

General Secretary's Report



A very warm welcome to you all.

I would like to begin my report with a couple of congratulations. Each year, the Food Standards Agency award the Tim Hooper Trophy to the Meat Hygiene Inspector of the Year. This award is based on nominations from across the Agency, and is awarded to a Meat Hygiene Inspector who has gone above and beyond whilst carrying out his role in protecting Public Health, animal Health and Animal Welfare.

This year I'm delighted to announce that the award has been given to Stephen Holden for not only his work as an emergency relief MHI in the South East, but also his role carrying out unannounced animal welfare audits, and supporting the next generation of trainee Official Auxiliaries, both in plant and as an assessor for the training programme. Stephen also champions the use of technology to assist with accessibility within the Food Standards Agency. Apart from all that, Stephen is also a Trustee of the Association, our seminar co-ordinator and the South East Divisional Secretary. I'm sure you will join me in congratulating Stephen on winning this prestigious award for 2022.

The Food Standards Agency also have a Vet of the Year Award, having reintroduced it a few years ago. This year, I'm also delighted to announce that it has been awarded to Collin Willson. Collin is a leading authority on Animal Welfare, and a great supporter of the Association. As well as advising Government, Collin is the Welsh President of the British Veterinary Association and senior Vice President of the Veterinary Public Health Association. He is also the veterinary lead of the Food Standards Agency Welfare Assurance Team. On behalf of the Association, I would like to congratulate Collin on his award too.

The Food Standards Agency are also recognising staff from across the organisation at an awards ceremony in April. Included in several categories are staff members from Field Operations, both individual's teams and the entire directorate in the 'Hidden

Heroes' category for working throughout the pandemic with no service failures in any establishment. An achievement all frontline staff can be justifiably proud of delivering.

Whilst most of the restrictions have now been lifted, Covid continues to have an impact on our day to day lives. I doubt that anyone doesn't know someone who has either contracted this virus, or whose family has been affected by it. Hopefully, we are now able to return to doing the things we enjoy, and meeting up with family and friends.

The Trustees have begun planning in earnest for our 57th Annual Seminar this coming September, with invitations having been sent to prospective speakers. Once again we will be returning to Harper Adams University in Shropshire, from Friday September 9th to Sunday September 11th. Building on our experience from running the last two year's seminars online, we are planning a live video link for one speaker, and I will also be exploring how we can use assistive technology to make the seminar more accessible than previously. For this, I must mention my good friend Clive Wilkinson, who has been introducing me to all sorts of technology I never knew existed.

We are also hoping to welcome an increased number of sponsored delegates from both the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. These places are part of the agreement we have with the two organisations, and the increased numbers are to cover the period since our last full seminar in 2019. We are also hoping to welcome delegates from some of the trainee Official Auxiliaries from both Competent Authorities, as well as our Service Delivery Partners.

More details about the seminar will be published in due course on our website and via the FSA Yammer group.

As this edition of The Meat Hygienist goes to press, we are about to hold our National AGM in Edinburgh on April 2nd. Although it is too late to join us in person, the meeting will also be available to join via Microsoft Teams. If anyone would like to participate, please contact me by email for the Teams meeting link.

Operational Transformation Programme

The Association's Council continues to be in regular contact to discuss the Operational Transformation Programme, and how we will respond to the various workstreams as a stakeholder organisation. We also periodically meet with the OTP team for updates. The team is continuing to work through the items they have presented to the FSA Board, and we will continue to scrutinise this work, and comment where necessary to ensure that the impartiality of the current system is maintained to protect both the public and animal health and welfare. We will also work with our colleagues at Unison, in all areas of common interest.

EWFC

The EWFC are shortly going to be holding their General Assembly. Due to the different Covid restrictions in the various member states, it has been decided to hold this event online via Zoom. Each General Assembly is held every two years, with meetings in

between of the EWFC Board. The Assembly elects the various officers, and is also when the Presidency moves from one member state to the next, in accordance with the Statutes. This year the Presidency is going to be handed over from Ireland to France. I would like to thank Sean Butler the Irish President, for doing a fantastic job despite all the challenges thrown at him by Coronavirus.

Elsewhere, the EWFC continues to keep a close eye on the EU Commission and any developments that will affect Food Inspectors across Europe, and its trading partners, to ensure that standards of Public Health protection are not allowed to be reduced. You can be assured that the Association will continue to work very closely with the EWFC Board, to achieve our common aims.

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

I would like to take this opportunity in wishing you all a very Happy Easter.

Regards,

Jeremy