

They mentioned the horsemeat scandal several times but if there is no cross border co-operation they are never going to get to the bottom of it.

John Chapman asked if there was any discussion on controlling their charges, this in number one in our mind and what we should be pushing at these meetings. Douglas said it is very easy to ask questions at these forums but there is a stakeholder advisory group set up to address official meat control charges but there has not yet been a meeting of the group.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT: Douglas Scott reported.

QGUILD: Douglas said SFMTA had taken over the Q Guild management function. We were asked to look after it in the interim on 25th March when Audrey Fenton was relieved of the task but the Q Guild decided in June that they would like us to continue. It has been a good boost to our finances even though we are charging a fraction of what Audrey Fenton was charging. The income received in this financial year will be £9400. That represents a fee of 2250 per month plus our expenses. It has made a difference to us but also a saving to the Q Guild. Hamish Deans asked if they were having meetings in our offices. Douglas said no but they have decided meetings would not be on the same day as the Federation meetings. The next meeting of the Scottish region of Q Guild will be in our offices on Monday 21st October. They have also appointed a Guild manager and that will be made public today.

MEAT UP: Doubling up on representing Q Guild, Douglas attended Meatup for two days rather than one but he did not meet many Scottish butchers there. Only Simon Howie, Grants of Speyside and Ian Faulds! It was not a well attended trade show.

ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW: there were only butcher demonstrations on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The meat demonstrations went down very well with more people watching them than the cookery demonstrations.

In June Douglas also visited members in Golspie and Caithness - Thurso, Wick, and Castletown.

There was a joint meat industry meeting on CAP on 10th July to receive a briefing paper compiled by NFU Scotland. There were 25 points which NFU had identified to be considered. There was agreement on the desired result i.e. increased beef production and the NFUS and SAMW appeared to know how policy needs to be implemented to achieve this. A joint statement was agreed that went out to the minister. It remains to be seen what comes out of the political bargaining within it. Everyone is agreed we need to get more cattle. The Scottish government is happy to support that but the UK government is not. Only 8% of the CAP reform is usable in creating an incentive. The UK government see no votes in the UK producing more meat. John Chapman asked if anything was being done about farmers who are paid for producing nothing. Douglas said that was discussed and anything they could do to stop it they would do. An article in the Scotsman said there were 4 million breeding ewes in Scotland and now there are 2.3 million John Chapman added. The cattle numbers have been in decline although he did not have the exact figures to hand. Douglas replied a lot of store cattle is bought to go south. Alan Kennedy said when he started buying cattle in 1981/82 there were two sales per week which carried about 130 to 150 cattle and a butcher a sale on a Wednesday which carried 60 to 90 the decline has gone from 250 a week to between 30 and 40.

FSA SCOTLAND: meeting with Sandy MacDougall and Willie Bone they are setting up a stakeholder advisory group on Official meat controls charging project. Douglas received the information on 12th July. The group comprises of individuals from organisations likely to be affected by the official controls. Ian Anderson (SAMW), John Sleigh NFUS, Christian Nissen Highland Game, Craig Stevenson Braehead Foods, Richard Griffiths from British Poultry Council, Douglas was invited on to give a broad view but he will take advice from members once he received some proposals.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT:

A written report from Training Administrator, Claire Simpson was tabled.

We currently have a total of 224 trainees funded through Skills Development Scotland and one through Falkirk ETU.

Forty-nine trainees have achieved their Modern Apprenticeship since 1 April 2013.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND CONTRACT: The contract for 2013/2014 has been issued by Skills Development Scotland and we have secured 149 trainee places for the forthcoming year. Applications for training has been positive and to date and we have inducted 33 onto the programme and have seven pending to be inducted.

ADOPT AN APPRENTICE: Skills Development Scotland has an incentive available for new employers of trainees who are made redundant. If a new employer agree a contract with the trainee to employ them for at least a year and also to allow them to complete their Modern Apprenticeship then they will be eligible for a £2,000 incentive.

WAGE INCENTIVES: Most local authorities are offering wage incentives for the recruitment of young people. Employers need to contact either their own local authority or jobcentre to find out what is available. SMT now has a contact list for the local authorities to fast-track queries.

MEAT MANAGERS HYGIENE AND HACCP TRAINING COURSE: Legislation sets out general rules that make clear that primary responsibility for food safety within a food business lies with the operator. It is therefore necessary to ensure that food safety procedures prevail in the business and are being carried out effectively.

We have two one-day courses on Meat Managers Hygiene and HACCP scheduled:

24th September – Campanile Hotel, Braehead

25th September – East End Park, Dunfermline

Both courses have ILA funding available for those who earn below £22,000.

Course Tutor will be Paul Bache, an authority on HACCP implementation. Feedback from candidates who have already undertaken the course has been very positive and all felt that the course was useful to their businesses.

Duncan Mackenzie asked what was happening in Northern Ireland. Douglas said A4e had offered us a contract and it is similar to what Scottish Bakers have been offered. Scottish Bakers have said it is not enough although we reckon it is workable. We have left it with Scottish Bakers to negotiate a better deal

QUALITY MEAT SCOTLAND: Ian Faulds announced that Andy McGowan was leaving Quality Meat Scotland. He is leaving to work with a company who are developing DNA testing. Douglas had expressed to him that we were all sorry that he was leaving. Hamish Deans suggested an email sent to him thanking him for his contribution.

At SFMTA Regional meetings in September Jack Broussine has been explaining the benefits of membership of the Scotch Butchers Club and the new QMS guide to saving energy. The Wham Bam thank you Lamb campaign which is targeting a younger audience to eat lamb has also been well received. There are six lamb products with no plate waste which are easy to make with the cooking times to make on the poster. A website supports the campaign with videos showing how to cook the recipes and all in all the campaign appears to be well thought out.

Alan Kennedy said he was getting good feedback from customers on leaflets from QMS and it justifies the subscription to them.

The meat vouchers scheme has been started again for schools.

QMS have met both SFMTA and Scottish Bakers for a steak pie promotion for late January early February.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Douglas Scott reported.

SCOTTISH MEAT TRAINING: we have reached the year end but do not have the final figures yet. Today we have actuals for July and forecasts for August. The training income from SDS for July was just short of £25k but this was the best since March. We will have quite a bit of money due in from Highlands and Islands ESF grant and we are looking at an income of £314k but our expenditure is greater than that so it does not look particularly healthy on that front. Income for SDS could be £262k but we only brought in £237k. Sometimes this is caused by a lack of co-operation from butchers and trainees. Sometimes assessors turn up to find the trainees don't have paperwork or have not done the work and sometimes the employer will not let you see the trainee. Lack of co-operation from employers is very disappointing. SMT have a lot of aborted visits which we will have to stop. Alan Kennedy suggested a cancellation fee. Douglas said we have recently composed a letter that will be sent to problem employers but no-one has received the letter yet. Duncan Mackenzie suggested it was sent out as part of the induction of the trainee. Hamish Deans suggested they phone up that morning or night before. Douglas said the assessors do that and sometimes they are still not there when they arrive.

MEMBER SERVICES: We are forecasting a surplus. Subscriptions are slightly up on last years by £1300. Corporate members are up by £2k. The servicing of Q Guild we will be bringing just short of £12K which is found revenue £3173 have been paid to executive travel some of which has come back as donations. We are forecasting to spend just short of £9k on advertising and promotions. This is the highest fee other than our employment law and health and safety people. We have now moved to Davidson Chalmers for our employment law advice and we would expect service to be superior.

Hamish Deans suggested at the finance committee we should at this stage ask the bank for the easiest overdraft facility since we are always struggling to find enough money until the subscriptions come in in January

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Bruce McCall reported.

318 members have joined with 93 additional branches, a total of 411 shops in membership.

NEW MEMBERS:- John MacMillan, Fort William, S Greenlees & Son, Lochinver

CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2 new members Choppingboards.com and 2Visulise.

REGIONAL MEETINGS were held at Carfraemill (25), Kilmarnock(23), Stepps (41), Inverness (29), Aberdeen (19) have been held. The last meeting is in Perth tonight and in excess of 60 attendees are expected. Presentation of the Steak Pie and Speciality Pie Awards were held at these regional meetings and there were demonstrations by Dalesman, Lucas, Scottish Venison Partnership and QMS.

The Sausage for Scotland has five shortlisted flavours which attendees can vote for. For the most popular flavour from all the meetings we will produce posters and send them out along with the winning recipe for perfecting and use in Scottish Sausage week.

Ian Faulds said he had attended five of the meetings and made very welcome in the businesses he had visited. He said that everyone whom attends is in good heart.

John Chapman asked if at the meetings if an appeal was put out for them to come to the executive meetings in particular from parts of the country not represented. Ian said he had put the message across. Alan Kennedy felt his business runs better because he comes to these meetings. Coming along here saves you money. Douglas said it is difficult to get people from the North but they do have a fair amount of discussion themselves. Hamish Deans said when he asked anyone to come up they do not have the time. The regional meetings are in the evenings so they are easier to get to them. Duncan Mackenzie has brought in the Paisley Association chain for safe keeping in the office but he was asked to return it to Paisley since the office was not insured for such a valuable jewel. Jack Meade suggested if there was a talking point that people were interested in they may come.

LIVESTOCK REPORT: Alan Kennedy reported.

In the last few months live cattle prices have advanced by another 10%. It is difficult to find anything to be optimistic about, as beef, pork and lamb are all commanding premium prices, due largely to the multiples buying everything they can and selling on promotion to regain market share lost due to the horsemeat affair.

My own cattle at Forfar last week averaged just over 400ppk deadweight. My own calculations make this up to around 435ppk when dressed to UK spec. Lambs were a slightly more reasonable 355ppk, and pigs remain constant at around 240 to 245ppk deadweight.

Since the takeover of Scottish Premier and Mathers by Scotbeef, I feel that quality has suffered and availability is much tighter than before. This all adds up to a stand out case for a new abattoir in the Forfar area to open up competition once again.

The spreadsheet shows little change in the boneless market. This may be due to a time lag between live prices and boneless cuts arriving on the market. There may also be a lot of consumer resistance to higher prices.

In March sides of beef were marketed at £4.10p/kg and in May it went to £4.41p/kg there has been a big leap between May and now but it has yet to reflect itself at the front end. He felt the cheaper cuts are about to get a lot dearer. Middle cuts are going to stay high and not come down. He looked at his cattle prices live. Steers today at Forfar £2.51 ½ p against £2.59p last week £2.579 to £2.592 this week's cattle were remarkable better in quality than last week.

Cost of sale markets appear to be complacent, they offer no pick up service to and 3.5% commission on a beast worth £1700 which comes to an of lot more than 3.5% of £1000 two or three years ago. There is scope for improvement on this and it has been suggested to Forfar. They are also selling an awful lot less cattle. If there was a way of demonstrating to farmers that going through the ring the very best cattle can command a good premium over an above what they can selling to McIntosh Donald. He knows that his cattle last week average 15p/kg to 20p/kg more if to UK speck than going to Portlethen. We should let farmers know that and demonstrate how it is done.

Douglas said the regional meeting in Aberdeen there was still concern over the lack of interest Scotbeef were having in independents. There is also a strong rumour that Woodhead in Turriff is up for sale. It is a pretty fluid market up there with the butchers concerned about the future of slaughtering and wholesaling facilities. John M Munro has benefited by going further and further into Aberdeenshire. Rhinds of Elgin are picking up a lot of business providing a variable service.

Scotch Beef has a 60p premium over Ireland and 30p over English when you take the price down there is half the kill.

PROMOTIONS REPORT: Douglas Scott reported.

PREMIUM SAUSAGE EVALUATION

The Diamond Award for the best Premium Pork Sausage was held over to be presented at the Royal Highland Show since the first tested product failed to meet the 72% meat content criteria. The winner Robert Watson from Watsons of Leven received his trophy from Lady Claire MacDonald on the Friday of the Show.

STEAK PIE AND SPECIALITY PIE EVALUATION: This evaluation, sponsored by QMS and William Sword, was judged at Perth College on Thursday 8th August. Presentations were made at the six regional meetings to be held in September, the last of which will be held in Perth tonight.

The Traditional Steak Pie contest attracted 75 pies from all over Scotland and there were 79 entries in the Speciality category.

A team of 16 judges evaluated the pies and the prize winners were as follows:-
Traditional Steak Pies, 5 Regional Winners, 9 Gold, 17 Silver

The Regional winners in the Traditional Steak Pie category were mystery shopped and the overall winner was decided in the second tier of judging held at Drumpellier Golf Club on Wednesday 21st August. There the Club Secretary, Alex Stewart, Course Manager Brian Hillen and Head Chef, Jess Vigni made the decision on which of the five regional champions was worthy of the title Scottish Champion.

Steak Pie is a firm favourite at golf clubs and decisions on venues for golf club outings are frequently based on the quality of steak pie that is served up at the chosen golf club. So this was a team of judges who were going to be taking the competition very seriously.

They were delighted with the standard of all the steak pies but decided unanimously on one winner. That turned out to be the West of Scotland champion, John Marshall & Son, in Johnstone.

In the Speciality Steak Pie Evaluation there was one Diamond, 19 Gold and 29 Silver awards. The overall champion in this category will be announced tonight.

SAUSAGE FOR SCOTLAND: Entry into the competition was free but limited to two entries per shop. You may recall the objective was to identify a sausage with a Scottish connection that could be promoted during Scottish Sausage Week at the end of October. Entries were judged on the same day as the steak pie evaluation and five sausages were selected for sampling at all the SFMTA Regional Meetings in September. Those present will taste and then vote for their choice to be promoted. Winner will be announced tonight.

PROMOTION FOR 2014

At the recent international Conference of the Robert Burns World Federation a new project was launched to identify the year 2014 as "The Year of The Haggis"

Thousands of international visitors are expected for all the major events ranging from the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup, The Year of the Homecoming and Clan Gatherings.

Backing this unusual event is the Burns Federation, the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Association and the vital and welcome sponsorship is being provided by Grampian Oat Products and Scobie and Junor.

The overall project will have a detailed announcement of involvements and activities throughout the year and this will be issued prior to St. Andrews day in November.

The 440 Shops in the membership of SFMTA will be invited to participate and help create increased demand for this popular product.

Haggis for all reasons is a food for all seasons and throughout 2014 from St Andrews day through Ne'erday and the Burns supper months of January and February there will be many opportunities for the provision of Haggis to venues and menus.

There are countless Burns Suppers in Scotland alone. Robert Burns Clubs, Bowling, Rotary, Football, Masonic, and many Churches, and an increasing number of Charities, Associations and Societies use a Burns supper for social or fund raising purposes.

The project has evolved from a meeting held with the Robert Burns World Federation and the newly appointed Chairman of the SFMTA Ian Faulds of Kilmarnock together with Chief Executive Douglas Scott. The Robert Burns World Federation is based at Dower House, Dean Castle Country Park Kilmarnock.

At a brief ceremony at the Glasgow based Burns Federation Conference Provost Kidd of East Ayrshire Council presented a Haggis (supplied from Ian Faulds) to the retiring President of the Burns Federation – Robert Stewart of Kirriemuir, and the incoming President Jane Brown of Dumfries.

Murdo Morrison Director of Marketing for the Robert Burns World Federation commented “We, in our Federation, warmly welcome the assistance of the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders and we are aware of many close association of Robert Burns Clubs and their local Haggis suppliers. These retailers source their ingredients from local suppliers and provide quality to their customers.

The year long event is designed to promote what they do and what we, in the Burns Federation strive to achieve –continuing support and prominence to Robert Burns.

Who can resist the call of the Bard?

Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware that jaups in luggies,

But, if Ye wish her grateful prayer,

Gie her a Haggis.”

The haggis creatures could be made into a family in the same way as the Simpson type characters with comic strips being made with learning about burns night poems.

SCOTCH PIE CLUB: the Scotch Pie Club awards will be judged on Wednesday 13th November. Entries close on Friday 1st November. This year there will also be an apple pie category.

LEGISLATION REPORT:

FSA BUTCHER SAFE: SFMTA had met FSA about the new HACCP assistance and were concerned about some of the things in it. There are a few worrying things in the recommendations. Counter high dividers will be required; these are available from Stockline Plastic. The major one we are concerned about was the shelf life. Limits were set at Cooked joints 3 days, sliced meat sold on the same day of slicing, pies 3 days. We replied to them after soundings from members suggesting that FSA base everything on science and we want to know what the science was to arrive at such limits. We have suggested at the minimum that it should say sliced cooked meat sold within 24 hours of slicing. A lot of people make steak pies once a week. Hamish wondered how this would be implemented as records are done weekly in a lot of cases. Douglas suggested they would look for daily records. Alan Kennedy said this is far bigger because there are things like sandwiches and buffets to consider. We continually ask members to give us in writing what they have been asked to do.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:

Alan Kennedy asked if there was any news on new abattoir at Forfar. Douglas said a business plan is to be drawn up but it is not ready.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 23rd October 2013.