

## General Secretary's Report



A warm welcome to you all.

I would like to start my first report for The Meat Hygienist with a brief introduction. At the National AGM in April, I was honoured to be elected as your new General Secretary. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Ian Robinson for his sterling work for the Association over the last twelve years. In that time, along with the rest of the AMI Council, he has been in the forefront of the move towards Professional Recognition, as well as tirelessly championing our core values of Protecting Public Health, Animal Health and Animal Welfare. He has also represented us in Europe, as the UK Vice President for the EWFC, helping to draft the successful input into various consultations on EU Regulations and although we didn't always win the argument, the EWFC collective 'voice' has been listened to at the highest level.

I am very grateful to be able to draw upon Ian's knowledge and experience as I learn about my new role.

I am a dual qualified Meat Hygiene Inspector working in a high throughput red meat abattoir in Cornwall, having qualified during the BSE crisis some twenty years ago. Although my base plant is single species, I am fortunate to be able to spend time inspecting all red meat as well as some more 'exotic' red meat species in the form of Alpacas. When not working my biggest passion is local motorsport, as both an event organiser and MSA registered marshal.

My first role within the AMI was as their IT Manager, with my main responsibility being the upkeep of our website and looking after the speakers and audio-visual aspects of the Seminar. I was then honoured to be asked to become a Trustee, the Registrar and the South West Divisional Secretary. I will be relinquishing some of these roles, and in the first instant I would like to welcome Michelle Barrett as our new Registrar. This role will be very important as we continue to move towards full Professional Recognition.

Apart from the change of General Secretary, I am delighted to report that the rest of the Executive will continue to represent the members throughout 2018.

Our attention now looks towards the final planning of this year's seminar. Once again, our hosts will be Harper Adams University, over the weekend of Friday September 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday September 16<sup>th</sup>. Further details can be found in this edition. Building on the feedback from last year, the Trustees are assembling a varied selection of speakers from across the Country and Europe. We will also have an update from the National Food Crime Unit, whose work has taken on a much higher profile in the first months of 2018.

The Friday evening session will take a somewhat different form than normal. Following a conversation with Martin Evans (a longstanding member of the AMI and Director of Field Operations at the Food Standards Agency) at last year's seminar, we have decided to include a debate to receive the views of as many MHI's as possible on how they feel they could shape the 'Future of Meat Inspection'. The Trustees feel that this is an excellent opportunity for members' voices to be heard at the highest level. Accompanying Martin on Friday evening will be Dr Colin Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer at the FSA. I'm sure he will have an extremely interesting evening.

The Midlands Division trialled the session at their AGM in March and came up with several discussion points. These were broken down into four topics. The topics were; Fundamentals, In Plant, Technical and Incidental.

I don't wish to influence your thoughts on these topics, but I would encourage you all to think about what each topic means to you, and what part you would like them to have in the future.

I would also like to ask all members to consider what they would like to feed into this session, whether you can make it to seminar or not. Please feel free to send any feedback to your Divisional Secretary, as this is a rare opportunity for all of us to contribute to the debate on our future roles.

After the email read out by our Chairman at last year's seminar about the pressure and stress that our job frequently generates amongst our colleagues, we added some links to mental health and wellbeing websites. This was done to give you the opportunity to seek advice, and to encourage anyone who needed it, to ask for assistance. The Food Standards Agency has recognised the importance of supporting their staff, with what can often be an unseen illness that puts great strain on individuals and their families. As a direct response, they have trained 45 staff from across all grades and departments to create a Mental Wellbeing Support Network. I am delighted to see that there is a very strong representation amongst Meat Hygiene Inspectors. hopefully this will help to ensure that the uniqueness of our working environment is understood by those giving assistance to those who need help.

Other topics to be covered at the seminar this year are; the diseases associated with the intensive rearing of pigs in the UK, a talk on Sarcocystosis, EU member States food identities, Protected Geographical Status and an update on the work of the National Food Crime Unit. After lunch, our Veterinary Advisor Eleni Michalopoulou will give an update on CCIR and the proposed knowledge refresh for all MHIs. The afternoon session will continue with MHI Health and Wellbeing, as mentioned previously. Our final session will cover the work of Dairy Hygiene Inspectors. The presentation will cover the specifics of carrying out inspections on farms that produce Raw Drinking Milk from Cows. This is a sector of the dairy industry that is growing in popularity with the public, but also one that carries inherent risks to public health if not managed correctly.

Further updates regarding the seminar will be posted on our website at [www.meatinspectors.co.uk](http://www.meatinspectors.co.uk) where you can also find the online version of the registration form to print. Alternatively, you can complete and return the one that accompanies this edition of our journal.

There is currently a public online petition in support of training more directly employed Meat Hygiene Inspectors. If you would like to have a look please go to [www.meatinspection.org/petition](http://www.meatinspection.org/petition)

And finally,

In line with the new Regulations for Data Protection, we have prepared a Privacy Statement on how we use members data. This can be found on our website. Also, if you have any issues which you would like to bring to the attention of the Officers of the Association, please do not hesitate to contact either your Divisional Secretary or me.

Regards,

Jeremy Thomas