

General Secretary's Report



A warm welcome to you all.

Coronavirus continues to rear its ugly head and impact all of our lives, and as we move in to the autumn and winter, now is the time to ensure that we remain vigilant. It's vital that we continue to maintain social distancing, wash hands regularly, and get tested if we develop any symptoms, and self-isolate if required and appropriate. We all need to abide by the guidance for wearing masks and shields, as if everyone complies, we protect not just ourselves but also others from this virus. Recently, there has continued to be localised outbreaks within food production facilities, so we must be on our guard and maintain social distancing. This has been reinforced for me personally, as I have friends affected by the outbreak in Cornwall at a meat processing plant. If you have any concerns in the workplace, you should always contact your Inspection Team Leaders / Line Managers, so that appropriate measures can be taken for everyone's Health Safety and Wellbeing.

As mentioned in the last edition, we held our postponed Annual General Meeting at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol on July 25th. Although attendance was reduced somewhat on previous years, we were delighted to be able to present our 2019 Trainee Meat Hygiene Inspector award to David Cunningham. David started with the Food Standards Agency in April 2019 after a successful time working in the meat industry. David also became a Registered Meat Hygiene Inspector. The pictures below, show David taking the oath with John Pratt, Vice President and receiving his award.



We were also pleased to welcome David's wife and daughter as our guests as well.

The Association were saddened to learn of the passing of Eric Wood earlier this year. Eric was a former Trustee, and passionate advocate for Meat Inspectors. Several years ago, Eric donated a large quantity of photographs to our library as an educational resource, and kept in touch with the Association through his longstanding friendships within Council. An obituary is published in this edition. One article that we have included, and I think Eric would have enjoyed reading, concerns the slaughter of Camels. The article has been submitted by Martin Whelan, who many of you will know, and now works in the United Arab Emirates. My thanks to Martin for finding the time in his very busy schedule to write this fascinating piece.

I was also informed that Dr. Yunes Teinez has sadly passed away. A few years ago, Dr. Yunes spoke at seminar, and many of you will probably remember that he was fearless in his pursuit of those who tried to exploit the public, through his role as a senior Environmental Health Officer in London and elsewhere. I would like to thank Bob Hancock for contacting me and writing the obituary.

2020 has been a catalyst for many changes to how we have to work. If you had said to me twelve months ago that we would be unable to hold our usual seminar gathering at Harper Adams University, I would have thought it inconceivable. However, that was the situation we found ourselves in when we took the extremely difficult decision to cancel the 'face to Face' event. However, the Trustees took a leap of faith when they agreed to the suggestion of taking the seminar online. I must first thank all our speakers, who without exception embraced the switch and supported us by creating

pre-recorded presentations, taking many entirely out of their comfort zones as public speakers. I would also like to thank the Chief Executives from the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland, along with the Directors of Field Operations and the Operational Transformation Program for participating in a live session as part of the seminar on September 12th.

In my other role as the IT Manager for the Association, I was ably supported with the running of the online part by Darren Pickering, Peter Watson and Stephen Holden, as well as the other members of the Council and Trust. Their support ensured that everything ran as smoothly as we could hope for. Stephen did a fantastic job with contacting and promoting the event, resulting in excellent attendance figures. The seminar has always been eligible as a Continuing Professional Development event, and this was proven by the number of Veterinary colleagues who participated.

Special mention should be made to the contribution of our Chair, Peter Watson. Not only did he present an excellent piece on the work of the Welfare Assurance Team, with Paul Morrell, but he also ensured that the entire event ran smoothly by chairing the entire seminar, following the opening address by our President Archie Anderson. Archie also had the task of announcing this year's recipient of The Robin Irish Award. This award goes to someone who has supported the Associations aims and objectives.

This year it was awarded to Dr. Robert Huey, currently the Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland. Robert has supported the Association for many years both as a former veterinary adviser, and with assistance and support towards Professional Recognition. This was also a first for us, as it is actually the second time Robert has received the award. I'm sure you will join me in congratulating Robert on this achievement.

My thanks to everyone that joined us online, and for the questions posted for our speakers, and comments in general. You'll be pleased to hear that planning for 2021 has already begun, and we are looking forward to returning to Harper Adams University and meeting up with friends old and new. Details, will be posted on our website at www.meatinspectors.co.uk in due course.

Elsewhere, there has been a number of different organisations expressing concerns about imports of meat that might not be produced to the same high standards that we currently have in the United Kingdom. Currently, it seems that public opinion is against such a reduction in the high standards the meat industry upholds. Let's hope that this remains the case. Our partner organisation in Europe, the European Working Community for Food Inspection and Consumer Protection (EWFC) continue to give opinion on any revisions to European legislation, as stakeholders to the EU. They also work with consumer groups to ensure that the highest standards are maintained. This year has meant that meetings have been held online as well, which has created its own problems for bringing everyone together from the member states. There are some more meetings proposed for this year, although with the differing quarantine and travel

restrictions, it's unclear what form these will take. As always, if you wish to read about the work of the EWFC, please visit their website at www.ewfc.org

Best wishes to you all, and stay safe in these difficult times.

Regards,

Jeremy