

## General Secretary's Report



Hello to you all.

Let's start with some great news!!!

On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014, at RCVS Day, held at One Great George Street, Westminster, the Veterinary Profession agreed a motion unanimously to submit a new Royal Charter for approval by Privy Council. The Charter dates from 1844 and has been previously amended once, in 1967 following upon the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Paragraph 17 of the new Charter reads:

'Bye-laws of the College may provide for there to be classes of associate of the College other than those persons entered in the register of veterinary nurses and may determine conditions to be met by them. The Council may by rules make provision for registers of other such associates to be kept in a manner similar to the register of veterinary nurses. Associates of the College may use such lawful descriptors, and such abbreviations of them, as may be provided for in bye-laws of the College.'

When approved by the Privy Council, the Charter will go forward to her Majesty for signature.

When the Royal signature has been applied, a clear legal pathway will then be

in place for the Meat Hygiene Inspectors to attain the status of a self-regulating profession.

I will of course keep you updated as and when I learn more.

### Seminar 2014

This year's seminar was once again held at Harper Adams University, Shropshire and has once again been acknowledged as being very successful.

We enjoyed papers on; Cellulitis of Poultry, presented by Michelle Barrett. This was quite an eye opener, accompanied by some brilliant photographs that provoked a sharp intake of breath from even the more seasoned inspectors. A first time presenter, Michelle gave a detailed presentation that outlined the causes of a problem that is on the increase, and some possible solutions. This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Susannah Williams on Porcine Dermatological and Nephrological Syndrome (PDNS). The overriding message was that this syndrome closely resembles Swine Fever and if this cannot be ruled out, then AVHLA would rather deal with a 'false alarm' than the real thing being missed. She informed us that PDNS can only be confirmed by micro-biological examination of the kidneys, so MHI's would be incorrect in recording anything other than 'suspected' PDNS. She also informed us the syndrome is on the decrease and as it is essentially an 'allergic response' doesn't in itself pose a risk to human health but might well impair the keeping quality of the carcass. Arjen

Brouwer MRCVS gave a talk on Hydatidosis that was very well received and our long-time friend Milorad Radokovich MRCVS outlined the importance of using the correct (Risk) terminology when creating policy and explained where confusion can be caused if care is not given to the details. Martin Evans FSA delivered an enthusiastic talk that re-iterated the opportunities that are now available to MHI's / PMI's. Dr. Inge Casper outlined the meat inspection system in Denmark and I think we were all just a little surprised to learn that Denmark is a little way behind the UK in the implementation of Visual Inspection of pigs, only just now starting to consider the matter. On Saturday afternoon we received a paper on the Food Chain Information (FCI) and Collection and Communication of Inspection Results (CCIR) project, presented by Dr. Olafur Oddgerisson. He informed us later that he gained some very useful feedback and comments from the Seminar and thanked those attending for their input. Charlie Mason, Technical Director with the Humane Slaughter Association gave us an insight into an innovative new stunning technique (Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning or LAPS) that excludes the need for aversive Carbon Dioxide. It all sounded very positive and further enhances animal welfare at the point of slaughter.

The final presentation of this year's seminar was from Eleni Michalopoulou DVM, DLSHTM, MSc, PhD, MRCVS, on the 'Drivers of Change in Official Meat Control since WWII (part one). Quite fascinating and we hope that part two will follow next year!!!

Following the formal dinner the Association generally awards the Robin

Irish Award, for long time servants to the AMI or to someone who has provided outstanding service. This year the recipient was Stephen Holden, working MHI, current divisional secretary of the South East division, Trustee and Seminar Organiser for the past three years. It was for this latter role that Stephen has gained the recognition (and admiration) of those who decide the recipient. The role of Seminar Organiser can be an extremely stressful one, with delegate changes right up until the very last moment, speakers changing late in the day and numerous other 'problems' that might be encountered. Stephen has dealt with all these challenges in an extremely efficient manner, making sure that the AMI Trust is kept informed at every step of the way. For those of you who do not know Stephen, he is profoundly deaf and to keep pace in the meetings the way he has, well, I'm not quite sure how he does it. He has been described as a 'truly remarkable man' and we concur with that statement. A very well deserved award, heartiest congratulations Stephen.

It was especially gratifying to see some new faces at this year's event; some who were attending for the first time and some who were attending after some years away. All of those who I spoke to (my apologies if I didn't get around to speaking with you) were in agreement that the weekend was well worth attending and that they planned to return next year.

I think at this point a nod in the direction of the Trustees is also in order. Immediately after breakfast on the Sunday at Seminar, the Seminar Team take everything down and stow it away for next year and the Trustees sit down and hold the first meeting to organise the following

years event. Next year's Seminar will be the 50<sup>th</sup> Seminar and the Trustees are hoping to make this particular event just a 'little more special' by way of commemoration. The dates of the 50<sup>th</sup> Seminar are 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015, so if you are interested in attending, mark the dates down and be sure to keep that particular weekend free.

Trainee award for excellence

This award was presented, for the first time, to Anwen Bell at the Park Inn Hotel in York, by Dave Clapham a Trustee of the AMI, and who has himself, been involved in the education and training of MHI's.

Congratulations Anwen, and good luck with the job.

Keep up the good work.

Regards,

Ian Robinson