

**MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD WITHIN 8/10
NEEDLESS ROAD PERTH, ON WEDNESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2003**

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

Plus 11 Executive and Ordinary members as detailed below:

John Chapman, Jamie Chapman, Hamish Deans, Bob Baillie, Adam McLay, Stewart Dempsey, Arthur Matthew, Roy Baird, David Jarron, David Lindsay, Beaton Lindsay.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Stuart Christie, Wilson Ferguson, Jim Hastie, Dennis Meney, Alan Kennedy, Jack Meade, Stephen Sherriff, George Lees, George Jarron and Moira Brady.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE MEETING:. Duncan Mackenzie approved the Minute of the previous meeting held in May; seconded by David Jarron.

MATTERS ARISING: Reference SMILG meetings, Douglas Scott reported that the other parties within the SMILG group had no desire to resurrect the meetings. Meetings with each individual party within SMILG had not yet been arranged but this will be actioned shortly.

Geoff Burgess of the Royal Smithfield Club has not been available recently to follow up on the future of the Young Butcher competition. Douglas Scott will keep trying to contact him.

Duncan Mackenzie asked how AES felt about the response they had been getting to attending our Regional Meetings. Douglas Scott said AES were pleased with the number of positive enquiries which they had received. Some of these had already been converted into sales.

The Federation gained a place on the stakeholder group through consultation with SEERAD. Douglas Scott and Hamish Deans took advantage of this by attending the BSE testing presentation at Pentland House, Edinburgh.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT: Douglas Scott and President Barnett attended QMS breakfast meeting at the Royal Highland Show. They were not totally happy about QMS's stand at the show. Not only were there live animals on their stand but they were displaying posters of primal cuts with the backdrop of the hills and livestock grazing. The stand had huge emphasis on the supermarkets. Douglas Scott felt the stand did nothing positive to promote the meat industry to consumers and looked as if it had been designed by animal rights activists.

John Molloy Training Manager of the Associated Craft Butchers Ireland (ACBI) visited our offices to learn about how we approach on the job training.

SFMTA met with Dynamic Advertising, a company that had been behind effective advertising such as the drink driving campaign. President Barnett, Duncan Mackenzie, Jamie Chapman and Douglas Scott briefed them on our position in the market place and some of the difficulties we have in attracting new customers. Dynamic Advertising will be returning to our offices on the 8 October (later re-arranged for 22nd October) with what we hope will be an

effective marketing initiative. If this is the case we may need to seek some funding to cover the costs.

Douglas Scott visited two butchers in Stornoway while on holiday and reported his visit in the newsletter. During the visit it arose that both butchers were having difficulty with the Local Authority over their charges through the abattoir. On his return with the help of John Chapman, Douglas Scott provided information to both butchers to highlight excessive charges by the local authority. It appears the situation has been resolved.

The Chief Executive visited Charles McHardy shop in Stonehaven to source material for an article for the newsletter.

A picture of the Make It With Meat Awards judging appeared on the front page of a local free paper. Douglas Scott felt this was not the main Make it With Meat story and QMS had been warned about issuing a press release of this nature as it detracts from the coverage when the results are issued.

The annual meeting with Kirk Hunter, CEO Scottish Association of Master Bakers took place. The PGI was discussed and SAMB seemed to think they would be able to support us. However, there was nothing that SAMB could offer to help on the animal waste and bones situation. Kirk Hunter provided us with a contact for education in schools. SAMB highlighted that the minimum wage had been increasing so much that the gap between the lowest paid and the skilled staff was very narrow this was a further difficulty in recruiting trained staff. This is a similar situation to SFMTA members.

Hamish Deans and Douglas Scott attended the BSE Testing presentation by LGC and were impressed. A full report appeared in the SFMTA Newsletter.

Graham Bidston of NFMFT and Douglas Scott met in London on the morning of Guild of Q meeting. Graham Bidston had just returned from holiday to a difficult situation. The Sheffield local authority tried to insist that butchers must wear their chain mail glove and apron at all times. This highlighted how difficult some authorities can be to deal with.

Graham Bidston suggested that attendance at the International Butcher Federation Skills competition was poor value but a visit to the Chief Executives meeting in November would be of benefit. Independent Retail Consortium is another committee that Graham Bidston recommended we get involved in since the information emanating from the meeting can be first class.

EBLEX are invited to the NFMFT executive meetings. The NFMFT are against the quality assurance mark put forward by EBLEX similar to the QMS scheme. They were aware of our argument towards who was a levy payer but they were unable to progress this further.

To date there had been no comment from NFMFT members on animal waste and bones since the regulations had been implemented on 1 August two months ahead of Scotland.

Graham advised that the main reason for business closures was a lack of skilled labour. The JIC agreement was not used in England but instead a wage survey was carried out in 31 regions. A reading on wages for the 16 –18 age, 19 – 21 age, skilled butcher and counter assistant are taken. David Jarron suggested that we could carry out a similar exercise through the newsletter. The NFMFT are trying to develop a training arm to their business and are having some difficulty with the administration. Douglas Scott has offered SFMTA assistance initially with this aspect if desired.

Guild of Q Butchers carried out a UK-wide survey and found that 53% of their members sell Scotch Beef. They have 200 members with 30 in Scotland. There have been difficulties with the inspections with some members complaining they are far too strict. In Scotland some of the members have been asked to provide photographic evidence that outstanding matters have been fixed. A National barbecue competition will take place in Darlington on 24/25 April. Product evaluations will be taking place next February and March. Douglas said that the organisation was now increasingly focussed on marketing initiatives.

A group of 17 from The Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland flew over to visit our Trade Fair. They followed that with a two day tour of butcher shops in the east of Scotland. The Irish were looked after by Arthur Matthew on the tour and treated to an excellent lunch with beer and wine by David Craig at his business in Broughty Ferry. Douglas Scott suggested following our visits in either direction it was a relationship we should keep up. President Barnett asked if letters of thanks could be sent to the shops that were visited. Douglas Scott agreed to action.

In the week commencing 15 September Northern Irish butchers are due to visit shops in Central Scotland including Wilson Ferguson's.

Following a complaint by Graeme Johnston about Falkirk farmers' market, Douglas Scott agreed to visit the next one on Sunday 14th September.

President Barnett added that he had attended the Ross Finnie's function on the Friday night of the Highland show. Defra asked about our relationship with QMS, they were not surprised by our response and sympathised with our position. The President further went on to say that the ACBI had remarkably similar problems with Bord Bia to SFMTA's with QMS.

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT: Convenor David Lindsay reported that paid members now stood at 355 with 12 corporate members. New members joining this month were Malcolm Allan, Bonnybridge (5 shops); Pearson Hepburn, Kirkcaldy, Frasers Butcher, Aviemore; Martin Baird, Melrose; Winston Churchill, Dunoon; Rennie's of Forfar and C & D Johnston, Newburgh.

TRADE FAIR: 140 registered businesses entered the show. Fourteen were non-members and all of these have been sent joining packs.

49 exhibitor stands were used with one stand BNL flooring failing to turn up. There were mixed views and it was agreed to have a meeting with the exhibitors to discuss the make up and frequency of the show due to falling numbers of attendees.

85 entries were received for both the Haggis and Pork Sausage competitions and the competition results were distributed. President Barnett questioned the low number of entries in the competitions and a variety of reasons were offered. One key point was that overall the show needed to have an attraction for children to keep members in the hall. A meeting of exhibitors would be held on Tuesday 21st October to hear their views about the Trade Fair.

Convenor Lindsay thanked President Barnett for his help during the show. The Executive gave a vote of thanks to the staff in Needless Road for all their hard work in putting the show together

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The AGM will be held in the Scotland's Hotel, Pitlochry on 15th & 16 November. Dinner Dance, Bed and Breakfast and full use of Leisure facilities is available at £ 50 per person. Sunday Lunch will be £ 15.00 any bookings can be made direct with the hotel.

REGIONAL MEETINGS: Douglas Scott asked the Executive to consider the dates for the next round of regional meetings and advise him as soon as possible if they were not suitable.

FINANCE REPORT: The Chief Executive reported that Member Services would be on budget to breakeven at the year end. Training & Development department is expected to have a surplus of at least £30,000. This was due to increased skillseeker money, maintaining meat plant training money, reduced staff costs and some forecasted costs that did not materialise.

The auditors, Bell & Co. will begin in Needless Road on Monday 29 September and the draft accounts are scheduled to be available by 8 October so they can be checked ready for distribution for approval at the next meeting on 22 October.

The replacement for the position of Training & Development Manager was discussed at the Finance Committee. Moira Brady is expecting to retire in June 2004. The position will be advertised as attractive salary to the right person with a view to appointing someone initially on a three month trial.

The Executive were advised that £1,000 was spent on photographs for the Steak Pie Competition. £352 was spent on barbecue badges and £600 on the cooking instruction leaflets. The Cooking leaflets are available for sale at £15 per hundred and are selling well.

In view of the healthy state of the accounts it had been agreed that all full time staff would receive an invite to the Annual General Meeting.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT: The Training numbers were discussed. Scotbrae has gone into liquidation. Fortunately, we are due only a small amount from this customer. New income is coming in from P R Duff.

MEAT SKILLS SCOTLAND FINALS: were held at the Trade Fair and sponsored by Lucas Ingredients. Fred Mallion (Worshipful Company of Butchers) judged the final along with Derek McMahon, Bill Patterson, John Stewart and Sandy Crombie. Fred Mallion commented that the set up for the competition was better than he has encountered in Europe. The competition highlighted that we had 8 very good craftsmen. Douglas Scott said there were a number of issues to be discussed about the shape of the competition in the future including the possibility of previous winners being debarred from entry.

MEAT TRAINING COUNCIL: SCOTLAND: A meeting was held within the SFMTA offices on 21st August. Douglas Scott and Moira Brady had attended. Susan Godfrey is likely to take over the chair from Alistair Donaldson.

Meat Training Council has taken over awarding body status in Scotland from SQA. This has generated a considerable amount of work for the office involving the transfer of trainee data. It is hoped that the new arrangement will ultimately make Federation's job easier as SQA were always slow to issue certificates. Douglas Scott hoped that most would see very little change in operation.

Meat Training Council Scotland has come under some scrutiny over its activities and how money is being spent. Hopefully with a change at the helm difficulties in its operation can be addressed. The QMS name was frequently mentioned but are not seen at this forum and it looks likely they will be invited to meetings in the future. This is possibly an avenue to encourage QMS to invest in training initiatives.

SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR SVQ

Over the summer support training material has been produced for the Vocational Qualifications.

Health & Safety videos have been bought from Highfield at a cost of £1,000. These will be on free hire for members to show their staff.

LIVESTOCK REPORT: Convenor Chapman had attended QMS's Standards Committee. The committee is looking to define what qualifies as 'Scotch' once the PGI changes. Some of the members of the committee wished standards to be set too high. This would have had cost implications for some plants. Whilst the remainder of attendees felt that simple is the best. Some of the areas discussed at the committee were swab testing, grading and cow beef.

Hamish Deans said his impression was that QMS seemed to think that the majority of beef will be sold vacuum packed and that the classification would go on the pack. It certainly is not the way we would hope it was tackled as our members in the main, sell loose product. There was a danger that good beef could not be labelled Scotch because of conformation or fat cover. Jamie Chapman said that most butchers were not bothered about the classification because they knew how they liked the beef they sold. Hamish Deans said there is no requirement to classify butchers' beef currently this applies only at wholesale level. To implement this would add an extra cost at abattoir level that the butcher would have to bear.

Paul Smith at MLC had laughed when Convenor Chapman advised him that QMS did not consider butchers as levy payers. When a letter on the subject was received from Paul Smith after their conversation Jamie Chapman was surprised the MLC employee had made a complete U-turn and declared we are in fact not levy payers. It would seem by the letter of the law the only people who are actually 'levy payers' are the slaughterers (plant owners). This would then leave the retailers with the same rights to be represented on the QMS board as the wholesalers and more rights than the farmers.

Supplies of livestock have been good throughout the summer months with trade being fairly consistent for cattle and prices starting to rise. Lambs have been plentiful and prices remained firm and have only really dropped in the last few weeks. Hides have not been so good with cattle being between £ 20 and £ 30 and lambskins have been £5 and £6.

A recent report stated that it is anticipated that the UK will import 260,000 tonnes of fresh and chilled beef this year. With consumption in the region of 950,000 tonnes this represents around 27% imported. Jamie Chapman suggested that QMS would be better to capture some of these users rather than squeeze out Scottish producers on the basis that they will not join the QMS club.

There are currently 16 abattoirs not in the QMS scheme and this is likely to increase. Convenor Chapman questioned whether QMS could still lay claim to the levy money especially the promotional part.

QUALITY MEAT SCOTLAND: David Jarron gave a resume of some of the points that George Jarron had noted through QMS meetings. The Scotch PGI and the OTMS are up for discussion on 2 October. Hamish Deans said that a decision was being left extremely late as OTM was going to hit the market in January. OTM export has been put on hold as it has become political. The AGM of QMS will take place on 2 October and it is a formal occasion.

The lack of representation by SFMTA was highlighted and the QMS Vice-Chairman took keen interest. The rest of the board had thoughts but did not comment.

June Lomax had reported about retail butchers with George Jarron, nothing resolved they have no answers. The outcome of the meeting was that the Federation was causing them problems. John Chapman said that many of the farmers he knew were opposed to what QMS were doing. John Chapman and Hamish Deans agreed to attend the next meeting of SAMW to gauge feeling in their camp.

Douglas Scott said that he had discussions with Brian Pack about opposition to the PGI and David Jarron said that that Brian's letter of protest had been submitted. Other parties who signalled their intention to support the Federation are the Association of Farmers Markets, Scottish Crofting Foundation, SAMB and NFMFT. John Chapman suggested getting the Auctioneers involved.

With a view to arrange meetings Douglas Scott was asked to contact David Legget, Jack Clark, J Robertson, Ian Galloway and Brian Pack to develop support against the PGI further. Formal objection's must be submitted by 25 October. QMS intends working along with SEERAD to counter act any objects raised. SEERAD have not been through this process before.

Hamish Deans said that the QMS stand at the trade fair was very poor and he was surprise to find a leaflet on their stand with Scottish Border Abattoir (SBA) on it. SBA have not been a member of the Specially Select Scheme for 2 years.

Douglas Scott agreed to write a letter to Scottish Farmer about the latest QMS propaganda article.

The Executive agreed the following reply to to QMS questions on OTM Beef / SSS label;

1 Should the SSS label be extended to cover all assured beef from Scotland irrespective of age of animal?

A. As long as the labelling makes it quite clear - steer/heifer/cow or bull

2 Should we differentiate between "prime" and "cow" and if so what is the age cut off if not thirty months?

A. Yes, all reference to 30 months should disappear and "prime" and "cow/bull" be the only differentiation.

3 Should the definition or labelling be any different between home and export markets?

A We see no reason why there should be any difference.

4 Should dairy cow beef be covered?

A. Yes

5 Any other issues that should be taken into consideration?

A. No

On the subject of BSE testing there was a problem in the case of a positive test. There was no compensation to cover the cost of the sides (one beast before and the two after) on either side of the positive case. This situation was left with Martin Morgan of SEERAD to come up with his thoughts on what and how compensation could be claimed.

Hamish Deans explained how a sample of the brain tissue was taken for the test and emphasised that there was no margin for error. Following training at Galashiels he pointed out that you would only get one shot at extracting the test. Hamish also said the government would pay the equivalent of £27.50 for testing at the laboratory but will not pick up the costs for getting it there.

PROMOTIONS: The Make it With Meat Awards had 143 entries this year from 33 businesses in the three categories. 106 awards were presented; 3 diamonds, 25 gold, 34 silver and 44 bronze. Convenor Mackenzie asked how we could increase the entry numbers. President Barnett said it was a difficult time of the year for entering competitions. Douglas Scott after discussing with some members suggested it would be better to move entries to May and hold over the results to Trade Fair. He also reminded the meeting in February we would run a burger, chicken and possibly speciality sausage and own cure bacon product competitions. Convenor MacKenzie displayed the posters produced from the Diamond award winning products. The Lamb poster has been sent out to members prior to the trade fair. The accompanying tray highlighters will be sent out with the next newsletter. The recommended cooking temperature leaflets were also on display and available to purchase at £15 per hundred.

Convenor Mackenzie displayed a poster ACBI has produced and the meeting was very receptive towards it particularly the strap line 'Craft butcher'. Jamie Chapman suggested we should copyright the phrase 'Craft Butcher'. President Barnett said that this would be a good angle against the supermarkets as their staff could not be classed as skilled. Douglas agreed but felt we should not proceed until Dynamic Advertising had reported back

Contact has been made with the Food Trader the magazine produced for the NFMFT to see if they had left over National Sausage Week promotional material. Convenor Mackenzie was getting a promotional pack sent to him. He agreed to evaluate the pack for the next executive meeting. He felt that butchers in Scotland would be keen to support activities like National Sausage Week. This would be pursued with QMS.

President Barnett suggested that we should consider updating our logo. He said that the ACBI were currently looking to do this. They intended selling branded goods such as pots, pans, hats, coats. ACBI are also suggesting that you would need to buy into being a 'craft butcher'. The money that is paid into the scheme will be reinvested into promotions. However the businesses who are not part of the scheme did not like the fact that a competitor up the road was called a Craft butcher.

Convenor Mackenzie suggested the way forward was the company would still be known as SFMTA but the public face of the organisation would be Craft Butchers of Scotland. A debate continued on our logo and nothing was further agreed until Dynamic Advertising had reported back.

Douglas Scott further commented that information on the Scottish Food Fortnight had been distributed with the newsletter and some members were making use of it.

LEGISLATION: Convenor Douglas Scott had prepared a handout that was distributed at the trade fair on the up to date situation on animal by products. The latest situation was that the statute was before Ross Finnie last week. This means the regulations will come into force on the 1 October. SEERAD and COSLA have eventually got themselves together and are virtually at the stage we were at 3 months ago, trying to find out what each Local Authorities intentions were towards the implementation. SEERAD are trying to persuade individual authorities to follow the Aberdeenshire model. Borders have said they will not be doing that.

A Private contractor Key Waste Management will cover East Lothian Midlothian, Edinburgh out as far as Peebles and down as far as Alnwick. They will be taking waste to Dumfries for incineration. Douglas asked what economic impact this would have. Hamish Deans put this into context by saying that the average shop would need two uplifts of a 330 Litre bin per week, which would cost £60. The current cost is £10 so there would be a significant increase. The effect would be the cost would rise to 5% of turnover on a small butcher.

Jamie Chapman reckons that the costs would be 5 times as much as the SRM. Douglas said he had hoped to gather all information available together so we can look for a better deal from other private contractors. The new boundaries of the Derogation Area were distributed. If a cost effective service became available within it, businesses would be expected to use it.

Douglas Scott distributed information received from the Food Standards Agency on the Wheelock report on butcher licensing. The report still did hint that FSA would be accepting any responsibility for any mistakes made.

New Quid guidelines have just arrived in the Federation offices at first glance it looks as complicated as ever. An update will be provided at the next Regional meetings. Implementation is planned for February 2004.

The Meat Trades Journal asked the Federation to comment on the report on salt levels in sausages. The report focused on manufactured sausages and only two butchers were mentioned. However, Douglas Scott did comment that if salt levels were too high it was the seasoning manufacturers who should be targeted. Butchers' sausages are better and could be much more easily adapted to react to consumer tastes.

LABOUR CONDITIONS: Convenor David Jarron highlighted that the minimum wage would be going up to £4.50 from 1st October 2003. The new minimum rate for 18-21 will become £3.80 per hour.

There will be a Health & Safety and Employment Law seminar taking place in the Federation offices on 23 September at 2.30. Members are kept abreast with what we need to know in the newsletter and from Kerr-Smith Associates. This seminar, put on free of charge by Citation plc, should be of great value to larger businesses.

The new Staff Rules and Procedures books have been issued and any member who wishes to personalise them should contact Federation offices.

David Lindsay suggested we should investigate how we recruit staff from overseas. Butchers are having difficulty recruiting and two local meat businesses have gone down this route. Douglas Scott agreed to investigate how butchers can go about this recruitment method.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS: Douglas Scott said that the AA deal represents excellent value for money. Details have been distributed with the newsletter and extra copies were distributed to Executive members.

He went on to say that Billy McFarlane from Bowmore had volunteered to attend the next Executive meeting. Ian McFarlane from Stewarton had been invited but unfortunately, he had recently been seriously ill and is in hospital.

Arthur Matthew asked if Corporate members could be on the Executive Committee. President Barnett suggested it would not be appropriate as their membership was there to serve for other reasons.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: President Barnett stated that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 22 October at 2.30pm. Executive members were also reminded that there would not be a meeting in November.

There being no further business the meeting was closed with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.