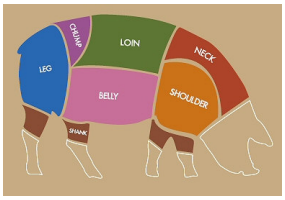
FEDERATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SCOTLAND'S CRAFT BUTCHERS



SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF MEAT TRADERS

MAY 2008

Skills bleeding dry

It is with dismay that we hear of an extra £19 million being ploughed into the Further Education system in Scotland bringing the budget available to colleges and universities to £555m in the academic year beginning 1st August 2008.

Compare that to the impoverish Vocational Training sector with its year on year cut backs. Here the National Training Programmes restrict funding to 16 to 19 year olds (that means up to 19th birthday), there is no funding for Modern Apprenticeships for those 20+ unless in Construction and Engineering sectors. Whatever happened to the priority for the Food and Drink sector?

Food has an important part to play in creating a wealthier Scotland, providing many jobs with one in five people in Scottish manufacturing work in food and drink businesses. Yet the retail meat industry is slowly being bled dry of skills and lack of funding seriously jeopardising the continued viability of our training arm, Scottish Meat Training.

We hear new bodies set up or proposed and funding promised at that level but what we see is no money for the operative to be trained in our industry. We already have the Sector Skills Council, Improve, a National Food Academy is mooted and we have the newly formed Scotland Food and Drink. They will all receive support but as far as vocational training is concerned we have ministers with a blind spot. Despite employers organisations such as ours continually pointing this out nothing changes.

The Scottish Government is currently spending a lot of time and money developing a National Food Policy, demonstrating this importance yet at the other end of the spectrum there would appear to be a lack of commitment to the food industry.

The reality is that employers in the meat industry will have to compete with colleges and other trades for the limited number of potential new starts in the 16-18 category, and older employees often in supervisory roles, can access no funded training.

As you might have guessed no colleges offer Meat and Poultry Processing qualifications. Currently there is a serious shortage of craft butchers but the Scottish Government is not helping.

This Month

www.sfmta.co.uk

Tel: 01738 637472
e: sfmta@sfmta.co.uk

News Release

Government Backing For "Get Some Pork On That Fork!"

Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Richard Lochhead has added his voice to the growing rallying call to "Get Some Pork On That Fork" – the latest high profile marketing campaign aimed at helping Scotland's pig sector.

Mr Lochhead gave his backing during a visit to an ASDA store in Glasgow's Govan area. The supermarket is a major supporter of the campaign and the Scottish pork brand, Specially Selected Pork.

Mr Lochhead said: "It is vital at this critical time that high quality, fresh meat is sourced from local suppliers wherever possible to support our pig industry. I know a number of food retailers have already taken positive steps in this direction and have offered their support for the Quality Meat Scotland campaign in stores.

"However there is also a need for consumers to create a demand for Scottish products, and I am delighted to support the QMS campaign which aims to 'get more pork on that fork'. I would urge shoppers to look for the Specially Selected Pork logo and consider using fresh Scottish pork cuts in every day meals, alongside the more traditional Sunday roasting joints."

QMS Head of Marketing Laurent Vernet added: "We are half way through what's proving to be a very exciting seven week long marketing campaign for Scotland's pork industry. For the first time we've added high profile taxi advertising to the annual radio promotion.

"These elements coupled with our traditional in store sales push in supermarkets across Scotland will, I am sure, help build on the success of the last campaign. Sales were up 20% year on year and volume up 27% during the last burst of marketing."

The campaign comes at a time when the pig sector is warning rising costs could force them out of business altogether. The aim is to reach more than 1.5 million Scottish consumers who will be targeted by the catchy slogan on multiple occasions.

QMS commissioned research last year which confirmed widespread public support for maintaining a pork industry in Scotland.

Commission increases the age limit at which the vertebral column must be removed from beef.

On 21st April the European Commission adopted a Regulation raising the age limit at which the vertebral column must be removed from beef from 24 to 30 months. Following the 3 month scrutiny period by the European Parliament, the Regulation has been finally adopted by the European Commission. The Regulation, based on scientific advice from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), increases the age at which the vertebral column of slaughtered cattle must be removed from 24 to 30 months. This measure is one of the EU measures set out in the TSE Roadmap in July 2005 which have been made possible by the improvement in the BSE situation, while maintaining the highest levels of food safety and consumer protection.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Health, said: "The decision is a further reflection of the progress Europe has made in the battle against BSE. The Commission took into account the latest scientific knowledge, and discussed this extensively with Member States and the European Parliament. We are confident that the high level of consumer protection provided by our BSE rules over the past decade will be maintained."

Since October 2000, the vertebral column has been part of the EU list of Specified Risk Material (SRM), considered to pose the greatest risk of BSE transmission. Under EU BSE legislation, all SRM has been required to be removed and destroyed in bovine animals over a certain age, to prevent it entering the food and feed chain. Due to this, and other stringent risk reducing measures, there has been a significant decline in the number of positive BSE cases detected in the EU over the past few years, and the age of those positive cases has steadily increased. These positive developments led the Commission to reflect on possible amendments of certain TSE measures in place, with a view to updating them in line with the improved situation.

In April 2007, EFSA published an opinion supporting an increase in the age limit for bovine vertebral column removal, and stating that even up to 33 months could be considered a considerably safe limit. On the basis of this opinion, and taking into account the views of Member States and Parliament, the Commission proposed 30 months as the most practical age limit to allow the highest safety margin against BSE.

The higher age limit for vertebral column removal is expected to have a positive impact on the competitiveness of farmers and meat industries, and to reduce the amount of SRM waste generated in the EU and therefore to reduce the costs for its destruction. It also brings EU legislation in line with the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Quality Meat Scotland has welcomed a 'commonsense' move by Europe to increase the vertebral column limit from 24 to 30 months. Andy McGowan, Industry Development Manager for QMS, said: "This is great news and it removes a serious obstruction to the efficient processing of beef between 24 and 30 months that had effectively created a two tier market for prime beef.

"We would argue that science would support raising this limit even further so that prime beef from cattle over 30 months can also benefit. We now look forward to this commonsense attitude prevailing in the current discussions over age limits in mince."

The new regulation came into effect on Saturday 26th April with transitional arrangements to cover beef slaughtered prior to that date, namely

- up to 24 May for the requirement for slaughterhouses to consign carcases of 24-30m bovines slaughtered up to and including 25 April to cutting plants or authorised butchers for removal of VC SRM; and
- up to 31 May for cutting plants and authorised butchers to be required to remove VC SRM from carcases of 24-30m bovines slaughtered up to and including 25 April.

GOLF COMPETITION

Organised by the
Scottish Federation of Meat Traders' Associations Inc
(Kindly sponsored by Dalziel Ltd)

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2008
LADYBANK GOLF COURSE, LADYBANK, FIFE

The Dalziel Trophy is played over 18 holes as a full stableford.

- Tee off times commence at 10.15am.
- Three people per tee off time
- A full self serve buffet breakfast including tea and coffee.
- High Tea
- First 36 entries only accepted.
- Entry Fee £65.00 payable in advance.
- In the event of a tie, the better inward half will count then the last 6 holes, then the last 3 holes.
- Competitors will be notified of tee-off times in advance.
- Presentation of prizes will take place after the High Tea.

An entry form accompanies this Newsletter. Please complete and return to to: Bruce McCall, SFMTA, 8 Needless, Perth PH2 0JW
by 21 May 2008

SALE OF BUSINESS AND LET OF PREMISES AT

61 HIGH STREET, FORTROSE IV10 8SU

Fortrose is an attractive Royal Burgh within easy commuting distance of Inverness.

PRICE: Offers for the business including goodwill and all fixtures and fittings to continue trading are invited in the region of £30,000. The premises will be let to the purchasers with a rental to be agreed in the region of £5,500 per annum. It is anticipated that the lease will extend to 10 years with a 5 year break though offers with varying terms may be considered.

VIEWING: Strictly by appointment with Burns Property Consultants 01349 867967

Price Fears

Beef prices both live and dead weight have continued upwards in the past month and almost every caller to the Perth Office at some point asks how others are coping with the steeply rising cost of raw material. While members are generally trying to recoup the added cost over the counter there are concerns that customers might resist price increases and signs that they are changing their buying habits, at least in the short term, to spend the same amount of money while compensating for higher prices. SFMTA Livestock Convenor Alan Kennedy made the following observations to the Executive Meeting on 16th April:-

"It would also seem that price resistance from consumers and caterers is affecting the middle cuts. Sirloins, rib roasts and fillets have seen little further rise at a time of year when this normally happens. It would appear that the very cheapest cuts are carrying the bulk of price increases with the exception of D rumps. This may be a sign that customers are seeking a cheaper steak cut.

"Prices have risen by almost 3% on the month for boneless cuts, reflecting a 14.46% rise since February. This may slow down in coming weeks given current live prices.

"Live hogg prices have bounced around over the past month but seem to have settled at around 140ppk (Forfar monthly average).

"Deadweight wholesale prices have risen – Scotch Premier showing a rise from 309ppk to 375ppk on the month, although this may settle back in the next few weeks. It is worth noting again that the price of lamb loins has not risen in proportion to the other cuts.

"Pork has remained largely unchanged over the past month. My own opinion is that this will change, and pork will start to catch up with beef and lamb.

"Since February the average price of Dutch bacon has risen by 15 and 20% and therefore falls largely in line with the rises in beef prices. Members should be very aware of this, and this rise will probably reflect in the future price of pork.

Hides and skins remain the same at £19 and zero, both figures from St Andrews.
Hides and skins at Wishaw £22.50 and 75p.

What is driving meat prices higher?

An explanatory note by Stuart Ashworth, Economist at Quality Meat Scotland

There are a number of common themes currently driving cattle and sheep prices up. At the request of members a separate yellow sheet is issued with this Newsletter that can be handed to customers who seek reasons for inflation of meat prices.
Extra copies of this can be requested from SFMTA, tel: 01738 637472

Lanarkshire Retired Butchers Dinner

SFMTA members wishing to attend the **Lanarkshire Retired Butchers Dinner** at the Best Western Popinjay Hotel, Rosebank on Tuesday 13th May should contact the local association President John Hamilton (Tel: 01899 220013).
Guest Speaker is Jim Leishman, cost is £25 pp.

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Working alongside the SFMTA, we provide friendly advice, information and insurance solutions tailored to your business needs.

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- Comprehensive Cover
- Competitive prices
- Interest FREE monthly instalments
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Bob Baillie

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Past President Bob Baillie on 23rd April. Bob suffered from prostrate cancer and we believe he had been admitted to hospital because the count had increased. Bob, originally from the Shetland Isles, bought the business trading as Thomson in Thornton. This is now run by his son Grant.

Bob was SFMTA President in 1993-94, a past President of Fife and Kinross Meat Traders Association.

The funeral was held on Wednesday 30th April at Thornton Parish Church at 2.00pm. Our sympathy goes out to his wife Pearl, sons David and Grant and the seven grandchildren.

Food not to blame for E Coli O157

The higher incidence of E. coli 0157 in Scotland than in the rest of the UK and Ireland is due to non food-borne sources, said Mary Locking, Health Protection Scotland (HPS) epidemiologist. Ms Locking said that the introduction of an enhanced surveillance approach in Scotland had allowed HPS to study trends more closely.

She said: 'We have found that a constant 12 per cent of cases each year are due to secondary spread and asymptomatic victims. Non food-borne risk factors are important. They include private water supplies, which are proportionately greater in Scotland'. Climate and Scotland's poorer health record, she said, are also factors.

Ms Locking said warmer and wetter weather in September and October in Scotland had produced a higher number of cases.

Night Time Inspectors

Gordon Greenhill, Edinburgh City Council's head of community safety, has called for more night-time working in environmental health, saying 'why do we work nine to five if the public want us at night?'

He said that last year in Edinburgh night noise officers had carried out 500 food hygiene and health and safety visits of high-risk premises. They did food and HMO inspections 'between 5pm and the time that anti-social behaviour kicks in'.

Edinburgh has two night noise teams with eight officers in each. They work closely with the police and will shortly be augmented by eight licensing standards officers and six environmental wardens. Mr Greenhill said spending on night noise teams represented great value for money and produced savings elsewhere.

He said: 'I am sure in an authority of any size you will find savings. And it makes the work more fulfilling. It's much easier to be out and about efficiently at night because there is less traffic.' He added: 'I think that any authority which does not do food hygiene inspections at night should fail their audits with the Food Standards Agency. You only see what really goes on at 9pm.'

Brothers spread their wings

Two well known local businessmen behind SFMTA members, Scott Brothers, have acquired a new distribution centre in Dundee aimed at supplying local butchers, hotels and restaurants with chicken and chicken products.

Scott and George Jarron who have acquired the Kilspindie Road depot, which was previously run by Mitchells of Letham, started operating under the new management and new name of Tayside Poultry from Monday 28th April. The decision to take on the running of the distribution depot was described as "reassuring for local food businesses" by Craig Conway the continuing depot manager.

Mr. Conway said, "We will continue to supply local businesses with a wide range of Scotland's finest produce and we hope that our existing customers will continue to support us."

The decision not to continue the depot by Mitchells of Letham was taken following its acquisition by 2 Sisters Food Group last summer.

A 2 Sisters Food Group spokesman said of the 2 brothers:- "We wish Scott and George Jarron every success with their new business. The Mitchell's provided a quality service for local food business around Dundee and we're delighted that the continuation of this depot should safeguard local supplies as well as the jobs at the depot."

Anyone wishing to contact Craig Conway can do so on 01382 827438.
Block 25 Kilspindie Road, Dunsinane Industrial Estate, Dundee

Regional Meetings

Meetings in May will be held in conjunction with the judging of the Regional heats of the Lucas Scottish Beef Sausage Competition and the Dalziel Scottish Black Pudding Competition. These entries need to be at the appropriate venues by 7.00pm on the night. [Entries close on 8th May] They will then be judged and Regional winners and runners up will be presented on the completion of judging. Presentation of the KRH Potted Meat Awards and the McAusland Crawford Scottish Sliced Sausage Awards and of training certificates to trainees with achievements will also take place at these events.

In addition to this McAusland Crawford will be providing new tastes to sample on the night, Bryan McAusland will be explaining what is possible in terms of meeting FSA traffic light guidelines on salt and fat. Gerry Doran will also be attending to show the latest from Avery and Douglas Scott will give a presentation about costings.

Although these meetings are generally for members and partners. If there are members of staff who are interested in products, and they are someone that you might want photographed receiving an award alongside you for your product, then please feel free to bring them along as well.

South East Scotland	**Monday 19th May**	**Buccleuch Arms Hotel, St Boswells**
East of Scotland	**Tuesday 20th May**	**Inchture Hotel, Inchture**
South West Scotland	**Thursday 22 May**	**Old Racecourse Hotel, Ayr**
North of Scotland	**Monday 26 May**	**Inverness Caledonian Stadium**
West of Scotland	**Tuesday 27 May**	**Garfield House Hotel, Stepps**

Tea, Coffee and Biscuits will be served from 7.00pm. Meeting will commence at 7.15pm and should conclude by 9.00pm.

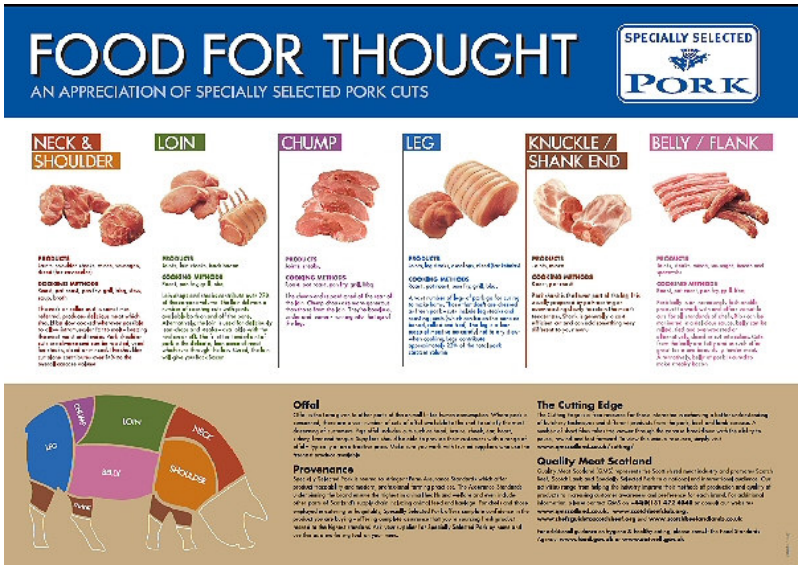
Pork promoted to prospective cooks

Scotland's chefs in the making could be great fans of Specially Selected Pork thanks to a new QMS educational resource.

Red meat promotion body Quality Meat Scotland has created a new poster for students called *Food for thought: an appreciation for Specially Selected Pork*, which gives them a complete overview of the pork carcase, as well as outlining the quality and welfare guarantees that come from sourcing pork bearing the Scottish industry's brand.

Laurent Vernet, Head of Marketing for QMS said: "Working with the food service sector is another link in the chain of our efforts to help Scotland's pig industry.

"The food service sector is a major consumer of pork, constituting about a third of all red meat used, and demonstrating the value and versatility of pork to these students right at the start of their careers, means they are aware of Specially Selected Pork and will know the many qualities that put it ahead of its rivals.



"Increasing public knowledge of Specially Selected Pork, working with retailers to encourage clear labelling and ensuring support in the food service sectors are all key to creating a sustainable market for Scotland's pig producers."

Copies of the poster, which outline all the cuts of pork that are available from the pig carcase and what you can do with each of them, have been sent to all of Scotland's Catering Colleges for use by students. This has also been supported by recent workshops held in Inverness College and Glasgow Metropolitan College.

This project is part of QMS work on behalf of the Scottish pig sector. The organisation is also embarking on a £300,000 project to look at adding value to the fifth quarter, and has recently run a major consumer campaign, *Get Some Specially Selected Pork on that Fork*.

This featured on the main metropolitan radio stations throughout Scotland, and was backed up by in-store events, a high profile taxi campaign in Edinburgh and marketing materials in selected independent butchers.

Co-op check out Somerfield

Tesco have done it - with stores represented in every UK Postcode area and a clean sweep of the main Outer Islands of Scotland.

Somerfield last month announced a deal to sell seven supermarkets, four in Scotland including ones in Ullapool, Stornoway, Kirkwall and Lerwick, to Tesco for an estimated £100m, in a transaction that had been discussed for some time and been handled separately to the main auction of the company.

The private equity owners of Somerfield have started exclusive talks with Co-op and hope to seal a deal to sell the UK's fifth-largest supermarket chain at close to their £2bn target valuation by next week.

The mutually-owned Co-op supermarket group has made the only bid for Somerfield. Its initial offer of about £1.7bn left Somerfield's private equity owners cold. But a revised offer at the end of last week has since allowed talks to resume.

It is thought the consortium that owns Somerfield - made up of Apax Partners, Barclays Capital, Robert Tchenguiz and Kaupthing bank - is unwilling to sell the supermarket group for anything less than £1.9bn.

Original valuations mentioned in the market were £2bn-£2.5bn. But Somerfield has been up for auction since July, with the owners resisting attempts from rival supermarket groups to cherry-pick parcels of stores rather than buy all 900 en bloc.

If Co-op's bid is successful, it is expected to keep Somerfield's smaller stores, while it is likely to talk to some of the bigger chains - Asda, Waitrose and possibly J Sainsbury and Wm Morrison - about selling on some supermarket sites.

Somerfield was taken private in December 2005 and is run by former Asda executive Paul Mason. It made an operating profit of £227m on sales of £4.4bn in the year to April 2007. It said its underlying sales rose 6.4 per cent in the 12 weeks to Easter.

Orkney MP Alistair Carmichael and Orkney MSP Liam McArthur have sent a joint letter to Tesco Scotland management seeking an early meeting regarding the announcement that Tesco is purchasing the Kirkwall Somerfield store.

Mr Carmichael said: "Liam and I are looking for an early meeting with Tesco management in Scotland to ensure there is a balance to be struck between protecting Orkney local businesses and suppliers and offering local people the same choice as is available in other parts of the country.

"My initial reaction is that the purchase of an existing supermarket on an existing site is probably preferable to the long rumoured construction of a new supermarket on an alternative site."

Shetland councillor Jonathan Wills said: "I am glad that the jobs can be safe guarded and very glad that there is not going to be a third supermarket in Lerwick. I think two is probably enough for a town of this size. There is competition between them and that is fine, but there is still room for smaller shops.

Adam Dalgleish

After 19 years as Secretary of both Glasgow United Fleshers Society and the Glasgow Retail Fleshers Association, Adam Dalgleish has decided at the age of 87 to retire!
A celebratory dinner will be held on Monday 19th May in the Swallow Hotel Bellahouston.

Work wanted

Kevin Robson (19) is looking for apprenticeship in Ayr - hasn't done any butchery before - does anyone have any vacancies? Tel: 07592490322

Scottish Food Fortnight

Scottish Food Fortnight (SFF) is a celebration of all Scottish food and drink, promoting the benefits of fresh, seasonal produce for Scottish people. It was launched in 2003 and has continued to grow and gain support from chefs, cross-party MSPs and a diverse variety of producers and retailers, hotels and restaurants, colleges and schools. They are lucky enough to have the world-renowned cook and writer Lady Claire Macdonald as Patron and supporter of SFF again.

SFF really need everyone to get involved in this great celebration so that they can continue to raise awareness that Scotland produces some of the **very best food and drink in the World** – and it's time everyone knew it!

It's completely free to take part in SFF. All you need to do is think up an event or a promotion, let SFF know what you are doing, and they can work together to get some publicity for you. Events could include organising a series of tastings of local delicacies, work with local producers to show where your food has come from.

SFF will be officially launched at Scotland's Countryside Festival at Glamis Castle on Friday 5th September 2008. For more information about Scotland's Countryside Festival log on to http://www.scotlandscountrysidefestival.co.uk/ and for details about taking stand space within the excellent food hall, email office@scotlandscountrysidefestival.co.uk

Adshell Sites

Some time ago it was suggested that members might like to use Adshells at bus stops to advertise their businesses. Sites close to you or outside your nearest supermarket could be available at a cost of around £100 per week – (apart from any heritage areas such as Edinburgh's Princes St / Hanover St which routinely sell for £250 per week).

If you are interested please contact:- Jan Deans, Dynamic Advertising Group. Tel: 0131 538 2637

Wholesalers losing patience with MHS

Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers held their Annual Conference on Saturday 26th April and President Allan Jess appealed for more to be done to stimulate livestock production, especially with food security becoming a greater issue and the government launching a food policy stressing the need for Scots to buy more local produce.

"I urge retailers large and small to allow us, processors, the correct price needed for our products and allow us to survive in the short term.

"If people can't obtain sufficient raw materials to run plants efficiently, then businesses will simply disappear.

"We are currently seeking a meeting with Scotland's Rural Affairs Minister to discuss a number of issues including Article 69. Article 69 is already used by other Members States to preserve their domestic priorities. We must do the same."

Allan expressed disappointment senior officials from the government's rural directorate chose not to attend Saturday's conference but he did have the presence of Ian Reynolds, Chair of the Meat Hygiene Service as a guest speaker. Allan described the way the industry has been treated by the inspection body, "this has been a total and utter shambles and a absolute disgrace. It is also a costly shambles for which we are all paying heavily at present and if nothing changes we will be paying heavily for some time to come.

"From our perspective as meat plant owners and operators, the meat inspection service has historically been overpriced and poorly managed. In addition the majority of plants are currently paying in excess of 25% more than they should be.

"On top of that we have the recently imposed 8% rise in inspection charges. This was introduced without any justification by MHS. When asked directly for an explanation the response was totally inadequate. The current value of the Euro allows MHS another increase in funding at the expense of our members.

"We were told of course that they consulted widely ahead of the 8% increase. The consultation included a few like ourselves who actually have jobs and businesses at stake plus a host of interested bystanders. By all means ask anyone you like but surely some priority should be given to the views expressed by those in the business. To me this was purely a window dressing exercise.

"We are all waiting for the emergence of the transformed MHS. We need this transformed organisation to be efficient, properly costed and well managed. Sadly the history of meat inspection in UK tells us to expect otherwise."

Shona Robison, Minister for Public Health has responded positively to an SAMW request for a meeting to discuss these concerns. That meeting will be arranged as soon as possible. The detail in the response included:-

"Scottish Ministers are very clear that the MHS has to continue the process of becoming a more efficient organisation."

Ian Reynolds, of the Meat Hygiene Service, told the industry to come up with the evidence needed to force changes in Europe to checks that he recognises are "a waste of time".

"We all know the current system is not right. Why should we be employing expensive, fully qualified vets and then remove their ability to use their professional judgment through the use of an overly prescriptive rule book? This is costing us all time and costing industry a significant amount. It makes no sense."

Training Successes

22 of our trainees will have just received invitations to attend a presentation ceremony at our Regional meetings being held in May in St Boswells, Inchture, Ayr, Inverness and Stepps.

Each of these trainees has successfully completed their SVQ level 2 in meat and poultry processing and in some cases have also completed the SFMTA certificates which are awarded for competence in the craft skills involved in their particular jobs.

All the trainees have worked hard to show their employer and their assessor that they have the skills necessary to 'cut it' in our business and it is important to recognise this achievement since these craft skills are important to our industry's future.

If you and your trainee have received an invitation to attend the presentation events, please contact Scottish Meat Training to confirm your attendance, we will be delighted to see you there.

ESF Project application rejected

Unfortunately, our government does not appear to share our opinion of the importance of these skills and the people we would like to train. Our 2008 Lowlands and Uplands ESF project has been rejected, which has had the serious effect of restricting the availability of our services to people under 20 years old, when we know that the majority of our workforce and the people coming forward for training are older.

Limited Number of Skillseeker places available

This year's Skillseeker training contract with Scottish Meat Training is restricted to 16 – 19 year olds and we have a limited number of places available - 44 in Scottish Enterprise area and 11 in Highland and Island area. This is a very small number of training places and any employer with a member of staff aged 16 – 19 year old who has not yet registered for our Industry recognised SVQ level 2 in Meat and Poultry Processing would be well advised to contact us immediately as once these places are filled we cannot guarantee that further funding will be made available.

Information about our training courses, including hygiene courses can be found on our website www.meattraining.net Or if you prefer, ring our office, we will be happy to discuss your training needs and send you an information pack with the details of training available and the SMT assessor for your area. Telephone: 01738 637785

Competitions Results - NEC, Birmingham 2008

Congratulations to John Saunderson, SFMTA member in Edinburgh who won four awards at the Supreme Products National Evaluation last month:-

Gold Awards: Beef Burger
Silver Awards: Traditional Pork Sausage
Bronze Award: Beef Sausage, Tollcross Pie.

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Busman's Holiday

Every butcher does this, photos of butchers shops somehow slip into the holiday snaps.

We were delighted when this habit was picked up by Scottish Meat Training administrator, Claire Simpson on her recent break to Prague.

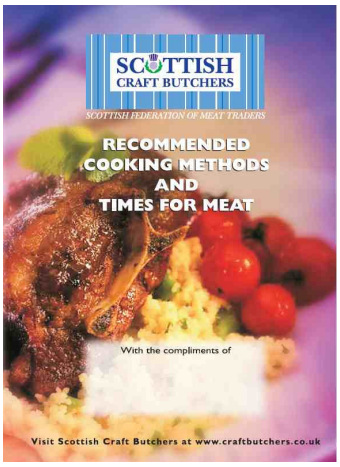
Send us your holiday pictures for publication (as long as they are meaty!).

Know Your Cuts Leaflet

Recommended Cooking Methods and Cuts Guides can be personalised with your business name overprinted on the front.

Ideal for handing out to new customers, giveaways at meetings, even doorstep publicity for your shop.

Available from SFMTA price: £15 per 100 plus VAT.



FSA drops five-star scores on doors

The Food Standards Agency has rejected the five-tier scores on the doors scheme favoured by the majority of councils. Instead it has decided to consult on a voluntary national scheme of either four tiers with three stars and a fail, or three tiers with pass, improvement required or fail ratings.

At present 123 of the 145 local authorities who make hygiene inspections public use five-tier schemes. Another 30 are committed to launching five-tier systems by June.
Dame Deirdre Hutton, chair of the FSA, said the consultation would focus on the four-tier scheme because research showed it was the most popular with consumers.

'The board agreed that we should adopt a UK-wide scheme. It also felt that as well as consulting on the scheme that our research shows is popular with consumers, we should also ask people to think about the scheme which has been running in Scotland for the last 18 months,' she said.

Scores on the doors, she said, was an important step in empowering consumers to make informed choices about the food they eat.

'Our data shows that the introduction of a single, nationwide scheme is supported by all stakeholders and we will work with local authorities and food businesses across the country to put this in place,' she added.

Following the three-month consultation a final decision is expected later this year and implementation of the scheme is expected next year. The FSA board would prefer a UK-wide scheme but that would depend on co-operation from the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.

But Prof Graeme Miller, who chairs the FSA's Scottish Food Advisory Committee, expressed doubts over whether it was yet time for UK- wide standardisation, at a board meeting to discuss the consultation.

At the same meeting, Tom Murray, from the FSA's local authority liaison division, told board members: 'The evaluation which we commissioned of existing schemes did not highlight any one scheme over others. They were all effective in one way or another. However, there was strong evidence that consumers want a graded scheme.'

He added that re-visits of food businesses to give up-to-date scores would not be a great burden: 'In our view re-visits and re-assessments would be manageable.'

Market Report - Cattle Prices and Supplies

Deadweight cattle prices after having steadied at around 250 p/kg dwt have subsequently broken through this psychological barrier as supplies continue to be tight. Mature cow and bull prices have tracked the upward movement in prime stock prices.

Cow and bull slaughterings have shown a 5% increase across the UK in the first quarter of 2008, while prime cattle slaughterings have fallen 6%. Young bull slaughterings in the first quarter are unchanged on last year, steer and heifer numbers have fallen 6% and 8% respectively. Scotland has maintained throughput rather better with prime kill falling only 3% with steer volumes falling 2% and heifer volumes falling 4%.

Prices are also strong across Europe. Euro prices for prime stock are typically 5-10% higher than last year in most states. Only Spain and Portugal are currently reporting prices lower than last year while Ireland and Sweden report prices more than 10% higher than last year. Cow prices are even more buoyant and in many countries are more than 10% higher than a year ago although in France and Italy cow price improvement is a more modest 5%.

Strong prices across Europe and a favourable exchange rate are creating export opportunities for slaughterers and deliveries during January and February were considerably higher than a year ago. Beef imports grew during February as Brazil shipped significantly increased volumes of frozen beef ahead of the export ban. Uruguay continued to be the main beneficiary of the travails of Brazil and Argentina.

The trading position with Argentina remains confused. Exports, which had been restricted to 480,000 tonnes annually, were banned by the Argentinean government in late March. However, following continued discussions with the industry the Government has indicated that it will lift its ban and increase the trade volume to 550,000 tonnes provided a selection of domestic retail cuts are made available at controlled prices.

Calf registrations continue to reflect the declining Scottish and GB cattle herd. Over 2007 as a whole Scottish calf registrations have fallen 2.5% and across GB as a whole passport applications in 2007 fell 2.75%. Within this total the Aberdeen Angus breed continues to show increased registrations and consolidated its position as the fourth most popular sire in Scotland after Limousin, Charolais and Holstein Friesian.

News Round Up

Brazil has gained approval for 95 holdings to supply beef for the European Union. As a consequence they have been able to deliver 80 tonnes of beef to the European Union during March, a far cry from the approximate 20,000 tonnes monthly deliveries in 2006 when there were no restrictions on trade.

December census results from across Europe show a general decline in the dairy herd of around 1% and switch to beef cows where numbers increased by 2%. However, such is the importance of the dairy herd in Europe, it accounts for two thirds of breeding cows, that overall breeding cow numbers are little changed.

On the basis of these census results the European Commission's expectation is for a decline in beef production in 2007 of 0.3% to 8.04 tonnes. Looking forwards the Commission forecast beef production declining to 7.6m tonnes by 2014 resulting in an import requirement of 743,000 tonnes.

Imports of beef into the European Union at full tariff paid are reported to have fallen by 20% over the period July 2007 to February 2008. Restriction on exports from Argentina will have played a big part in this.

Market Report - Sheep Prices and Supplies

Prime Lamb continue to strengthen through March although by mid April as new season lambs began to reach the market in England and Wales and the quality of remaining hoggs declined, prices have eased back. Nevertheless, prices remain at their highest level at this time of year for a decade.

Higher prices have continued to draw hoggs on to the market. Over the first quarter of 2008, hogg slaughterings in both Scotland and the UK increased 15% on last year and are at their highest levels since before the 2001 FMD outbreak. This high level of slaughtering over the past quarter means that since May last year UK lamb slaughterings have been 2% higher than last year. This substantial increase when set against the June 2007 lamb crop and losses to the FMD welfare scheme would point towards heavy slaughtering of ewe lambs and the likelihood of further significant ewe flock reduction in 2008. UK ewe and ram slaughterings also increased in the first quarter of 2008, by 3%.

Prices remain firm across Europe for heavy, UK specification, lamb. France and Ireland report modest increases in producer prices compared to last year but Spain is seeing producer prices move lower. Some of the smaller producers, for example Belgium and Poland are showing some substantial improvement in producer prices. In contrast the price of light, Mediterranean specification lamb, is much lower than last year; Italy, Spain and Greece all reporting prices more than 7% lower than last year.

Despite the start of a new tariff quota year sheepmeat imports remained low in January as New Zealand reduced deliveries. However, imports bounced back strongly during February as New Zealand had significant supplies available as their producers slaughtered stock early and at lighter weights as a consequence of continued drought related problems. Australia, although sending modest volumes to the UK, increased shipments in both January and February in comparison to last year.

Exports continue at much higher levels than last year, reflecting the much higher UK kill and the weakness of sterling which gives exporters some strength in the market without compromising producer prices. Nevertheless, export volumes remain below the levels seen two years ago

News Round up

Proposals put forward by Alliance Group Ltd of New Zealand to rationalise the meat slaughter and processing sector in New Zealand and create a company to handle 80% of sheep and cattle has been shelved. PPCS, one of the other major processors who had initially backed the concept, have withdrawn their support on the grounds of improving world markets for both sheep meat and beef. New Zealand producer returns for lamb are around 10% better than last year and PPCS expect 1 million fewer lambs to be marketed each year for the next three years and this will help to sustain producer returns.

Data from a number of December census surveys across Europe have been published which show that in most leading sheep producing countries the ewe flock is stable or declining, only Spain reported an increase in ewe numbers however, over the whole of the EU-27 a small increase in ewe numbers is expected, mainly on the back of an increase of more than 1m breeding ewes in Romania to around 7.4m ewes.

This makes the Romanian ewe flock around the third largest in the EU but some 90% of them are used primarily to milk for dairy products. Having consolidated this information the European Commission is forecasting sheepmeat production in the EU-15, that is excluding the new member states and Romania, to fall by 2.5% in 2008. On a longer horizon the European Commission is suggesting a decline of 6% in EU sheepmeat production by 2014.

Market Report - Pig Prices and Supplies

The DAPP has continued to improve since the start of the year. At the start of April the producer price was 9.8% higher than year earlier levels at 116p/kg. This is repeating the price improvement of the first half of the year seen in the past two years but at a greater rate.

The Euro continues to strengthen against Sterling and is currently valued at 80 pence. This inflates the price of imported goods to the UK whilst offering a more competitive market place for domestic exporters.

Weaner prices have recovered to near year earlier levels after a sustained period of poor returns. Slaughter throughput in Scotland has risen by 4.3% year on year. The UK slaughter statistics for the first 2 months of the year show a 4.0% increase in throughput

Imports for the first month of the year were down by 15%, to 34,000 tonnes, compared to last year whilst exports grew by 12% to 9,400 tonnes for the corresponding month. During February imports increased despite the strength of the Euro but were offset by a continued growth in exports.

News Round up

Lower production across Europe is leading to higher prices. For example, Czech farmers reduced pig numbers by 80,000 to 2.7 million head during 2007 and over the past month prices have increased in the Czech Republic 3.1%.

Elsewhere in Europe the main producing countries have also seen recent strong increases in producer prices. The Netherlands (4.3%), Denmark (6.0%), France (9.9%) and Hungary (7.8%) have all had improved producer prices over the last month. Germany has experienced a lower level of price increase, of 1.3%, but this still exceeds the UK price decrease, when quoted in Euro of 0.04% by some way. This situation with the exchange rate continues to improve the market for exporters and hinder potential suppliers to the UK.

The EU is around 108% self-sufficient with regards to pigmeat production and therefore is the world's largest exporter of pigmeat. The high value of the Euro has affected the European competitiveness in the world market and in 2007 the market share of exports to Japan and Russia decreased as the US and Brazil expanded supplies. Gains, however, have been recorded to the Asian markets.

Germany has signed an agreement with South Africa approving the export of pigmeat. The forecast is for consumption in South Africa to increase prior to and during the World Cup in 2010. There is speculation that the world boom in grain prices may have peaked as latest crop predictions show improved production potential mainly in the US and Canada. Cereal prices are still expected to remain high in the short to medium term within the EU due to structural factors as well as more recent lower harvests. There remains however an anticipation of a greater deal of fluctuation within the marketplace due to a tighter market in general. The structural factors include: (1) the rise in global demand driven by economic growth rates, (2) the development of new markets i.e. bio-fuels and (3) the significant slow down in cereal yield growth in the EU.

Developments in bio-gas technology are creating an opportunity for pig farmers to diversify. The result could be that pigmeat production could be a by-product for farmers – in terms of financial reward. One company in the UK is using pig manure, from 52000 finishing pigs, to produce £1million worth of electricity. A further by product of the bio-gas process is fertiliser which could be used to reduce the requirement for artificial fertilisers in crop production.

Livestock Prices

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

BEEF PRICES	**W/E 19/04/08**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish Abattoirs			
Steers dwt	262.1 p/kg	257.9 p/kg	214.8 p/kg
Heifers dwt	262.0 p/kg	255.8 p/kg	215.4 p/kg
Young Bulls dwt	247.1 p/kg	236.9 p/kg	199.0 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	3330	3565	4157
Heifers	2266	2175	2642
Young Bulls	332	417	597
BEEF PRICES	**W/E 16/04/08**	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish Auctions			
Steers lwt	154.65 p/kg	150.77 p/kg	123.48 p/kg
Heifers lwt	154.57 p/kg	150.41 p/kg	127.13 p/kg
Young bulls lwt	132.62 p/kg	134.29 p/kg	109.87 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	532	507	560
Heifers	524	473	524
Young bulls	77	59	43

Deadweight cattle week ending 19th April 2008								
	All steers p/kg			All heifers p/kg			All Young bulls p/kg	
	3	4L	4H	3	4L	4H	3	4L
-U	266.9	265.9	265.6	270.1	268.4	268.2	253.4	254.6
R	261.0	264.1	264.3	261.3	262.2	263.6	248.2	248.8
O+	255.1	259.4	253.5	259.0	262.4	258.7	239.5	243.4
-O	238.9	240.4	-	-	238.3	-	227.7	229.9

New Member:-

Welcome to the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders to:-
Meat at Muirs, 11 Stoddard Square, Elderslie, PA5 9AS
Tel: 01505 342049

New - Members Only Website:-

http://www.sfmta.co.uk/members/

Please feedback your views on this addition to the service available to you as a member. Username and passwords were enclosed with your receipt for payment of subscription. If you need this re-sent, please contact Bruce on 01738 637472.

SHEEP PRICES	W/E 16/04/08	Previous week	Previous year
Scottish Auctions			
Old Season SQQ lwt	142.83 p/kg	139.75 p/kg	109.02 p/kg
Ewes lwt	£39.76/head	£39.35/head	£37.92/head
Sheep numbers			
Scottish Auctions			
Old Season SQQ	19301	18800	20914
Ewes	2408	3151	3271

SHEEP PRICES	W/E 19/04/08	Previous week	Previous year
GB Abattoirs			
Old season SQQ dwt	319.1 p/kg	321.8 p/kg	249.2 p/kg

Deadweight sheep week ending **19th April 2008** p/kg				
		2	3L	3H
	U	331.0	332.1	325.4
	R	323.5	324.0	319.8
	O	315.4	317.3	310.0

PIG PRICES	W/E 19/04/08	Previous week	Previous year
GB Abattoirs			
All pigs DAPP	118.05 p/kg	117.46 p/kg	106.17 p/kg

GB deadweight pigs ending **19th April 2008** – p/kg					
	Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change		Method 1 and 2 p/kg dwt	Change
Up to 59.9 kg	107.72	0.50	80.0 – 89.9 kg	118.45	0.65
60.0 – 69.9 kg	117.73	0.34	90 – 99.9 kg	112.87	0.73
70-0 – 79.9 kg	119.05	0.53	100 kg and over	79.39	-1.30

For Sale -

Bakbar Commercial Turbo Fan Assisted Oven with Stand and Trays 6.66kw 240v.
Good Condition. No reasonable offer refused. Contact John Morrison Tel: 01250 872477

For Sale -

Two serve over counters in very good condition.
1 Trimco 1.8 metre serve over counter 4-5 years old excellent condition, £500 (buyer collects)
1 Volero 2.5 metre serve over counter 1 year old, £500 (buyer collects)
1 pine display dresser, (antique bottom chest with solid shelf additions, looks really good with wines/deli goods etc) very large 2.75 metres wide, £500

Telephone Louise Stewart: 01573450272 (Kelso, Scottish Borders)

Retail Prices for w/e 26/04/08

	SFMTA AVERAGE APRIL	SFMTA AVERAGE MARCH	QMS AVERAGE APRIL	QMS AVERAGE MARCH
SCOTCH BEEF				
Fillet Steak	2981	2922	2911	2820
Sirloin Steak	2134	2006	1900	1872
Popeseye Steak	1373	1336	1157	1198
Topside	1047	1030		961
Round / Rump Steak	1134	1084		
Diced Stewing Steak	877	857	800	788
Rolled Brisket	854	834		
Steak Mince	743	724	673	657
Boiling Beef Bone In	525	515		
DOMESTIC LAMB				
Whole Leg of Lamb	950	925	873	852
Centre Cut Leg Bone In	1115	1094		
Gigot Lamb Chops	1218	1200		
Lamb Leg Steaks	1344	1326	1516	1496
Chump Lamb Chops	1263	1260		
Double Loin Lamb Chops	1253	1239	1400	1385
Single Loin Lamb Chops	1150	1133	1355	1319
Rolled Shoulder Lamb	874	851	916	878
Lamb Shanks	537	519		
Diced Lamb	1026	998	1023	977
Minced Lamb	904	871	985	952
PORK				
Pork Tenderloin (Fillet)	1120	1117	923	912
Pork Leg Steaks	789	787		
Double Loin Pork Chops	710	708		
Single Loin Pork Chops	685	683	679	662
Rolled Shoulder of Pork	522	520	553	594
Belly Pork	489	484		
Pork Loin Steaks	846	844	866	805
Diced Pork	629	627	662	621
PRODUCTS				
Beef Link Sausages	574	560		
Pork Link Sausages	571	563	537	523
Speciality Pork Sausages	622	612		
Sliced Beef Sausage	510	501		
Sliced Black Pudding	458	457		
Ball Haggis	553	552		

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
Supplier of Dishwashers
Crossbush, Riccarton,
Kilmarnock KA1 5LN
Tel: 01563 551122,
Mobile: 07788 926925

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96 Milnbank Street
Glasgow G31 3AL
Contact: Fiona McKenzie
Tel: 0141 556 7691
E-mail: fimckenzie@acerefrigeration.co.uk

AVERY WEIGH TRONIX LTD,
Foundry Lane,
Smethwick,
West Midlands B66 2LP
Contact: Gerry Doran Tel: 0774 077 2154

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Hawthorn Bakery,
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Lanarkshire ML7 5BD
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KY6 2SE
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Mobile: 0787 551 4334

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Bellshill
ML4 3JA
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Fax: 01698 740503

EAST OF SCOTLAND CONTRACTS
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0784 107 1634

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