

FEDERATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SCOTLAND'S INDEPENDENT BUTCHERS

Meating of Quality Minds

JULY 2002

Federation members met with QMS Managing Director, Alasdair Muir and Technical Director, Alistair Donaldson on the last Wednesday in May. The meeting which at times was very heated made it clear that the vast majority SFMTA members had reached the conclusion that they would rather not be part of the Specially Select Scotch scheme.



Their decisions may be for all or some of the following reasons:

Distrust of other sectors in the chain

Removal of points of difference

Do not want to be part of the mass market

Independent butchers source beef that is superior in quality to Specially Select Scotch Beef

Specially Select Scotch has done a dis-service to the independent retailer

Discussion ensued on the merits of defining Scotch as being born, reared and slaughtered in Scotland. It was clear that the Protected Geographical Indicator (PGI) reason is not sufficient to win interest – butchers will not join Specially Select Scotch just to be able to say they sell “Scotch Beef” and they shouldn't need to. The case is weakened by the assumption of most customers that Scottish butchers sell Scotch Beef.

If it is QMS' responsibility to police the PGI then it was felt that they should address the verification of all Scotch Beef. PGI is for the definition of Scotch Beef but the policing is being suggested only for Specially Select Scotch members. Specially Select Scotch is not the PGI!

SFMTA does not have a solution to the PGI policing requirement although it would be the desire of all Scottish butchers to be able to mark Scotch Beef where applicable. Policing is QMS' responsibility and SFMTA will assist where possible. Other matters pursued:-

SFMTA seeks support from QMS for the promotion of Scotch Beef, Scotch Lamb and Scotch Pork and is happy that QMS produce point of sale material with the Independent Butcher logo on it, albeit slightly bigger than on the first attempt.

SFMTA wishes to engage with QMS to secure a promotional activity exclusive to SFMTA members. This would kick off with Make it with Meat Awards. [this has subsequently been taken forward and entry forms and details will be sent out to SFMTA members in the next week]

SFMTA will continue to lobby for proportional spend on promotion of non-SSS and demand a planned promotional calendar.

SFMTA does not see merit in creating yet another tier of confusing labels with Gold, Silver, Bronze standards for eating quality.

This month

Ban on Sheep Gut

Role of QMS

FMD cost £8bn

Hygiene Training for Schools

MHS Reviewed

Caged Hens to go

Cooking up Food Safety

Scotch on the Rocks till 2003

Law is an ass but Donkey is a Sausage

Elementary Hygiene Course – Wishaw - July

The above course will run from 12 noon until 6.00pm on Wednesday 3rd July at Chapmans in Glasgow Road. If there are any members wishing to send candidates on this course please contact Lynn at Food Training Services ASAP – tel 01738 637785 Cost to members is £25 which includes certification subject to passing the multiple choice exam on the day.

The role of QMS - Federation's Conclusions

After months of debate at Federation Executive and Regional meetings members have decided what they are looking for from their promotion body, Quality Meat Scotland. Most of these points are included in the Federation's wishes listed on the front page. In addition we have gathered in views on MLC for submission.

The issues were pulled together to form the submission to the Scottish Executive on the proposal for QMS to take over the MLC's responsibilities in Scotland and are catalogued on the Federation's website – www.sfmta.co.uk

The conclusions are listed here:

- ◆ With QMS being responsible for all MLC functions within Scotland they are going to require **specialist input** which at the moment lies with MLC. SFMTA feels that specific MLC services should be contracted at an early stage to ensure that they do not disappear during the period of uncertainty which has been prolonged.
- ◆ If QMS is to be responsible for all the work previously carried out in Scotland by MLC they are going to require a much wider angled lens. SFMTA believes that the requirement to promote all Scotch meat whether quality assured or not is going to pose QMS many hard decisions. The preferred promotion route of this Federation is to support **generic Scotch Meat promotion**.
- ◆ Economies of scale will not be maximised under the proposed system. The Scottish retail industry fears the threat of future cost implications. If costs are held there is also a danger of the industry receiving **less in benefit** than from the previous MLC structure.
- ◆ SFMTA is extremely disappointed in the direction that has been chosen but will work with QMS to achieve the best outcome for the Scottish industry.

Regional Meetings in August & September

Please take a note of the next round of regional Federation meetings.

Any Federation member is very welcome to attend at any (or all ☺) of the venues.

All meetings start at 7.30pm. and finish around 9.00pm.

Date	Venue
Monday 19 th August 2002	Hilton Hotel, Bellshill
Tuesday 20 th August 2002	Laichmoray Hotel, Elgin
Thursday 22 nd August 2002	Forth Bridges Hotel, South Queensferry
Monday 26 th August 2002	Swallow Hotel, Bellahouston, Glasgow
Monday 2 nd September 2002	Royal Tay Yacht Club, Broughty Ferry
Tuesday 3 rd September 2002	Kings Arms, Melrose
Wednesday 4 th September 2002	Travel Lodge, Monkton

More Britons prepared to complain about food safety problems

10 June 2002

A survey by the Food and Drink Federation reveals that the stereotype British reluctance to 'cause a fuss' is being whittled away by a growing willingness to complain about poorly cooked food.

The survey showed that nine out of ten Britons would kick up a fuss and complain if they were served pink chicken in a restaurant. Eating undercooked poultry and rare minced products such as burgers and sausages is a major cause of food poisoning and in total it is estimated that there are up to 4.5 million cases of food poisoning in the UK each year.

A new survey by the Food and Drink Federation found that:

- 91% would kick up a fuss if they were served pink chicken in a restaurant;
- but only 65% would complain at a friend's dinner party;
- 74% would refuse to "keep mum" if their mother in law served the meal;
- Nine out ten (90%) aren't afraid to point out the potential hazard to their other half; and
- 72% would rather save their stomachs than save face at an important business lunch.

Dirty hands are another major cause of food poisoning. Some germs can stay alive on hands for up to three hours, spreading to all the things we touch. However, Britons are not so inclined to point out the dangers to someone who hasn't washed their hands after using the toilet.

- Only one in ten said they would remind someone that they hadn't washed their hands after using the toilet;
- Women (11%) are more likely to say something than men (6%); and
- 32% of schoolchildren (aged 7-14) said they would "raise the alarm" to fellow pupils but only if they knew them

Encouragingly, 88% of adults said they always washed their hands after a visit to the toilet. This is a significant positive increase from the 2001 survey, which found that only 76% would do so.

Consumer awareness of the importance of washing hands has been heightened since foodlink published the gruesome "dirty hands" photography for National Food Safety Week 2001 showing how unwashed hands can harbour bacteria - now being used in the Food Standards Agency's advertising campaign.

Also compared was the food safety knowledge and behaviour in relation to food hygiene issues of adults and children (aged 7-14):

Some 88% of adults said they always washed their hands after a visit to the toilet; but more than a quarter (29%) of girls and nearly half (46%) of boys aged 7-14, admitted to not always washing their hands after a visit to the loo.

Worryingly, children are not washing their hands at other key times:

- Less than three out of ten (28%) children always wash their hands before eating food (over half of adults do – 53%);
- Only 32% of children always wash their hands after playing with pets. In fact, 17% admit to rarely or never doing so;
- Only half (50%) of children wash their hands before preparing food, whilst over three quarters (79%) of adults always do.

However, the survey did reveal encouragingly, that the older children got, the better their habits, and the more they knew about food safety issues.

Agency takes further Precautionary Measures on Risk of BSE in Sheep

24 June 2002



The Food Standards Agency has recommended to the European Commission that sheep intestine should be banned from food use on a Europe-wide basis as a precautionary measure against the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep. The Agency takes the view that although this is a theoretical risk it has to be considered in the context of the possible human health impact of vCJD should BSE be present in sheep.

The proposed ban, added to the current controls, could reduce potential infectivity entering the food chain by up to two-thirds if BSE were to be found in sheep. Current precautionary measures are estimated to reduce risk by very approximately one-third.

The measure is subject to EU-wide agreement. Until such a decision is taken, it remains legal to buy and sell natural lamb sausage casings.

Most sausages in the UK use artificial casings. About 15% of the sausages sold use sheep intestine and they are usually sold at higher prices than sausages using artificial casings. Alternative natural or artificial casings are available should sheep casings be banned.

The Agency has accepted the current risk assessment that, were BSE to be found in sheep, infectivity would be greater in mutton, the intestine and lymph nodes. The Agency accepted that banning intestine was practical and proportionate to the risk and the removal of lymph nodes was rejected as being too costly and difficult to achieve.

The Agency has agreed to take forward further measures to protect and inform consumers about the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep. These include:

- ◆ communicating the higher theoretical risk of infectivity in mutton and
- ◆ goat to those communities - Muslim and Afro-Caribbean - that are most

- ◆ likely to be affected
- ◆ seeking agreement with baby food manufacturers for the voluntary 'country of origin' labelling on lamb products coupled with information from the EU on the sheep-BSE risk from different countries to enable maximum choice for parents
- ◆ supporting the acceleration of the national scrapie plan to eliminate TSEs (transmissible spongiform encephalopathies)
- ◆ commissioning a full audit on the uses of sheep and goat products.

There is a theoretical risk of BSE in sheep because:

- ◆ sheep ate the same feed that gave cattle BSE
- ◆ it has been shown that sheep can be artificially infected with BSE
- ◆ it is possible that BSE is hidden by scrapie in sheep and passed between flocks or from a mother to her lambs

Although BSE has never been found in the UK sheep flock, only a small number of scrapie affected sheep - some 200 - have been tested with the most effective test available.

Sir John Krebs, chairman of the Food Standards Agency, said:

"The Board has looked carefully at the issues involved, which are surrounded by considerable scientific uncertainty.

"When considering measures to protect the public against the appalling consequences of vCJD, the Board felt it was right to recommend practical and proportionate measures that could significantly reduce the risk, even though it remains a theoretical one.

"We have deliberately taken a precautionary approach. We are not advising against the consumption of sheepmeat. Until, and unless

there is European agreement, buying and selling sausage casings made from sheep intestine remains legal. However, consumers have a right to know that, if BSE were present in sheep, their risk could be significantly reduced by avoiding sausages made with natural lamb casings and avoiding mutton."

Pre-packed sausages should be labelled* with a description of the sausage skin and consumers can ask their butchers if they are buying loose sausages. Lamb and mutton should always be labelled if sold pre-packed or loose. There is no requirement for caterers to label sausage skins, or declare whether meat is lamb or mutton.

Background Notes

1. The Agency announced at its Board meeting on 22 October 2001 that it planned to review existing precautionary measures against the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep. A public stakeholder meeting was held on 18 December 2001 where it was announced that a core stakeholder group would further consider the issue and put their findings to the FSA Board. The BSE and Sheep Stakeholder Report was published on 23rd May 2002 for public consultation.

2. The parts of sheep currently specified as specified risk material (SRM) under EU legislation are: all sheep:

- ◆ spleen sheep over 12 months of age (ie with one permanent incisor): the
- ◆ skull (including brain and eyes), spinal cord and tonsils.

***The Scottish Food Advisory Committee on Friday 21st June raised questions over how consumers were to know what kind of casings they were eating with their sausages. You will note from the above that FSA are asking for labelling to point out type of casing. Also counter staff should be able to advise on whether or not the sausages they are selling are made with lamb casings and the country of their origin.**

There are no new scientific findings and despite intensive research over several years there is currently no evidence of BSE naturally occurring in sheep.

BSE / Sheep- Where now?

The recommendations were adopted at the FSA's Board meeting in Armagh on 13th June.

Following the meeting the FSA wrote to Commissioner Byrne in Brussels asking the EU to consider adding intestines of all sheep to the EU list of Specified Risk Materials [SRM] that cannot enter the food chain.

It should be stressed that no ban has been imposed on the use of sheep intestines in the UK, as has been implied by one or two media reports. Furthermore the FSA has no plans to do so on a unilateral basis.

The FSA's advice to UK consumers is unchanged. It is not advising against the consumption of lamb and mutton sourced in the UK. This applies to all age groups, including babies or other group who may be considered vulnerable.

The FSA has told the MLC that it has no wish to interfere with the legal rights of traders to buy and sell intestines or products from them.

The timetable for consideration in Brussels is not yet known. Much depended on whether the matter is taken on by the EU Scientific Steering Committee [SSC] which meets on Friday 28th June. They reviewed the SRM issue as recently as 5th April this year. At that time it stated that under the current situation of no evidence of BSE being present in small ruminants, the SSC saw no reasons to amend the list of Specified Risk Materials to be removed from the food chain.

Deliberations in Brussels therefore could take several months before a decision either way becomes clear.

In a paper presented to the core stakeholder group, the Meat and Livestock Commission estimated that the loss of natural sheep sausage casings sales ex-abattoir would be £6.5 million per year.

BRC head says government should do more to set dietary standards

19 June 2002

In a presentation to the UK government's recently formed Nutrition Forum, Bill Moyes, director general of the British Retail Consortium (BRC), set out the food retail sector's contribution to raising standards of diet, and called on the government to ensure that it takes a strong lead on changing consumers' attitudes to diet.

The Nutrition Forum was created to bring together key stakeholders in nutrition to allow for an exchange of views and information. It also aims to assist the FSA, the Department of Health and other government departments develop and implement nutrition policies through regular feedback. The food retail sector has made an important contribution to raising standards of diet over recent years. The presentation demonstrated how own brand retailers were providing well-labelled products that increased the profile of healthy eating as well as making good diets accessible to all groups.

Encouraging forum members to look beyond the food industry for ways of improving the nation's diet. Moyes said: "Government needs to take a strong lead in changing consumer attitudes to public health. Once that demand has been created, retailers will respond. "People are more conscious of healthy living than they were ten years ago and retailers have played a part in that. To succeed in future, the whole food industry and the government need to work together to build on the successes of the past."

Safeway to face Competition Commission over cheap petrol promotion

17 Jun 2002

UK supermarket chain Safeway could soon face the Competition Commission over its "money off" petrol promotion after legal experts suggested that the deal is unfair to sector competitors. The deal provides shoppers who have spent over £150 (US\$221) in store with vouchers for 20p per litre off petrol prices.

A Safeway spokesman insisted "we do not believe that the promotion is unfair", but experts have pointed out that Competition Act laws prevent firms cross-subsidising parts of their business with proceeds from another part. This means that Safeway cannot fairly use profits from its grocery stores to pay for price drops that undercut the UK petrol market.

Several lawyers added that Safeway should not be running the promotion "indefinitely" because this could be a permanent change to business practice, and the law says that a promotion can only run for a "sustained period". The Petrol Retailers' Association (PRA) said that it might take the issue to the Competition Commission if Safeway's promotion is seen to last for more than two months.

FOR SALE

1 Reich Steam Cooker Tray Loading
1 Trolley Loading Reich Steam Cooker
with Shower
1 Maja Derinder
1 Butcher Boy 56 Mincer
1 Bastra 200 Litre Electric Kettle

2 x 8^{FT} Cabinet Display
1 x 8^{FT} 4 inch Display Cabinet
1 x 8^{FT} 3 inch Display Cabinet
1 x 6^{FT} 7 inch Display Cabinet

Contact: **Quality Fayre Scotland Ltd**

Tel 01555 840239

Scottish Meat Trade Fair 2002

The meat trade's big day out is on Sunday 8th September. Exhibitors already booked up to be at the Dewars Rink, Perth are:-

Fispak, Forrest Products, Bizerba, Country Choice, Styropack, Wm Sword, Scotweigh, East of Scotland Contracts, MacNaughton & Watson, K R H Ltd, Dalziel, Stockline Plastics, Clippertech, Unitech, Turner Vehicle Bodies, Paragon Products, D & R Stevenson, F M S Ltd,

Skills Scotland Competitions Progress

The judges are still busy with their task of visiting each candidate and assessing the performance. This work will be completed by the end of June. The feedback from the judges is that they have found it very interesting and have been very impressed on the majority of occasions with the interest in training displayed by employers.

The Finalists from each of the Regions will go through to the Trade Fair in September.

New Ways Awards – May 2002

Murray Freeland Cook from George Lees butchers in Yetholm was a guest of Scottish Borders Economic Forum at the New Ways Awards on 11th May.

New Ways Awards was developed to celebrate the successes and achievements of individuals, communities and organisations of the Scottish Borders. Over 70 applications were received for this first New Ways Awards and Murray was the proud recipient of the award to the person making the most out of training. Murray won the under 22 section in the Meat Skills Scotland competition at the Perth Meat Trade Fair in Perth last September. Both Murray and George should feel rightfully proud of this well deserved recognition. Congratulations from everyone at SFMTA and Food Training Services.



Scotch Day likely to be July 1, 2003

'Scotch Day' – the date from which only beef and lamb born, raised and slaughtered wholly within Scotland is eligible to carry the 'Scotch' label – is likely to be on or around July 1, 2003.

The date will be determined by the timescale for approval from the European Commission of an application by Quality Meat Scotland to redefine the 'Scotch' beef and lamb PGI (Protected Geographical Indication). In March, Quality Meat Scotland signalled that it was moving to ensure that 'Scotch Beef' is 100% born raised and slaughtered in Scotland.

The Scottish Executive, who confirmed that it is in line with recommendations contained within their Forward Strategy for Agriculture, backed the move.

Mackie scotches beef bid

24 Jun 2002

Bill Howatson wrote in *The Scotsman*

ONE of Scotland's most prominent agricultural figures has denounced the decision of Quality Meat Scotland to redefine what is Scotch beef as a "knee-jerk reaction" that will have a serious affect on domestic production and processing.

Maitland Mackie, a former president of the Scottish NFU and chairman of Mackie's ice cream in Aberdeenshire said that to say that Scotch had to mean only cattle born and raised in Scotland should qualify for the label weakened Scottish manufacturing capacity.

"The food industry in Scotland is 17 per cent of manufacturing and to shut down one source will only stop that sector growing. If I had to find sugar from Scotland for my ice cream business I would not have a business."

Mr Mackie said that the issue was to make sure production and processing in Scotland was the best in the world and that brand had to be underpinned by the best processing of raw material. "It is about controlling how we raise and how we hang beef. We have got to go forward in the way we know best."

Mr Mackie's comments on the controversy will only fuel the debate which has become increasingly acrimonious on both sides. Before the QMS decision, imported calves into Scotland could be branded as Scotch beef if they had spent at least the last 90 days north of the Border before slaughter.

Brian Pack, the chief executive of the ANM group, also denounced the move. "Traditionally, imported animals have been finished in Scotland. It has been an enormous asset to the Scottish industry. Scottish must be the same as Scotch.

"The whole industry has given away a tremendous ability to add value. What better value can you get than an animal finished in

Scotland? I am apprehensive about the whole Scottish beef industry and the fact that we have given up the ability to top up beef animals.

He added: "There are major implications for the brand and QMS will come under pressure dealing with the levies they will have to collect. We had a perfect vehicle to get Scotch recognised but we have thrown it away without consideration."

But the decision was defended by NFUS vice-president, Peter Stewart, who said it was vital that the situation was taken under control after a complaint to the advertising standards agency that a newspaper advertisement from QMS was misleading. "We had to make sure we had pure quality product," said Stewart.

Ross Finnie, the environment and rural development minister, warned: "What the consumer wants is a brand to be underpinned by the critical issues of quality and traceability."

Scottish Executive sources pointed out that anomalies of labelling had drawn criticism from European Commission officials and that the previous position in Scotland was opening QMS up to ridicule.

June 2002

To: The Farming Industry

CHANGE TO REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCOTCH BRAND

The Scottish livestock industry has to protect the integrity of its flagship brand and has to ensure its origin labelling is meaningful. Recent consumer market research has fully endorsed this view. Therefore the decision has been taken to redefine "Scotch" beef and lamb as coming only from animals that have been born, raised and slaughtered entirely in Scotland.

The current 90-day (beef) and 60 day (sheep) residency rule is registered under EU Law as a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication). An application to redefine the Scotch Beef and Lamb PGI has been put to the European Commission. Its approval of the change is expected to take between 12 and 18 months.

We therefore advise all producers and other industry partners in the Scottish red meat chain that **the "changeover date" is anticipated to be 1st July 2003** (the exact date will only be known when the change of PGI status is given). After the changeover date, any Scotch beef or lamb that has not been born, raised and slaughtered wholly within Scotland will not be eligible to carry the "Scotch" label when sold.

What does this mean to you?

- Finished animals complying with the current residency criteria will continue to be eligible for the Scotch brand until the changeover date.
- Rearers buying calves from outwith Scotland should be aware that they would not be eligible for the Scotch brand if they are slaughtered after the changeover date.
- Finishers buying in young store animals from outwith Scotland should plan to have them ready for slaughter before the changeover date, as after this date they will not be eligible for the Scotch brand.
- After the changeover date, **producers in Scotland can still rear and finish animals** from outwith Scotland and they can still be sold and slaughtered in Scotland. **But beef and lamb from these animals will not be eligible for the Scotch brand.**

We will keep you informed of progress with the EU Commission and announce the changeover date as soon as it is confirmed.

Yours sincerely,



Alasdair Muir
Managing Director

Scottish Food Advisory Committee

21 June 2002

Chris Lawson of the **Meat Hygiene Service** explained the workings of his organisation at the June meeting of SFAC. He was accompanied by Jane Downes and the Scottish Regional Director, Spencer Dawson. The Meat Hygiene Service was established in 1995 assuming the provision of supervision, inspection and health marking GB wide.

MHS operates in licenced cutting plants and abattoirs dealing with red and white meat, wild and farmed game. The service was set up in 1995 to bring consistency of approach and to apply common standards. Back in 1995 the MHS employed 800 staff and had a budget of £41m. Following BSE in 1996 MHS took over responsibility for SRM control and the enforcement of the Over Thirty Months Scheme.

The size of MHS has almost doubled to a current staffing level of 1500 and budget of £75m. In addition 600 Vets are contracted to MHS. 90% of staff are plant based and MHS employs more vets than the State Veterinary Service. Under the 1999 Food Standards Act the MHS became an executive agency of the Food Standards Agency. Although three times bigger than FSA, their budgets are similar. Their laundry bill is £2m annually!

In Scotland there are 190 members of MHS staff; 146 in red meat 11 in white meat, 15 for cutting plants and remainder for cold stores. MHS is charged with providing service on demand. Whatever the species or frequency of slaughter the Meat Hygiene Service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.

The aim of MHS is to safeguard public health and animal welfare in GB; to provide value for money and to achieve financial targets. MHS provides services for FSA with enforcement of hygiene regs, health marking, BSE and SRM controls. Agricultural Ministers in GB for enforcement of inspection, sampling, cattle ID checks, Export certification, supervision of OTMS for DEFRA; TSE sampling in sheep and BSE sampling for beef.

Industry pays for meat inspection work based on headage bearing little relationship to actual cost. Government picks up the shortfall which is the vast majority of the £75m. MHS Advisory Committee assesses the effectiveness and service level agreements.

MHS is an enforcement body for EU law. It works to operations manuals while processing 2 million cattle, 20 million sheep and 200 million poultry annually. Legislation in Scotland can be slightly different so MHS deals with variations. They have four functions in abattoirs: Ante mortem checks for disease [it was MHS personnel who discovered FMD and triggered the two recent scares]

Welfare at slaughter

Post mortem checks for hygiene – incise and palpitate organs; check age, dentition and passport; removal and staining of SRM; classification of by products

MHS employs four categories:

Senior Meat Inspectors, Meat Inspectors, Meat Technicians and Cleaning Supervisors.

Chris Lawson said that despite industry's claims of down sizing the MHS had no evidence of this. He warned that staffing was at the limit and there was a danger of the service "failing with a duty" during the summer holiday period. He claimed that the MHS was the most audited organisation in the country. FSA check on compliance with the three volumes of compliance requirements; BSI audit: National Audit Office examine finances; internal audits for DEFRA; then there was Investors in People and Charter Mark. All the results are printed in the Annual Report.

Since 1st June this year MHS has been responsible for inspecting records in large plants to ensure that they are complying with the requirements of HACCP. This includes taking samples for microbiological analysis from production surfaces, and from carcasses on a daily or weekly basis. Chris Lawson stated that HACCP will make it clear who is responsible in plants. He felt that in the past responsibility was fudged because of the MHS presence. He stressed that they were only there to enforce and not to do the work of the operator. HACCP might well throw up a need for MHS staff with different skills.

Chris Lawson summed up his address by saying "We will not achieve perfection but we will do our best." [Maybe butchers should rehearse that line for the EHOs visit.]

Professor Cled Thomas of Scottish Agricultural Colleges followed with a presentation on **Emerging Food Safety Issues**. The Professor listed a number of challenges:

Campylobacter; 40 – 80 % of the British poultry flock appeared to be infected. There was a need for SME companies in this sector to adopt best practice. There was a need for research and development to reduce levels associated with birds.

Microbial resistance; Salmonella Newport was in USA and there was a threat it could reach the UK.

Organic Food; Although this sector accounted for only 1% of food and drink sales it had grown 55% in the last year and so was the fastest growing sector. In Scotland 416,000 hectares of organic land is in place or under development i.e. 8% of the total. 380,000 hectares of that is rough grazing in hills and uplands. 70% of all organic food is imported and there was the possibility of increased levels of pathogens.

Health Benefits: There were major research projects looking into manipulation of the diet. They needed to know more about how changes to animal diet affected human health. Health benefits of organic food and links to health were largely unproven.

SFAC also made recommendations from their June meeting on Food Hygiene training in schools. SFAC recommended that the Food Standards Agency Scotland encourages all 13 – 16 year olds to complete Elementary Food Hygiene Course by:

Encouraging all secondary schools to register as training centres [currently 50% of them are registered]

Co-ordinate the provision of 25 copies of the Food Hygiene Handbook for Scotland, as a teaching resource, to every secondary school in Scotland registered as a training centre

That an appropriate sum be identified in the 2002/03 budget to fund this recommendation [it is recognised that other Departments/ agencies may wish to fund this proposal]

SFAC further recommended

A) That FSAS considers using the Scottish Consumers Council Report "Young People and Food Safety" [excerpts of which appeared in previous Federation newsletters] as a baseline survey, to allow for the evaluation of changes in awareness of food safety issues among children

B) That in the 2005 Curriculum Review, six hours be devoted within the curriculum to enable all 16 year olds to acquire the Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate prior to leaving school.

This is a major step forward and something that members of the Scottish Federation have been asking for many years. It seems that one more of our wish list items is about to be satisfied.

Tesco has identified 1000 potential sites for its convenience store format, Tesco Express. Dow Jones reports Tesco Finance Director Andrew Higginson as saying that leading Express stores generate sales worth as much as £100,000 every week. There are currently 95 Express stores, all situated on petrol forecourts.

Foot and Mouth cost £8 Billion

21 June 2002

A National Audit Office report to Parliament on the handling of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak showed that the outbreak cost the public sector over £3 billion and the private sector more than £5 billion.

According to head of the NAO Sir John Bourn, lessons to be learned from the outbreak, unprecedented in its nature and scale, included the need for more thorough contingency planning, more sensitive to outbreaks of different scales, which would allow better preparedness for a future outbreak. In addition, in the event of a crisis, plans should be made to ensure that cost and financial control should not fall below a minimum standard.

Preparations for a possible outbreak of foot and mouth disease

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) had prepared contingency plans that met European Union requirements. These plans worked in those areas where there were relatively few cases. However, the unprecedented scale of the outbreak meant that in many areas the resources needed to deal with the disease rapidly went beyond what had been envisaged in contingency plans.

According to the report, it is unrealistic to expect that any contingency plan could have coped with all the problems and difficulties that arose or that the Department could have forecast the nature of the 2001 outbreak. In the light of Britain's experiences many countries are revising their contingency plans. Nevertheless there are lessons to be learned in preparing contingency plans for the future.

- The contingency plans were based on the most likely scenario and other scenarios were not considered. In line with European Commission guidance, the Department's plans were based on the supposition that there would not be more than ten infected premises at any one time. (In this outbreak there were at least 57 infected premises before initial diagnosis.)
- Little prior consideration had been given to the impact on non-farming businesses that a large-scale epidemic might have. For example, the initial blanket closure of most footpaths by local authorities had a very severe effect on the rural tourist industry.
- An internal report in 1999 found considerable variations in the State Veterinary Service's readiness to deal with outbreaks of exotic notifiable diseases, including foot and mouth. By July 2000 the Department had made progress on many action areas but implementation of other key issues was delayed by the need to attend to other high priority work.
- Tackling a serious outbreak of animal disease requires effective co-operation with other government departments and agencies and those affected. These stakeholders were not formally consulted in preparing contingency plans, although some had been involved in simulation exercises as part of local contingency planning.

Foot and mouth disease was confirmed at an abattoir in Essex on 20 February 2001. By the time the disease had been eradicated in September 2001, more than 6 million animals had been slaughtered: over 4 million for disease control purposes; and over 2 million for welfare reasons.

The report recognises that the Department has prepared an Interim Operational Contingency Plan which codifies lessons learned during the 2001 outbreak, which will be reviewed once the findings of the independent inquiries have been published.

Handling the outbreak

Foot and mouth disease was eradicated in two months or less in around half the infected areas. The Department successfully contained the outbreak substantially to those areas initially infected with the disease and was also successful in ensuring that once the disease had been stamped out in an area it did not reappear. The disease was eradicated in seven months, the same time that it took to deal with the smaller and more localised outbreak in 1967-68. The report notes the commitment and dedication of the Department's staff and that those involved worked punishingly long days in stressful and often distressing conditions.

Because of the widespread 'seeding' of the virus before it was discovered (48 premises in 15 counties had already been seeded before 19 February 2001 when disease was first suspected) there were severe problems in handling the outbreak in the worst-hit areas.

- It took time to get other agencies involved. The Department liaised with the armed services and other Government Departments and agencies from the outset but decided not to call for substantial military assistance for three weeks. This was because the Government considered that the early stages of the epidemic presented no obvious requirement for military participation.
- Vets played a key role but in the early weeks there were too few of them and this delayed disease control. The Chief Veterinary Officer called on agreed standby arrangements nationally and internationally from 23 February 2001. By mid-April 2001 the Department had the number of vets it felt were needed to contain the outbreak.
- A national movement ban (on 23 February 2001) prevented greater spread of the disease but with hindsight should have been imposed earlier in this outbreak. A national ban would have been unprecedented and the Department considered that the epidemiological evidence at the time did not exist to justify it.
- Communications and information systems were severely stretched during the epidemic. The Department found it difficult in the crisis conditions to get its key instructions and messages across and to obtain good quality information from the field.

Controlling the costs of the outbreak

Farmers received over £1.1 billion in compensation for animals that were slaughtered for disease control purposes and over £200 million for animals slaughtered for welfare reasons. Many farmers and rural business suffered consequential losses to which they were not entitled to compensation. The Government introduced a series of measures to alleviate the financial difficulties of small businesses.

The sheer volume of cases put compensation schemes under enormous pressure and this led to costs being higher than they might otherwise have been in more normal circumstances.

- The professional valuers who determined compensation tended to make higher valuations as more and more animals were slaughtered because they expected increased prices for stock when the markets reopened. Standard rates for slaughtered animals were introduced on 22 March 2001 because the valuation process was thought to be delaying the slaughter of animals on infected premises. The standard rates acted as a floor for valuations and contributed to a rise in the compensation paid.
- The Department introduced the livestock welfare disposal scheme to alleviate the suffering of animals who were not directly affected by foot and mouth disease but who could not be moved because of movement restrictions. The rates were extremely attractive to farmers and the volume of applications overwhelmed the Rural Payments Agency, who administered the scheme.

The total bill for measures to deal with the epidemic is expected to reach nearly £1.3 billion by the time all claims are settled. The largest items are £375 million for haulage and disposal – including

£113 million on mass burial pits - and £304 million on cleansing and disinfecting. Large numbers of staff had to be brought together quickly and deployed across the country and a wide range of goods and services procured to meet urgent demands. Consequently systems of cost and financial control were put under great strain:

- The Department recognised that it might have to pay a premium to get things done at maximum possible speed. Valuers, slaughterers and private vets, without whom the disease could not have been eradicated, all demanded and received higher fee rates.
- Many contracts, which would normally be put out to tender, were awarded without competition. Aspects of some contracts were initially agreed orally. When some contracts came to be written and formalised it was sometimes difficult for the parties involved to recall the detail of what had been agreed. This later gave rise to many disputes about payment for work done.
- Information was often lacking to support the payment of bills. The Department was frequently unable to monitor the work being carried out by contractors, especially the slaughter and disposal of animals, and the cleansing and disinfection of farms.

After the difficulties experienced in the early weeks, the Department took action to control the costs of the outbreak. This included setting up a dedicated financial unit and reorganising financial responsibilities. Forensic accountants have also been employed to examine the invoices of the largest contractors.

Sir John Bourn said:

"This outbreak had a devastating effect on the rural economy and parts of the tourist industry. We must acknowledge that it was of an unprecedented nature and magnitude. In the light of what happened, urgent action is needed to produce contingency plans which would be more sensitive to outbreaks of different scales and thus be better suited to dealing with a future crisis on this scale. Moreover, further research must be carried out into effective measures for tackling foot and mouth. And the means for ensuring minimum standards of cost and financial control in crisis conditions must be established.

"There are lessons to be learned for the whole of government from the foot and mouth crisis. Departments need to be aware of the major threats in their areas of business and to have contingency plans in place which conform with best practice on risk management."

The Treasury has estimated that the net economic effect of the outbreak was less than 0.2% of gross domestic product (less than £2 billion) because expenditure was diverted elsewhere in the economy.

Help wanted

At the May SFMTA Executive meeting George Lees from the Borders drew the members' attention to a form of Muscular Dystrophy, Fredericks Ataxia. He said that a lady called Judi Gunn from Hawick had highlighted the properties of lamb and haggis in restricting the disabling effects of the condition. It was nice to hear positive comments about eating lamb.

Judi is researching just what it might be that gives haggis this special power and she would be keen to hear from butchers just what goes into their haggis! You don't need to give your name if you don't want to but she can be e mailed at thp@hoovesandpaws.co.uk or snail mailed at Borthwickbrae Stables, Roberton, Hawick.



MEPs lend voices to UK's lamb war

Scotsman 26 Jun 2002

Dan Buglass

THE gloves are off and it's time to chuck the book at Paris over the French government's proposals to ban all imports of UK lamb from the beginning of July unless the spinal cord is first removed.

That was a key message from 12 members of the European Parliament, who linked up with a group of farming organisations outside an Edinburgh butcher's shop yesterday to protest against the potential loss of £60 million of business by Scottish sheep farmers.

Struan Stevenson, a Scottish Conservative MEP, made the point that the French are basing their case on nothing more than self-interest with no scientific evidence to link BSE in cattle and, by implication, variant CJD with sheep.

Stevenson said: "David Byrne, the commissioner in charge of food safety, is perfectly correct in saying that France will be acting illegally if they proceed with this ban. And, given the experience we have had with France over the beef ban, where not a single red cent of fine has yet been levied, we are just not going to see the same situation develop with lamb.

"They just cannot ignore EU law. The European Court of Justice found them guilty over beef last December and nothing has happened."

The Commission in Brussels could in theory fine the French government an initial penalty of 5000 euros (£3,200) each day, which is "peanuts", according to Stevenson.

John Kinnaird, a vice-president of NFU Scotland, is another who is convinced that any ban on exports would have serious implications. He said: "It's nothing other than

blatant protectionism. The fact is that we in Scotland export almost half of our lamb, of which 80 per cent normally goes to France. We have had all the problems with foot and mouth last year and our farmers cannot possibly face another disaster."

Later in the day, the MEPs and farming leaders had a meeting with Franz Fischler, the EU commissioner for agriculture and fisheries.

Speaking later, it became apparent that Fischler was clearly concerned at the French attitude. He said: "We have to act. It is an impossible situation were we find that member states do not follow Community rules. I am sure that Commissioner Byrne will make sure that the regulations are observed."

Fischler concedes that the French will argue that any action they take is based on a precautionary principle.

He concluded: "If a member state uses this argument, then we are close to the point when they are overruling Community law. We need the scientific evidence, but if it is not forthcoming, then we must start the legal procedure."

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Coming Soon



The Return of the Make it with Meat Awards

As you will know doubt be aware the annual "Make it with Meat Awards" have in the past, been a resounding success. SFMTA firmly believe that this year will be no exception. As a member of the Federation you have every opportunity to win in the "Make it with Meat Awards of Excellence 2002"

If you are currently offering your customers a range of ready prepared meat products you can win a cash prize in each of the categories: beef, pork (including ham & bacon), lamb and burger. Entry for these awards is free. The maximum number of beef, lamb or pork products that can be entered per shop is a total of four including the burger category.

This event is not for sausages. A separate Pork Sausages and separate Beef Sausages Competition will be run at this year's Trade Fair. Products in the Make it with Meat Awards must be submitted raw and must be sold from a member's own retail shop.

Prestigious certificates and tray highlighters will be awarded for you to display proudly in your shop if your product is classified within one of the following categories.

Members will be asked if they would like a common pick up point for their products when entering.

Entry forms will mailed to you within the next week and please note entries close on 31st July. Products entered for this award will require to be delivered to Perth on Wednesday 7th August.

Billy distills success in Islay



Recently SFMTA President Duncan MacKenzie had the pleasure of going to Islay to present butcher and member Billy McFarlane with Investors In People Award.

Billy whose shop is in Bowmore high street is the first island butcher in Scotland to be presented with the award, a great honour. It will come as no surprise to anyone who knows Islay that Duncan had a wonderful day and he commented:-

"The hospitality shown to myself on this island was second to none and I would like to thank Billy, Margaret and staff for their kindness". [Margaret is pictured above with Billy and his staff]

Take-away sandwich business on a roll

WAY back in 1965, an American high school graduate, Fred De Luca, 19, was looking for a way to make enough money to pay for his university tuition.

Within a couple of months armed with a US\$1,000 loan, De Luca launched a sandwich takeaway outlet with the rather lengthy name of Pete's Super Submarines. A little while later, with a change of name and a new bright yellow logo, Subway was born.

Subway came to the UK in 1995 and now has 79 outlets around the country. The company's plan is to double the number of stores by next year and by 2011, it aims to take this number up to 2,000. Just how is the company going to achieve this?

Take Glasgow as a case in point. There were no Subway outlets in the city three years ago and now The Subway Development Agents have opened no less than five throughout the city centre alone.

Taking this exponential growth into consideration, and the right quality of franchisees, Subway will have about 150 outlets in Scotland within the next decade. If past success is anything to go by, this vision will no doubt be realised.

Defra launches rules to ban cages for laying hens

25 Jun 2002

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is to launch a public consultation on banning all cages for laying hens.

New welfare standards for laying hens due to come into force in England in June will ban conventional barren battery cages from 1 January 2012 and forbid new ones being installed after 1 January 2003. Farmers will still be able to use enriched cages which have more space for each bird and include a nest, perch and litter.

But Germany has decided to go further than the new standards, laid down in an EU Directive, by banning enriched cages too. Animal Welfare Minister Elliot Morley wants to see if there is a case for the UK following suit.

Morley also wants to work with stakeholders to phase out beak trimming. The Regulations which implement the Directive allow beak trimming to continue until the end of 2010 because of welfare concerns about feather pecking and cannibalism.

But industry is already working on breeding and management programmes which could eliminate these problems making beak trimming unnecessary. A government code of practice for laying hens also encourages beak tipping - which just removes the sharp tip of beaks - instead of beak trimming.

Morley said: "The UK government has worked hard to push for barren battery cages to be banned and I welcome the Directive and the new implementing Regulations. But I am not convinced enriched cages have any real advantages over conventional barren cages. I want to hear people's views on the subject to see if the UK should follow Germany and ban enriched cages too. The consultation will be open, wide and transparent, all interested parties will have a chance to put their views and we will listen to what they have to say.

"Beak trimming has traditionally been allowed because there are welfare concerns relating to feather pecking and cannibalism. But I am confident this can be phased out, through improved management and, in particular, breeding. I want to see an Action Plan, developed with stakeholders, which takes account of our increased understanding of what triggers feather pecking and addresses on-farm management issues."

The new standards amend the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000 and implement an EU Directive on laying hens. For the first time there are now minimum welfare standards for laying hens kept in all systems.

The Directive bans all mutilation of laying hens, but allows beak trimming to be authorised if necessary to avoid feather pecking and cannibalism.

As well as the implementation of the EU Directive through amendment to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000, two new separate user-friendly codes of recommendation - one for the welfare of laying hens and one for meat and breeding chickens - are to be published soon.

The new codes replace the relevant sections of the Domestic Fowl code, which dates back to 1987. They offer farmers advice on best husbandry practice and are designed to focus on the welfare outcome for the birds.

Farmers must have access to and knowledge of the codes which have taken into account practical management experience and make the welfare of birds the principal objective. The new codes dovetail legal requirements with advice on best practice.

The laying hens code also provides guidance on the new Regulations. The meat and breeding chickens code addresses ongoing concerns about the welfare of meat chickens in intensive systems.

Morley said: "These codes are an important part of the government's animal welfare strategy. The format is based on the sheep code we issued in 2000. This was welcomed by the industry as something that is easy both to read and to follow."

FSA Stakeholder Meeting

Edinburgh Airport 20 June 2002

The Chief Executive represented SFMTA at a recent meeting of Food Standards Agency Scotland [FSAS] with Scottish stakeholders. The assembly of around 40 comprised of one representative from the likes of consumer groups, producers, retailers organisations, enforcement authorities, media and various others with an interest.

The meeting provided valuable contact with the FSAS and they were interested to gather opinion on four specific topics. The attendees were split up into four groups for one hour of discussion and then each group reported its findings.

The first group was asked to address Modernising food safety enforcement. The group examined the merits of assurance schemes as opposed to licencing. A FSA report into quality assurance schemes is imminent. The FSA is perceived as the guardian of consumer interest and there was consensus that auditing should be seen to be independent. It was felt that new technology and processes give the inspectorate additional problems. George Paterson, Director FSAS conceded "technology leads, legislation lags."

The second group were asked to examine Stakeholder Communication and the involvement of stakeholders in policy making. The group were asked to debate the FSA policy of openness but their report seemed to miss the point. The report's message was to build trust as a key value and have coherent solidarity.

Raising standards in food premises was the topic of the next group. They were asked to comment on whether food premises were meeting the standard. Although it is reported that 60% of business were reported for having some contravention or other it was impossible to evaluate the degree of threat that posed to public health. Local Authorities were of the opinion that food standards were improving and it was pointed out that the reporting and interpretation of statistics was extremely important.

Although FSA has no control over what the media chooses to report it was felt that FSA press releases should be accurate and in no way sensational.

This group also confirmed support for HACCP and the need for hygiene training and education. Communication with trade organisations was perceived to be good but a need was identified for FSA to be seen to be communicating more directly to food premises. [This is possibly a very valid point of particular importance to those butchers who choose not to be members of SFMTA and so never see this newsletter!]

The final topic was to address Improving Scotland's Diet. It was accepted that this would possibly take a generation to make any impact because the efforts were to be concentrated on children. The debate requires a balance between affordability accessibility; cheap food v nutritional quality. Knowledge about diets should be directed at schools to enable action and informed choice.

It was clear that FSA would require to work together with other agencies with an interest in Diet, Nutrition and Health.

Suggestion raised in debate:

Hygiene Certificates would be much more reassuring if they were displayed beside the photograph of staff members they pertained to.

Members might like to introduce this idea.

A New Zealand supermarket is trialling a new fresh meat storage system that means meat can stay fresh for up to two months. Plastics company Vertex is launching its SecureFresh chilled-meat packaging system, and Progressive Enterprises is trialling the system at the moment. The Securefresh system extracts oxygen from the meat pack and replaces it with carbon dioxide. As long as the meat is kept at 0°C, it should stay fresh for up to two months, according to Vertex.

Tour of Ireland,

Sunday 22nd to Wednesday 25th September 2002

In 1995, the then SFMTA President, Wilson Ferguson led a "study tour" to the Republic of Ireland. In September of this year President Duncan MacKenzie would like to repeat the Irish "adventure". Plans are being made to fly to Dublin and visit up to nine shops, a farm and school while travelling by coach via Carlow and Clonmel to Cork. Return flight would be from Cork in the evening of Wednesday 25th September.

On this occasion Martin Carey, a butcher from Bandon is our local contact and organiser. He is extremely keen to show Scottish butchers around his country and butchers' shops. Overnight stops are planned in Dublin, Kilkenny and Ballymaloe. Details and costs are just being confirmed and should be out with the August newsletter.

The previous trip was a tremendous success with the 19 Scottish butchers who took part having a great trip while finding out how the Irish went about selling meat. In addition the group learned a lot from each other and discovered how to put away the Guinness! The hospitality and experience of the 1995 trip will last long in the memory of those who attended.

If you think you would enjoy three nights in Ireland with a group of like-minded members of your industry, please contact the Perth office to register an interest and receive details as soon as they are finalised. Numbers will have to be **restricted to 20** on a first come basis so pick up that phone now – 01738 637472

EU: Commission proposes geographical protection of "Feta" cheese

14 June 2002

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Council regulation on the registration of the Greek "Feta" cheese as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). According to the proposal, "Feta" cheese can only be produced in certain areas of Greece and respecting strict product specifications. Producers in other Member States or not respecting these specifications will be given a maximum five-year transitional period to change the name or to stop production.

"Protection of geographical names is a key to promoting quality produce and increasing transparency," commented Franz Fischler, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries. "Feta" cheese should not be an exception," he said. Marketing cheese as "Feta" when it is not produced strictly according to its product specifications is misleading consumers. These specifications require that the cheese is both produced in the specified traditional way and within the clearly defined original production region".

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Speed Cameras

There are 3 new speed cameras on the A80 Glasgow to Stirling road. Two are situated on the west side of the lights at the Moodiesburn House Hotel, one on either side of the road. the other is just past the Crowwood Hotel going east before the lights. They are painted blue and there is no sign up as yet to warn you they are there!

Catering students get healthy cooking lessons



New plans to teach Scottish catering students how to cook healthier meals were unveiled by the Food Standards Agency Scotland. The Agency wants nutrition lessons to form part of catering courses to encourage chefs of the future to offer more healthy options on their menus. Discussions are being taken forward with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other bodies responsible for the content of catering courses in Scotland.

Dr George Paterson, Director of the Food Standards Agency Scotland, said:

"Eating out plays an increasingly bigger part in our lives. Caterers are therefore in a prime position to influence the eating habits of consumers but at present food consumed outside the home tends to be higher in fat, salt and sugar.

'If we are to increase the range of healthier meals offered to customers it is essential that we improve the knowledge of those who prepare the food. At present, however, catering colleges are under no obligation to provide training in diet and nutrition.

'We intend to change that and want to see all catering courses provide their students with at least basic training in healthy catering practices. These changes will not only benefit those who eat out in restaurants. Menus in school, hospital and workplace canteens, where large parts of the population eat, will all be improved.'

Scottish Parliament BSE Answers

14 March 2002

The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Mrs Mary Mulligan) said:

"Extensive controls are now in place to eradicate BSE from the Scottish cattle herd and the disease is in sharp decline. Last year there were 24 confirmed clinical cases, compared with 36 cases in 2000, 37 in 1999 and 85 in 1998. So far this year, there has been one reported clinical case of BSE in Scotland. The peak year for BSE in Scotland was 1993, when 2,208 clinical cases were confirmed. Because of the long incubation period associated with the disease—as with variant CJD—it will take some time before BSE in cattle drops to minute levels.

"The Executive also has in place an active surveillance system for BSE, focusing on high-risk cattle—adult bovines found dead or killed on farm for welfare reasons—as is required by European legislation. Active surveillance procedures were first introduced on 1 July 2001 and a further 28 BSE cases were identified last year. I understand that current levels of BSE in Scotland compare favourably with those in other parts of Europe."

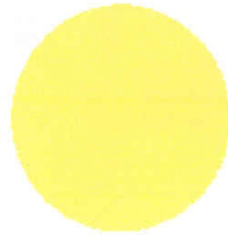
Donkey meat sausages cause offence in Kent

25 Jun 2002

The French owner of a delicatessen in Sandwich, Kent, has upset local residents by selling sausages made from donkey meat.

The sausages, which are 10 inches long and cost £3.50 each in the delicatessen, have come under fire from locals in Sandwich who say the animals used to make them may have suffered hardship and cruelty by being transported thousands of kilometres across Europe prior to slaughter.

The charity The Donkey Sanctuary has urged delicatessen owner Dominique Levet to stop selling the sausages, but Levet said the sausages are a quite normal food in his native France and do not cause offence there.



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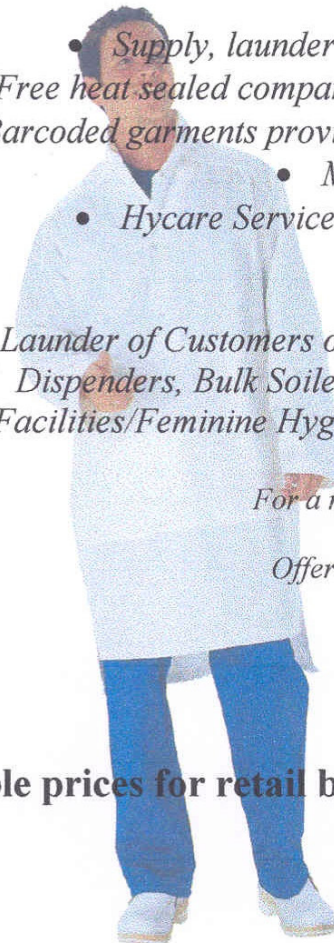
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Unbelievable prices for retail butchers

Most Scots consumers unaware of how much fish to eat

Only a third of Scottish consumers are aware of the recommended amount of fish to eat each week, new research by the Food Standards Agency Scotland has revealed.

The Agency has also found that appearance, taste and price are the over-riding factors which dictate how much fish consumers buy.

Of little concern to the fish-buying public are environmental issues, whether the fish is farmed or wild and where the fish comes from.

Research was commissioned by the Agency to find out whether people were aware of how much fish should be eaten as part of a healthy, balanced diet and to find out how much they actually ate. The study was also carried out to find out what factors affected people's decision to buy fish.

The Agency advises consumers that they should eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.

The research found that:

- 41% of people in Scotland eat fresh fish once or twice a week
- 21% eat fish products [for example, fish fingers] once or twice a week
- 8% eat shellfish once or twice a week
- Just over a third [36%] of people knew they should eat two portions of fish a week
- One in four [25%] knew they should eat one portion of oily fish a week
- 30% of people say appearance is the most important factor influencing their decision to buy fish, followed by taste [16%] and price [14%]
- 1% said the most important factor was whether the fish was farmed or wild
- Less than 1% cited environmental concerns or country of origin as the most important factor

The Agency will use the results of the survey to inform their work on diet and nutrition and to encourage more people to adopt a nutritionally balanced diet.

Notes: Research into people's fish eating and buying habits was conducted by Market Research UK between 4th and 10th March 2002 on behalf of the Food Standards Agency Scotland.

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:-

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East of Scotland Contracts, Ferryhills Road, Inverkeithing, Fife KY11 1HD, Tel 01383 418610

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KRH Ltd, 1 Macgowan House, Nobel Business Park, Stevenson, Ayrshire KA20 3LJ, Tel 01294 472755

Macnaughton & Watson, 423 Gallowgate, Glasgow, G40 2DY, Tel 0141 554 2757

Paragon Products, Newhailes Industrial Estate, Newhailes Road, Musselburgh, Tel: 0131 653 2222

Scotweigh, Unit 2, Granary Square, Bankside, Falkirk, FK2 7XJ, Tel 01324 611311

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