

General Secretary's Report



Hello to you all.

CCTV in abattoirs

At the last meeting of Council in June, the AMI executive agreed to a shift in position on the use of CCTV in abattoirs.

Previously, the AMI had agreed that the use of Closed Circuit Television was a good idea, and should be considered to be an example of best practice but that it should not be mandatory, but installed on voluntary basis. Our thinking stemmed from the practicalities in the utilization of such footage; how long should it be kept? Who should have access and how often should it be monitored etc.

However, since the footage obtained at an abattoir in Burnley, which clearly demonstrated a 'willful non-compliance' by the operatives, we believe that the emphasis has now shifted, and our thinking has shifted accordingly.

While we could never advocate the manner in which the footage was obtained (we would never condone trespass), the operatives in the footage can clearly be heard to warn each other when the official veterinarian was approaching, and one could be heard to

instruct the others to 'stop feeding them in' and to 'clear the belts' prior to the veterinarian actually arriving. This clearly demonstrates that they knew they were acting in manner that was non-compliant with the regulations and it is the opinion of the AMI that, if CCTV had been in place and that the operatives were aware that they could have been observed at any point throughout the working day, that these breaches of the welfare regulations would have been far less likely to have happened. CCTV should also address the apparent 'problem' of the OV being able to approach the lairage and point of slaughter without being observed themselves.

Footnote;

During the time that I was writing this piece for the Meat Hygienist, the Minister for the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP has announced the intention for CCTV to be made mandatory in all abattoirs in those areas where live animals are handled. The first stage in this process is to hold consultations, in this case via an on line consultation document. The AMI have completed this and have voiced our support for this initiative

Personal Protection Equipment

Recently, there has been an enhanced priority to the use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) being used by inspection teams when Bovine TB is encountered. In a nutshell, what this means is the MHIs and OVs are required to stop the line when slaughterhouse cases are

encountered, don required additional PPE themselves and inform the FBO so that their staff are provided sufficient opportunity to don PPE themselves. Additional PPE should be worn at all times when TB reactor cattle are being processed.

It has been my understanding that, in some quarters at least, there has been a resistance to the use of facemasks, perhaps more so by 'old school' slaughtermen. To be honest, I personally find the wearing of facemasks a little uncomfortable, particularly during hot weather, but I appreciate the reasons why this is necessary. Furthermore, it is something that our employers are insisting upon, and 'them that pays the piper calls the tune'. For our part, I would suggest that if our diligence is observed in following all the protocols to the letter, then this should set a shining example to those that we are regulating. This reason alone should be reason enough not to waiver from that which we are being asked to do.

Seminar 2017

This year's seminar is again been hailed as an all-round success. Ok, numbers were down a little but the quality of the speakers, papers and the questions that came forth provided for some good conversation in the bars on an evening. On the Friday evening we received presentations on the evolution of the MHI from Martin Evans, COO FSA, and Julie Girling MEP gave us a personal view of Post Brexit. On the Saturday, we enjoyed presentations on 'The reality of training under WATOK by Dr Claire White, Ante – mortem inspection by Jason Aldiss, MD of Eville and Jones, Wine Inspection presented by Andy Kilby, Parasitology (a forgotten parasite), By Andy Grist, Internal and External Assurance, by Andrea Cranfield, FSA perspective as

Regulator, presented by Gavan Wafer of the Food Crime Unit and to end the day, Transport and Animal Welfare presented by Charlie Mason, technical Director with the Humane Slaughter Association.

Our whole hearted thanks go to all the speakers who sacrificed their weekend for our benefit.

The formal meal on the Saturday evening had a real buzz about it and, having done a quick head count and assumed an average of twenty years' experience each for the MHIs around the room, I estimated that there must have been close to a thousand years of experience all sat down to dinner. The sounds of cutlery hitting plates and the distinct lack of conversation when the food had been served was testament to the quality that was served again this year.

The Trustees hold a meeting on the Sunday morning directly following seminar, to discuss the event, collate feedback and ideas for future events and to decide if we are going to do it all again next year. The answer to this was a resounding 'yes' and the dates pencilled in are the 14th – 16th September 2018. Lots of ideas for subject matter have made a list which will be whittled down at the next meeting in December. If members have any subjects they would like to be considered, please drop me line and I'll add to the list for consideration at that meeting.

Forthcoming University of Liverpool online training exercises for operational MHI's and OV's

The research team at the UoL are currently designing a CPD on meat inspection. The learning tools will have the format of online exercises that will be followed up after a week by the model answers. These exercises will be repeated at intervals.

Together with the training exercise, the UoL is researching the efficiency and design of the

learning tools provided to you and your opinion on their adequacy/suggestions on how to improve them. As part of this study we will be also be asking for some background information, this is solely to investigate the variables that might affect the effectiveness of the learning tools. At the beginning of the online exercise you will be asked if you want to partake in this research study. You are not obliged to partake in the research project, however the more information we can gather the more likely we will be able to contribute positively to your future training. If at any stage in the process you decide to opt out of the research project you can do so. The results of this research study will be interpreted at national level.

All responses will be anonymised and will not be traced back to you personally.

These exercises will be part of the FSA obligatory CPD requirements and as such all MHI's and OV's active in the field are required to complete them. For the UoL to be able to inform the FSA that you have fulfilled the CPD requirements, the UoL will send you a link via e-mail that is unique to you. Be assured that the only personal information that the UoL will give to the FSA is your e-mail address and if you completed the exercise. The UoL will not ever give the FSA your personal results and is unable to do so since responses will be anonymised.

The system aims to support your training and allow its evaluation against currently or future agreed conditions. Your collaboration will be greatly appreciated. Any queries don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail.

Rita Ines Barros da Silva Papoula-Pereira,
DVM, FHEA, PhD, MRCVS
Lecturer in Veterinary Public Health

These are exciting times. We are taking post mortem inspection data to a new place agreed with all the stakeholders that can and want to act upon our PMI data. Producers and Private Veterinarians have increasingly been demanding it in the form agreed and recently, in collaboration with AHDB, they have designed the new FCI report. This new form is currently being trialled and soon will be rolled out. This research by UoL will provide a robust, credible and independent foundation to build on the value of Post Mortem inspection even further.

18 months ago we set ourselves the ambitious objective to create a more robust platform to ensure meat inspectors conditions data that relate to public or animal health, or animal welfare, were reported consistently and promptly to ensure the necessary action is taken by farmers and other stakeholders. Ultimately, by making our Meat Inspection data into actionable knowledge we will assist industry, producers and processors, to increase their efficiency and sustainability in this challenging and uncertain times.

This work by UoL will most certainly assist us to achieve just that.

Ramon Romero BVSc MRCVS
Programme lead

Association of Meat Inspectors

The AMI has been aware of this project for quite some time now, and has always been fully supportive of it, as it falls squarely within the AMI remit of the maintenance and enhancement of standards within the fields of public health and animal health and welfare.

We are aware that some MHIs believe that this is an assessment of their capabilities, but this is simply not the case. It is simply an assessment of the efficacy of the condition cards and training. Simply put; is the training adequate?

Therefore, we would urge the membership of the AMI (as all MHIs) to fully engage with this project, demonstrate the capability and ability of the MHI skills and provide constructive feedback where you deem it to be necessary. MHIs are the good folk who are going to have to work with the systems being put in place so have your say, work with the researchers and help to get a system that works for us all.

Ian Robinson
General Secretary AMI

Keep up the good work.

Regards,

Ian Robinson