

General Secretary's Report



A warm welcome to you all.

By the time you receive this edition of *The Meat Hygienist*, a number of changes to legislation will have come in to force. The main aim of the new legislation is to ensure that the Competent Authorities in each Member State are conducting controls in a suitably rigorous and impartial manner. These have been covered previously in this journal, and I hope that the transition has gone smoothly in your regions. I would urge everyone to make themselves aware of the changes, and in particular to the delegated and implementing regulations that set out the specific rules on controls for products of animal origin. Change is something that I believe the vast majority of inspection staff cope well with. As I think back to how differently we had to work when I trained to become a Meat Hygiene Inspector, with all paper based systems for the Manual of Official Controls, and the recording and reporting of inspection results, the computer based system we now have, has generally improved the accuracy of recording this data.

Despite the impending exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the Association will remain a proud member of the European Working Community for Food Inspection and Consumer Protection. This will enable us to have a voice in the continuing desire to maintain the highest standards of Public Health, Animal Welfare, and Animal Health. It is also pleasing to see that our Government has announced new Animal Welfare legislation to ensure that the United Kingdom remains a world leader in animal welfare standards.

Hopefully, by the time you receive this edition of our journal the upgrade to the Association's website will have taken place. This has been delayed largely due to the workload we all experience in the run up to Christmas, and a desire on my part to minimise the time the website is unavailable. I am planning to include a couple of additional features not previously available, to both enhance the site and provide further educational benefit to our members. The first new feature is going to be an

extensive listing of the contents of the Association's library. With the kind assistance of Brian Bull, our librarian I am going to add a list of textbooks, articles and videos that are available to borrow. This is a service available to our members, and details of how to request titles will be included. The library is available for those who are studying a Meat Inspection related subject, and could be used in conjunction with our educational bursary scheme, the Tweed Fund. I would like to thank Brian for the massive amount of work involved in cataloguing and listing the titles available.

Another proposed addition to the website will be 'The Meat Hygienist's Pocket Book'. No doubt some of our longer standing members can remember when it was first published, although it has been out of print for a number of years. The book was originally written by Ralph Wilson, who granted the Association of Meat Inspectors the rights to use his work. It was last revised by Ian Robinson, who has provided the current edition for our use. Although some of the references to legislation, have changed, the main content of the book is as relevant today as when it was first written. The book covers Ante Mortem, anatomy, each red meat species in detail, and also includes a glossary of terms found in meat inspection. The book is laid out in the manner of how you would carry out your inspection of each animal, and the conditions you might encounter. It then gives advice on judgment as to its fitness for human consumption. Each section gives detailed information for the reader.

This will be of particular use to students or experienced Inspectors alike, as both a reference document or as a 'knowledge refresher'.

I hope to develop further content for the website, as in future it should be easier to update content. I would personally like to include some Divisional content, perhaps including details of activities and news from each area.

If there is any content you would like added to the website, or any suggestions for improvements, please email them to me via the contact details for Officers.

In recent weeks the spotlight has fallen on the environmental impact that is caused by livestock farming, and I'm sure that many of you have either read or watched the reporting. Much of the coverage focussed on the farming practices employed outside of the United Kingdom, and failed to report the efforts made by farmers here to minimise their environmental impact. The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board have published their response, and if you would like to read it, please follow this link <https://ahdb.org.uk/news/your-levy-bodies-response-to-the-bbc-s-meat-a-threat-to-our-planet> Although it is important to highlight the impact that different industries have on the environment, it's a shame that the program referred to in the article failed to give a balanced report.

Within this edition of The Meat Hygienist, you will find details of our National Annual General Meeting. In 2020, and in keeping with alternating the meeting between Scotland and south of the border, we are back in the South West of England at the Aztec West Hotel, Almondsbury, Bristol. The hotel is located just off the M5, and within a short journey from the M4 and Bristol Airport. The date for your diary is Saturday

March 21st 2020, commencing at 10:30am. Unfortunately, the date had to be moved from our traditional April slot due to Easter.

Finally, I would like to close by hoping that you had a great Christmas, and wishing you all a Happy and Peaceful New Year. There will no doubt be challenges in our role, but I know that each and every one of us will meet them with the professionalism that Meat Hygiene Inspectors hold so dear.

Best wishes to you all

Regards,

Jeremy