The business was founded in 1932 by his grandfather in a partnership called Brown and Carson on the existing site. Back then they were one of seven butchers in Dalbeattie. Today the town has a population of 6000 and three butchers' shops. That means that the local community are good supporters of their local butchers but Scott says that the biggest problem is that a fair number of residents do not shop in the town, preferring to travel the 14 miles to supermarkets in Dumfries.



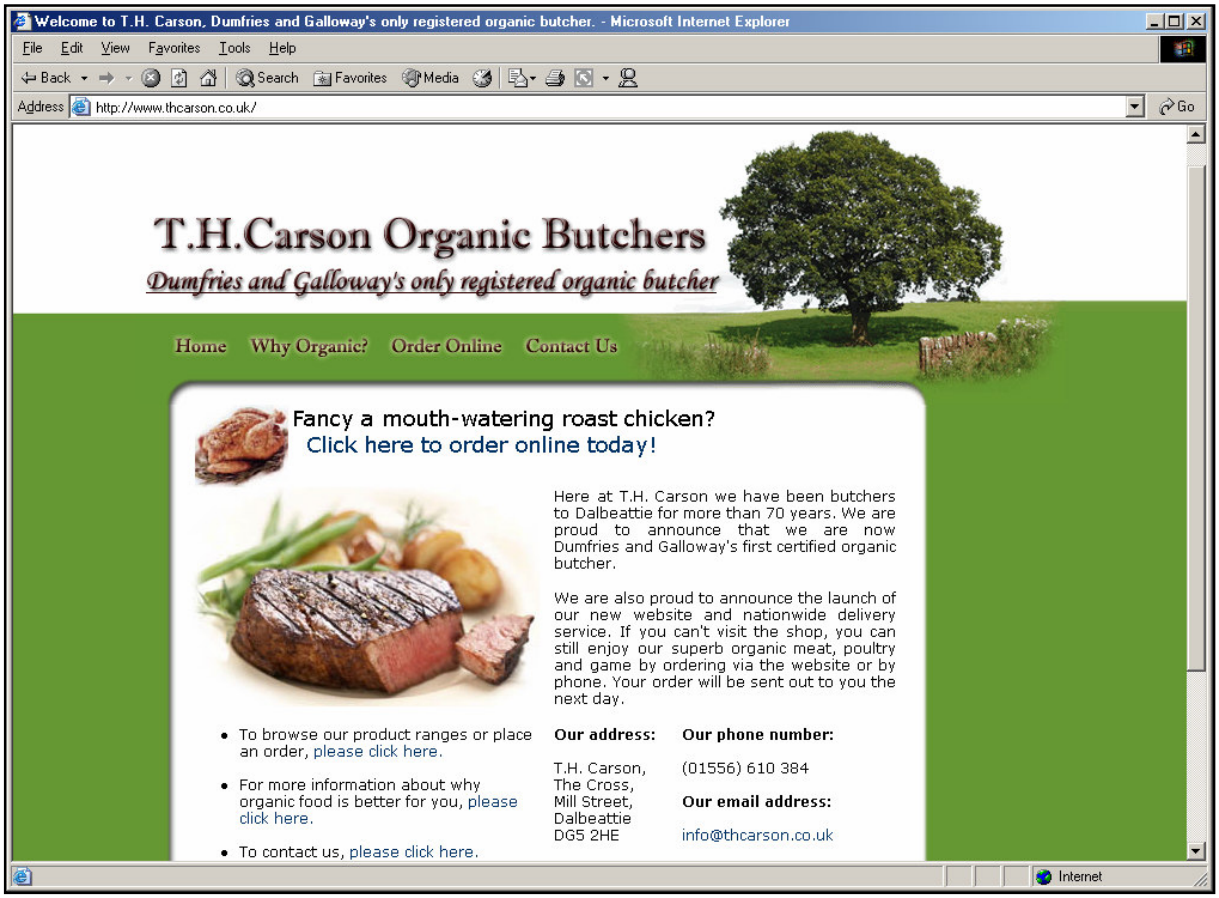


In attempts to stop locals leaving Dalbeattie to go to Dumfries Scott says

"We try to make everything ourselves. We buy direct from farmers Bruce McMyn at New Abbey and Rory Young at Kirkgunzeon. They supply me with Organic Aberdeen Angus crosses. It is good meat with a nice covering. We moved to this two years ago and became the first certified organic butcher in Dumfries and Galloway.

"I don't like the idea of animal being pumped full of chemicals just to get the weight up. I prefer them left a bit longer to be reared naturally."

In 1987 Scott left the local high school to work in the business. His father retired officially two years ago and Scott has been left to develop an online service for his organic offering with next day nationwide delivery. He is fairly modest about its success but adds "We do find it hard to get a premium over the counter but we do a fair bit of business over the internet.





"Customers who buy our organic beef rave about it."



At Christmas Carson's had Organic turkeys from Dippenhead Farm in Arran and throughout the year they assist Liz Ramsay of Scottish Organic Lamb cutting into packs for her to sell through Farmers Markets.

Most of Scott Carson's sales are over the counter or through the internet but he numbers a few good hotels and catering establishments amongst his customers.



Guinea Fowl, Pheasants are ordered in from Braehead Foods, Carson's stock a few ready meal and free range eggs increase the reasons to make this butcher a destination shop.

Steak Pies are made on the premises. Haggis Pies (right) are one of the speciality fresh baked Dalbeattie delicacies.



Local chocolates (below) made in Twynholm aim to become as famous as its Formula One driver, David Coulthard.

Scott could not take credit for the new stock:-

"My wife thought they'd be nice presents for Christmas and no one else in Dalbeattie sells them."



Biscuits and oatcakes with a local label and attractively packaged add to the non-meat attractions available.

In Dalbeattie the busiest trading times are Fridays all day and mornings on Saturday. Carson's open 8.00am till 5.00pm.

In May 2005 Carson's were crowned the South West of Scotland Haggis Champions.
Scott claimed:-

"It definitely helped sales. I have not pushed it as much as I should have done."

Oh well, maybe this January Scott will find time to cash in on the title so that visitors to this 'Carson City' will have a gem or two to discover.



Foodex Meatex,

Sun 19 Mar 10am-5pm
Mon 20 Mar 10am-5pm
Tue 21 Mar 10am-5pm
Wed 22 Mar 10am-4pm

The biggest food manufacturing show with the highest combined audience of food professionals of any exhibition in the UK has been formed by the co-location of Foodex Meatex, Food & Drink Expo and the Convenience Retailing Show.

10 Business Reasons Why You Should Visit:

1. Source new products
2. Search for specific business solutions
3. Update on industry trends
4. Keep up-to-date with the law and its implications
5. Establish ways to improve efficiency and productivity
6. Discover ways of improving profitability
7. Process control and integration
8. Benchmark your business with your peer group
9. Networking
10. Gain competitive advantage

Food & Bake 2006

The PERFECT SHOWCASE FOR THE BAKERY INDUSTRY

The bakery industry's main exhibition Food & Bake 2006, held from 19th to 22nd March 2006 at the NEC, Birmingham, provides a cost effective platform for suppliers to the UK bakery and food manufacturing industries to showcase their products and services. Organisers Bakery Exhibitions Limited board vows to maintain its "by the industry, for the industry" ethos that is key to Food & Bake's continued growth over the past two decades.

Food & Bake 2006 is co-located with a host of other food shows providing the perfect showcase for the food & bakery industry and will take place in the ambient light and airy halls 6 and 7.

Spanning over 15,000 square metres, Food & Bake will include popular features such as the free breakfast, taking the form of a trendy Cafe Society style area, will return along with exciting new features. The new Confectionery Pavilion is joined by the Business Services area, designed to demonstrate services that will enhance your business such as marketing, labelling, packaging, management and development in this growing market. The area will address the key issues currently faced by the food and baking industries today.

Sectors highlighted for 2006 include ingredients and mixes, frozen and chilled foods, catering equipment, bakery machinery and hygiene and technology innovation.

Other Diary Dates for 2006

23rd February – 28th February	Food & Drink, Athens
25th February – 5th March	SIA, Paris (Agricultural Show)
6th – 10th March	Alimentaria, Barcelona
9th – 10th May	Pig and Poultry Fair, NEC Birmingham
22nd June – 25th June	Royal Highland Show, Ingliston
22nd – 26th October	SIAL, Paris
1st – 2nd December	Royal Smithfield Show, Earls Court, London

Changing School Meals in East Ayrshire



Food for Life - established by the Soil Association in 2003 - offers a practical response for parents, health professionals and food campaigners who are frustrated by poor quality school meals. Food for Life targets specify that at least 30 per cent of the food served should be from organic sources, 50 per cent from local sources and 75 per cent from unprocessed ingredients.

By adopting a Food for Life standard, East Ayrshire Council is developing its school meals service beyond the targets set by Hungry for Success and has created a far reaching programme that contributes directly to the local environment, economic regeneration and local employment as well as the child health improvement agenda.

In this process, East Ayrshire has demonstrated progress in the practical realisation of policy and guidance on sustainable public procurement goals issued by the Scottish Executive in 2004. This urges
local authorities to develop sustainable food policies and to take account of relevant sustainable development and healthy eating objectives when awarding contracts for food and catering services,
whilst achieving value for money and complying with EU procurement law.

From May 2005, a package of imaginative menus and local procurement, tested over the past year in Hurlford Primary School, has been extended to a further ten schools in the region with the prospect of expanding the same provision to more schools in due course.

As a result, many more children are being influenced to eat healthy food from a young age. Pam Rodway, Food for Life Scotland Co-ordinator, said: *"The combination of Hungry for Success and Food for Life can offer far-reaching changes to the way children eat and think about food and to the way the local economy is involved in delivering meals to schools."*

Earlier this year, East Ayrshire's School Meals was commended by the Scottish Parliament for its pursuit of a quiet revolution in school food procurement and preparation.

For more information please contact:
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Susie Orr, Soil Association Scotland, tel: 0131 666 2474 or e-mail: SOrr@SoilAssociation.org
Article submitted by East Ayrshire Council and Soil Association Scotland

Is your Business Struggling?

Nightmare Staff? Morale at an all time low? Customers Complaints soaring? We certainly hope that this is not you but if you do fit the bill help is at hand. Read on.

If this is you an award winning TV company will provide one of the UK's top business Gurus to help you turn things around.

They will be provided free of charge as part of a major new documentary series.

Call Anoop on 0207 290 0663 or email anoop@bettytv.co.uk All calls are in confidence.





Task Systems stock a wide range of Butchery labels, Special Offer, Scottish, Ideal for your Barbecue, Fresh - Ideal for Freezing, and price flashers for pre-packing needs.

If you are interested in attracting customers attention to pre-packs these labels are invaluable. The chevron price highlighters are available in different colours:- Blue, Green, Purple, Red on Yellow.

Contact Paul Eadon at Task Systems, 32,Bethnal Green Road, London. E1 6HZ.
Tel: +4420 7749 8400 Fax:+4420 7613 5142 email: paul.eadon@tasksysytems.co.uk

East of Scotland Food Forum - Learning for Profit

Gleneagles Hotel, Tuesday 31st January 2006

Did you know that companies that encourage their employees to undertake some form of learning significantly outperform in bottom line profit companies that do not?
The forum will be featuring the subject of helping our workforce to improve their learning and skills, and how this can help us to increase our profitability, in our Forum on 31st January.
Frank Pignatelli, the Chief Executive of learndirect Scotland, has agreed to chair the event.
In addition to Frank Pignatelli, we have three excellent speakers:

- Yvonne Brown, Director of Learning, learndirect Scotland
- Mhairi Robertson, Senior Executive, Business Growth & Learning, Scottish Enterprise
- Sylvia Halkerston, HR Director, Macphie of Glenbervie

There will also be a video interview with Chris Thomson of Macphie, Learning Employee of the Year 2005. You are welcome to arrive from 4.00 p.m., with the formal start at 5.00 p.m. The event will finish around 7.30 p.m. Attendance is free.
To register, please use the weblink http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=108754221E21909

Intermediate HACCP Courses

We have a note of candidates for the above certificated course that was postponed in October and November 2005. These courses will be re-arranged for the Spring but if anyone wants to add staff to the course, please contact Scottish Meat Training on 01738 637785. Venues are still likely to be St Boswells, Dingwall and Perth unless there is an influx of interest from other areas. It's up to you!

The New Hygiene regulations and the Identification of Sheep

The following is a briefing on how the Food Standards Agency and the Meat Hygiene Service will enforce the requirements of the Regulation from 1 January 2006.

Reliable identification of animals destined for public health protection and for traceability. The Regulations require slaughterhouse operators to have procedures in place which guarantee that each animal or, where appropriate batch of animals accepted onto the slaughterhouse premises is "properly identified". The Official Veterinarian must ensure that "animals whose identity is not reasonably ascertainable are killed separately and declared unfit for human consumption". Sheep whose identity is not reasonably ascertainable must be slaughtered and disposed of as animal by-products.

Our interpretation of the sheep identification rules is that it is not possible to establish if an individual sheep is "properly identified" in all cases unless it's full movement history is known. Clearly it is not feasible for a slaughterhouse operator to have this information. We will, therefore, consider a sheep bearing any approved form of identification to be properly identified. We understand that SEERAD is about to issue guidance concerning their modified identification rules. This should help to clarify that the requirements of the food hygiene legislation can readily be met if farmers are compliant with SEERAD's identification legislation.

We are most concerned to ensure that the sheep industry is aware of the likely consequences of consigning unidentified sheep to slaughterhouses after 1 January and have written in similar terms to a range of industry bodies including NFUS, the National Sheep Association, the Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland and the Scottish Crofting Foundation.

We wish to adopt a reasonable approach to enforcement of this requirement - the identity of the occasional individual sheep, bearing no means of identification but which is clearly part of a batch whose provenance is known, may be considered "reasonably identifiable". However, the rule is that all sheep consigned to a slaughterhouse must be properly identified. The same requirements will also apply to any goats that are being sent for slaughter for the food chain.

It is the responsibility of a slaughterhouse operator, to have procedures in place to guarantee that only animals that are properly identified are accepted for slaughter.

PGI for Melton Mowbray

A High Court judge, Mr Justice Crane, has given the go-ahead for the Melton Mowbray pork pie to be elevated to the same geographical status as Parma ham and Mortadella Bologna, thus protecting its name.



SFMTA have had an approach from an Englishman living in Albania. Eddie Machen is trying to assist Albanian nationals to find work in the UK. Apparently the employment situation there is dire and many, well qualified Albanians are seeking jobs elsewhere.

Although Albania is not in the enlarged European Union, employment in the UK is allowed through a Sector Based Scheme for the meat and fish processing industries. Currently the Home Office permits 600,000 non EU workers to come to the UK for employment.

Due to EU enlargement the member country personnel have an automatic right to travel within the EU seeking employment. Currently the UK has attracted many new people from East European states such as Poland all seeking work. EU laws allow EU members to be able to move within the labour market freely so the advantage of non-European people to an Employer is that they would be tied to a full **12 month contract of employment**. During this 12 month contract an employer can safely offer on/off the job training which has a good payback because the client is held under contract. If the employee proves to be no good then the contract can be terminated by the employer.

Obtaining a work permit is done by Peter Larking at Work Permits Ltd in Sheffield. The issue of a work permit means that the applicant has met the requirement to work under contract in the UK with a Company that has met British law standards. The entry clearance visa is the sole right of the British Embassy in Tirana Albania. They can refuse entry based on facts that are known to them and not declared in the application. In most cases a refusal will be based on information that hasn't been disclosed to Albaan Recruitment at the registration stage.

Albaan Recruitment screen the applicants and the Home Office will turn down applications from Albanians with a criminal record although this includes parking tickets! The application process is submitted from the UK and in this way it removes the difficulties surrounding any misunderstanding or corrupt practices that may be inherent in the system.

75% of Albanians seeking positions in Britain speak English and will be competent in basic education. Overcoming any language difficulties is unlikely to be the biggest problem. We are told that adapting to the affluent British way of life is the major cultural shock.

So to obtain an Albanian worker visit their website (**http://www.albrecruit.com/**) where there are about 60 possible candidates and through that website, or by phoning Mike Williams on 01207 588600 you can register an interest. If a contract can be offered the procedure takes between 4 and 6 weeks before they arrive on your doorstep. Apart from employment you'd be expected to fix up accommodation for them but the cost of this is met out of earnings.

Under the Sector Based Scheme workers are covered by the NHS.

References can be obtained from Graham Reed at Pinnacle Meats (023 92587883) who currently employ a number of Albanian workers.

These Frequently asked questions and answers are taken from the AlbaanRecruit website (**http://www.albrecruit.com/**)

What are the costs for the Employers?
We don't make any charge to the Employers who offer work placements to our clients. In general we complete all relevant paperwork and legal application work. We will advise you as to the documentation you need to submit to our offices for verification of your Company status. This process protects our client interests as many have never travelled abroad before and can be vulnerable .

Who recommends Albanian workers?
In all placement we offer, we guarantee the integrity and honesty of our Albanian clients. We know them to be honest, hard working and with a variety of additional skills to offer an employer. In the main they are multi lingual, well educated and do not time watch. They request the opportunity to be able to work hard, impress their employer and make money for their families and home. Because we are diligent on selection and interview, we often research not only the client, but the Family background, which is common practice in Albania .

How do we select our clients ?
Our clients are generally selected by recommendation to us. We do not advertise. All clients are interviewed and upon selection, they register and verify all details with documentary evidence.

How do we select our Employers?
Our employers will be legally constituted in the UK as a Company under British Law. Part of the process of drafting out a contract of work is that the Employer has to supply relevant documentation about the Company as required under Home Office rules. The Employer has to offer at least minimum wage as laid down by the British Government. The Employer and client decide on the actual salary to be offered as part of the work contract.

How long does the process take ?
The process time depends on several factors.

1. The offer of a work contract from an Employer
2. The submission of detailed documentation to our Immigration Office for onward processing for the award of a work permit from work permits Ltd.
3. The length of time allocated by the British Embassy for an interview to be conducted to obtain an entry clearance visa.
4. As a general rule it should take on average 6 – 8 weeks from the issue of a work contract.
5. For those clients recruited for placement in the UK in professional capacities, this time could be extended for up to a year, depending upon the level of documentation to be cleared .

How much does it cost?
Here at Albaan Recruitment we try to keep the costs to a reasonable level. We do cover many of the costs required for processing the application without seeking any upfront payment. There is a small charge on registration, but this only covers the administration costs locally. This small charge is non-refundable. We are aware that for most Albanians they will generally have to pay any final charge from within the extended Family or friends. We try therefore to limit our charge per applicant to a level within an anticipated monthly salary once the applicant is successful in the UK. Because of the inherent problems, we do seek payment in full before the Entry visa application stage. If for any reason the application for entry clearance is refused, we promise to refund 75% of the final payment.

Livestock Prices

Data collection co-ordinated by MLC Economic Services on behalf of QMS, price updates available at **www.qmscotland.co.uk**



BEEF PRICES	**W/E 17/12/05**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish Abattoirs			
Steers dwt	205.4 p/kg	206.8 p/kg	186.5 p/kg
Heifers dwt	206.7 p/kg	208.3 p/kg	187.8 p/kg
Young Bulls dwt	184.0 p/kg	182.7 p/kg	167.7 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	4336	4412	3732
Heifers	3633	3382	3790
Young Bulls	788	957	833

BEEF PRICES	**W/E 15/12/05**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish Auctions			
Steers lwt	115.77 p/kg	123.28 p/kg	101.87 p/kg
Heifers lwt	117.44 p/kg	120.90 p/kg	104.81 p/kg
Young bulls lwt	98.42 p/kg	94.20 p/kg	76.76 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	496	655	548
Heifers	853	712	844
Young bulls	73	59	159

Deadweight cattle week ending 17th December 2005

	All steers p/kg			All heifers p/kg			All Young bulls p/kg	
	3	4L	4H	3	4L	4H	3	4L
-U	209.5	211.0	211.1	212.5	214.5	213.6	196.2	192.9
R	206.6	208.5	209.1	208.2	208.5	208.5	191.8	189.6
O+	200.0	203.1	201.5	197.6	201.7	200.4	185.1	185.6
-O	183.9	188.1	184.6	-	182.6	177.3	174.4	175.1

Scotland has the world's fattest children, according to new government-backed research. One-in-five Scottish school pupils are obese by age 12, compared with one-in-six in the USA. The figures from the information statistics division apply to all ages and all classes. Lewis Macdonald, the Scottish deputy health minister, said all developed countries had similar problems.

SHEEP PRICES	**W/E 15/12/05**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish Auctions			
New Season SQQ lwt	106.83 p/kg	103.31 p/kg	110.71 p/kg
Ewes lwt	£21.62/head	£22.60/head	£26.57/head
Sheep numbers			
Scottish Auctions			
New Season SQQ	25061	22668	18005
Ewes	4005	5317	5142

SHEEP PRICES	**W/E 17/12/05**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
GB Abattoirs			
New season SQQ dwt	238.3 p/kg	236.7 p/kg	244.2 p/kg

Deadweight sheep week ending 17 December p/kg

(New season average)

		2	**3L**	**3H**
	U	253.6	250.9	234.7
	R	248.4	247.8	236.5
	O	240.4	240.7	234.6

PIG PRICES	**W/E 17/12/05**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
GB Abattoirs			
All pigs DAPP	102.10 p/kg	101.68 p/kg	100.11 p/kg

GB deadweight pigs week ending 17 December – p/kg

	Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change		Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change
Up to 59.9 kg	97.77	-0.68	80.0 – 89.9 kg	101.66	+0.48
60.0 – 69.9 kg	102.83	+0.12	90 kg and over	94.83	+0.66
70-0 – 79.9 kg	102.76	+0.39			

Data collection co-ordinated by MLC Economic Services on behalf of QMS, price updates available at **www.qmscotland.co.uk**

Recommended Cooking Methods Leaflet

Further copies of the leaflet sent out last month are available at a cost of £17.63 inc VAT per 100. Contact Bruce at the Federation 01738 637472

Annual General Meeting – Livestock Report

Convenor Stuart Christie

The past year has been fairly steady with no major catastrophes befalling the livestock industry. Cattle prices have remained stable with prices now rising as they always do towards the Christmas period.

Personally I think they will stay firm until mid January and then ease a little. Farmers paid too much for store cattle in the spring and said prices will have to rise. But they didn't. The OTM scheme is now over and I only hope this may bring more manufacturing cattle on to the market and stop so much imported beef flooding the country, as long as it is labelled as such and does not find it's way into the quality end of the market.

There are moves afoot to make caterers and restaurants say where their beef comes from., not before time. There are too many hotels etc saying their beef is prime Scottish Aberdeen Angus when it comes from Brazil, Uruguay, Namibia, Botswana etc. As I said it's high time they were brought under the same strict controls as the butchers.

Sheep prices have remained much the same through the year but the big problem is the price of skins they are now making just 50p. Pig numbers are continuing to fall with a knock on effect, the local abattoir where I kill has stopped killing pigs and we are now killing in Carlisle, which only adds to extra food miles (a thing this government is trying to discourage) and means more imported pig meat coming into the country.

During the past year waste charges have risen again with Forrest putting up their prices last month. In April I reported the Office of Fair Trading was looking at Forrest and Prosper De Mulder down south but as far as I know no decision has yet been made.

We were getting nowhere with QMS about representation on their Board but today I have just heard that we are having a good dialogue with the new interim chairman, Donald Biggar.

I attended a stakeholder meeting of the Meat Hygiene Service at York. It was my first such meeting and I did not know what to expect, I was not impressed my thoughts were they were only there to blow their own trumpets about what they had achieved in the past 5 years.

Local Authorities, Hospital Boards and the Ministry of Defence are all saying they want to source suppliers locally and have been holding meetings all over the country to that effect.

I have attended four of them but you need to be on a computerised, emailing and ordering system to qualify and the Ministry of Defence has their own scheme which seems very Hi-tech and complicated. The only good thing is if you are on this scheme you will be paid within 12 days of invoice provided your invoice is to their specification but at the end of the day the main thing is price, if you are the cheapest never mind quality, you will get the contract. At the hospital board meeting I attended the question was asked "what was the average spend per patient per week on food?" The reply was given between £12.50 but no more than £18 which is not very much

This is the time of the year when all the Christmas shows and Winter Fair are being held and as usual it will be Independent Butchers who will be buying the best of livestock for their customers.

Avian Flu thankfully has not yet reached our shores, but, and I am not being pessimistic no doubt it will, when the media will have a field day. We can only re-assure our customers what the experts are saying you can not catch it from properly cooked poultry and eggs.

Lastly I would like to thank the Livestock Committee, especially Jamie Chapman and Hamish Deans and the staff at Perth for all their hard work over the past year.

Scottish Retail Prices

Week ended	4 December		11 December		18 December		25 December	
BEEF	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average
Topside	590-1098	863	590-1098	863	590-1098	869	378-1098	846
Sirloin steak	899-2185	1695	1099-2185	1686	899-2290	1692	899-2290	1692
Rump steak	665-1750	1155	699-1750	1173	746-1499	1125	699-1499	1122
Fillet Steak	1679-3200	2307	1599-3200	2302	1590-3300	2324	1679-3300	2330
Diced stewing steak	399-860	709	399-860	709	399-860	709	399-860	709
Braising Steak	339-882	764	339-882	758	339-890	767	339-890	775
Premium mince	269-765	574	269-765	574	269-800	578	269-800	578
Standard mince	124-463	257	124-463	268	124-463	268	124-463	268

Week ended	4 December		11 December		18 December		25 December	
LAMB	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average
Domestic								
Whole leg	549-1168	825	552-1168	832	549-1168	825	499-1168	820
Fillet end leg	569-1413	1107	569-1413	1107	559-1413	1103	599-1413	1101
Shoulder (bone-in)	220-799	569	220-799	569	220-799	569	220-799	569
Shoulder (boneless)	479-992	784	479-992	781	479-992	781	479-992	784
Lamb steaks	793-2150	1381	793-2150	1374	793-2150	1361	793-2150	1361
Loin Chops	705-1499	1176	705-1499	1185	705-1499	1185	705-1499	1185
Double loin chops	767-1499	1193	767-1499	1196	767-1499	1196	767-1499	1196
Cutlet chops	799-1299	1167	799-1299	1174	799-1299	1174	799-1299	1174
Diced Lamb	599-1143	846	599-1289	846	599-1289	846	599-1289	846
Minced Lamb	169-992	800	169-992	800	169-992	802	169-992	802

Week ended	4 December		11 December		18 December		25 December	
PORK	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average	Range p per kg	Average
Leg (Boneless)	335-765	569	349-765	580	319-765	579	319-765	579
Fillet end leg	399-765	619	399-765	628	399-765	628	399-765	628
Shoulder (Boneless)	229-800	520	229-800	546	229-800	556	229-800	541
Fillet of Pork	589-1250	966	589-1250	893	639-1250	894	639-1250	893
Loin Steaks	549-1012	730	549-1012	727	549-1012	727	549-1012	727
Loin Chops	488-900	625	488-900	628	488-900	628	488-900	632
Diced Pork	299-800	595	299-800	604	299-800	604	299-800	604
Minced Pork	169-765	468	89-765	445	89-765	445	98-765	447
Sausages	209-574	460	209-574	460	209-574	460	209-574	460

Federation members Price Survey

Judging by the feedback last month's members price survey proved to be of great interest. This will now be repeated monthly with prices for everything from Potted Meat to Cutting Sides of Beef up for customers being examined. If you are willing to participate please contact Bruce or e mail douglas@sfmta.co.uk

Introducing Improve…

Improve is the **Sector Skills Council for Food and Drink Manufacturing and Processing** across the UK and part of the Skills for Business Network.

Improve was established in July 2004 as the recognised authority on skill development in the UK Food and Drink Industry. Our vision is **'to deliver more profit to employers through skills'.** This is an ambitious aim and we already have an ambitious programme of activity in place to deliver the results.

Working together in Scotland

As part of our remit Improve will work with employers, training providers, trade associations and Government to improve productivity and competitiveness in our industry across the UK. To do this Improve will become the centre of excellence on all information and research into employment matters related to skills. We will also help recruit 100,000 new employees to the sector in the next eight years, retain the 650,000 employees working in the industry and develop the new and existing workforce's skills.

Looking forward to 2006….

Over the next 12 months Improve will be developing new products and services to meet the skills needs of the UK food and drink industry. These will include:

- Establishing and running a sector-specific academy which will be shaped and run by industry employers and stakeholders to meet the skills needs of the industry.
- Establishing the Green Card as the UK skills passport of skills, qualifications and work experience for the food and drink industry
- Monitoring and Reviewing the labour supply and skills needs of the sector to maintain the supply of appropriate skills.
- Taking a lead in ensuring that the basic and vocational skills delivered by schools meet the need of the industry
- And, playing a key role on behalf of the sector in setting National Occupational Standards and sector qualifications.

For more information about Improve and our work in the food and drink industry, please visit our website www.improveltd.co.uk.

To receive all the latest news and developments from Improve and the food and drink industry, sign up for our free monthly e-newsletter, Food for Thought online at www.improveltd.co.uk or email improve@improveltd.co.uk.

Corporate Members

Corporate membership is by invitation and the following companies have supported the Federation by accepting our offer. Members should be aware that the following are supporting them: -

AES, Crossbush, Riccarton, Kilmarnock KA1 5LN	**Tel 01563 551122,** **07788 926925**
Avery Weigh Tronix Ltd, Foundry Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 2LP	Contact : Gerry Doran **Tel: 0774 077 2154**
Bizerba (UK) Ltd, Eastman Way, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7DU	**Tel: 01442 240751**
Dalziel Ltd, 8 Belgowan Street, Bellshill North Industrial Estate, Lanarkshire ML4 3NS	**Tel: 01698 749595**
East of Scotland Contracts, Ferryhills Road, Inverkeithing, Fife KY11 1HD	**Tel 01383 418610**
William Forrest & Son (Paisley) Ltd, Omoa Works, Motherwell ML1 5LY	**Tel 01698 860149**
KRH Ltd, 1 Macgowan House, Nobel Busn Park, Stevenson, Ayrshire KA20 3LJ	**Tel 01294 472755**
Lucas Ingredients Portbury Way, Bristol BS20 7XN	**Tel 0800 138 5837**
Macnaughton & Watson, 423 Gallowgate, Glasgow, G40 2DY	**Tel 0141 554 2757**
McAusland Crawford, 79-81 Abercorn Street, Paisley PA3 4AS	**Tel 0141 849 7033**
Paragon Products, Newhailes Ind Estate, Newhailes Road, Musselburgh	**Tel: 0131 653 2222**
Scotweigh, Unit 2, Granary Square, Bankside, Falkirk, FK2 7XJ	**Tel 01324 611311**
Stockline Plastics, Grovepark Mills, Hopehill Road, Glasgow, G20 7NF	**Tel 0800 262015**
Turner Vehicle Bodies, Carseview Rd, Suttieside Ind Estate Forfar, DD8 3BT	**Tel: 01307 462142**
William Sword Ltd., Blairlinn Ind Est, Cumbernauld, G62 2TX	**Tel: 01236 725094**

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