

# General Secretary's Report



Hello to you all,

It has been reasonably quiet this last two months or so, which means that I have not got a great deal to report to you.

## Professional Recognition

The feedback that we have been getting on the issue of professional recognition has all been positive, with some quarters stating that, in their opinion, it has been long overdue.

A presentation has been sent to your divisional secretaries for discussion at your divisional AGM's and for cascading via e-mail. For those of you who are not able to attend your AGM's, or for those of you who have not provided your e-mail addresses to your divisional secretary, the presentation will be made available on the Association website. Go to

[www.meatinspectors.co.uk](http://www.meatinspectors.co.uk) and click on the link.

## Plant Inspection Assistants

With regards to the meeting I referred to in my last report, we are still awaiting sight of the report from DNV.

## Line Speeds

I have received reports of a couple of plants with "push/pull" lines that appear to have increased the number of operatives on line to a point where the inspectors in plant have a real problem in keeping up.

You probably won't be needing me to tell you that these lines can prove to be very problematic when it comes to regulating the speed of throughput.

If this does prove to be a problem, then the first recourse should be to the plants business agreement, where line speed for each species should be clearly stated. If these are being exceeded then the OV should be made aware and the problem referred onwards and upwards.

At a meeting with the then Director of Operations Steve McGrath, we received assurance that such situations would be reviewed and that where deemed necessary, steps would be taken to bring the line speeds back down to an acceptable level.

At the last Midlands divisional meeting, Geoff Ogle made himself available to set out his view on the future of meat

inspection and to answer questions from the floor.

At lunch I mentioned this issue to him and stated my belief that most inspectors take a "certain kind of a pride" in being able to keep up with line speeds. That said, there quite obviously comes a point where inspectors, no matter how good or how quick they may be, would reach a point where they were no longer able to keep up without having to cut corners or compromise themselves. In this scenario it is down to the inspectors concerned to stand up for what they believe to be right and to highlight the situation.

It would also appear that in some plants, the operatives are cleaning down rather too close to the end of the line, with pressure washers being utilised while fresh meat is still present on the slaughter floor. Aerosol contamination is something that apparently some operatives either have no understanding of, or is something that they choose to ignore if they are on job and finish. In my own experience, I usually find that a polite request to wait until the meat is pushed into the chillers without expanding on the hazard that is aerosol contamination has provided the most favourable response. Of course, if the desired result is not forthcoming then more formal action by the OV could well prove necessary.

### AGM

The AGM is to be held at the Kings Manor Hotel in Edinburgh on Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>.

One of the key points for discussion is the progression towards formal professional recognition and the more comments we have, the better. If you have something that you would like said or a point brought up for discussion, but are unable to attend yourself, please drop me an e-mail with your comment and I will take it to the meeting on your behalf.

Hopefully, I will get to meet some of you in Edinburgh where you will be able to make your points in person.

Until then,

keep up the good work.

Regards,

Ian Robinson