

General Secretary's Report



A very warm welcome to you all.

Hopefully, by the time you receive this edition of The Meat Hygienist we will know if the final Coronavirus restrictions are going to be eased in England, as hopefully the majority of adults will have received at least their first vaccine dose. It seems such a long time ago when you could just make a spontaneous decision to go away or visit friends and family, without having to think about taking PPE, or whether the destination was safe to visit. I for one look forward to a return to some of the previous normality we took for granted.

The Association held its National AGM on June 12th via Teams, and I would like to thank those members who gave up their Saturday morning to attend. Online meetings are never ideal, and can be difficult to chair, so I would like to thank Peter Watson for doing an admirable job in ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to speak. My thanks also to all the Officers who stood for re-election. We have a diverse Council, who will always put the defence of Public Health, Animal Health and Animal Welfare, as well as all our Meat Hygiene Inspector and our Veterinary colleagues first. I was delighted to welcome our latest Council member, Aneliya Watson to our Council meeting the day before too. Annie was elected as the new South West Divisional Secretary, at their AGM, having swapped roles with Michelle Barrett, who has become Divisional Chairperson. I would like to thank Michelle for her hard work as Divisional Secretary, and I believe we have a very strong Divisional leadership in the South West. I'm delighted that Michelle will continue as our Registrar. As ever, if you have any changes to your contact details, please let Michelle know, to keep our database up to date. Contact details for both Annie and Michelle can be found inside the cover of your journal.

I am also delighted to welcome Charles Mason as a Vice President of the Association. Charles will be known to many of you, as he is the Technical Director for the Humane

Slaughter Association. Charles has supported the seminar for many years, and we are very fortunate to have his animal welfare experience available to call upon.

We have also recently welcomed a significant number of new members from Northern Ireland, who work as Meat Hygiene Inspectors for DAERA. We are delighted to initially welcome them as members of our Scotland South Division. However, we are actively looking at the formation of a Northern Ireland Division, and were delighted to welcome John M^cKeever to our last Council meeting to observe how Council works. Thanks, should also go to Dr. Robert Huey, Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland, for his support of this development for his staff.

Planning for our 56th seminar is progressing, with the Trustees having put together a varied line up of speakers. Subject to any unexpected restrictions the seminar will go ahead as usual at Harper Adams University, over the weekend of September 10th to 12th. To fulfil the requirements of the University, we will probably have sole use of the campus. A provisional list of speakers and registration details can be found elsewhere in this edition. One change that we have introduced for 2021, is the ability to register via our website, which will be going live soon. This has the benefit of reducing postage costs, and assisting our Seminar Co-ordinator, by automatically generating an attendance database.

We have had to adjust some of the costs to attend the seminar this year. Whilst keeping the full delegate rate the same as previously, we have reduced the day delegate rate but increased the Divisional sponsored figure. Each Division will be able to give you further details on how they will apply the change. The new rates are;

- Full seminar £350
- Day delegate £120
- Divisional Sponsorship £120

Hopefully, we will be able to welcome you to a normal seminar in September, where we can enjoy both the presentations and the social get together. There really is no better way to catch up with friends old and new.

This edition also has an article from the Operational Transformation Project team. This was delayed until the publication of the paper they prepared for the FSA Board. The paper has now gone for public consultation, and if you wish to comment as an individual, details can be found at <https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/consultations/consultation-on-early-proposals-for-a-future-delivery-model-for-fsa-delivered-official-controls-in-the-meat-sector>

The Association will be making a formal response, and the Council have been formulating a number of questions to put to the OTP team. Peter Watson and I have also recently met with the senior members of the team and put forward some initial views. As a stakeholder, we will continue to engage with the discussion on the Future Delivery Model, and raise our concerns for the protection of Public Health, Animal Health and Animal Welfare. The latter of which only gets a brief mention so far. If you

have any views you would like to share with the Association, please contact your Divisional Secretaries or myself. We can then pass them on or include them in our response before the 23rd July.

One issue that seems to frequently make the news is the continued difficulties surrounding exports following our exit from the European Union. This has put particular pressure on our colleagues working in Northern Ireland. Following a discussion at the Midlands Divisional Meeting, we are currently in the process of organising a webinar on Export Certification. Further details will be announced when known. We already have one speaker arranged, but will be looking to have some more for the event.

Whilst on the topic of Webinars, our colleagues in the EWFC organised a very successful one in May. The subject was 'EU Food Safety and Sustainability under The Green Deal', and speakers came from the EU Commission, the IFA and TEAGASC. The event was well supported with over a hundred registered delegates. I was delighted to be able to help with the organisation, and the Association provided the use of our MS Teams account to host the event on the EWFC's behalf. Particular thanks should go to Sean Butler (EWFC President), Jan Homma (EWFC Webmaster) and Bruno Lagae (Belgium Vice President) for organising the session, and the EWFC Board for promoting across their member states. The presentations can be found on the EWFC website.

Unfortunately, the EWFC have taken the reluctant decision to postpone their congress in Kilkenny, Ireland in October, due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding international travel. It's hoped the congress can be rescheduled for the early part of 2022.

As always, if you wish to keep updated on the work of the EWFC, please visit their website at ewfc.org.

I am saddened to report that we have lost another well known Meat Hygiene Inspector, and former Divisional Chair, Nancy Tague. Many of you would have known Nancy both as a colleague and friend, and also with the work she carried out with students studying their Poultry certificate whilst training to qualify as MHI's. Latterly, Nancy studied Law, and following qualification, turned her attention to working to help former members of the Armed Forces in Lincolnshire and beyond. There is an obituary included in this edition, and our thoughts go to Charlie Brindley, and Nancy's family.

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

Regards,

Jeremy