

General Secretary's Report



Hello and welcome to the latest edition of The Meat Hygienist.

Unfortunately, this edition has been delayed for reasons beyond our control, mostly due to the work and family commitments of the Council members. This dedicated band of volunteers spend many hours of their spare time working tirelessly to uphold the values we all have in protecting Public Health, Animal Health and Animal Welfare, and they have my thanks for everything they do.

I am pleased to announce that this edition has been edited jointly by Ian Robinson, and our new editor David Ogden. Many of you will know David from his year's working as a Meat Hygiene Inspector and Manager in the North West, and as the NW Divisional Secretary. David brings his vast experience to the role, and I'm certain he will do a great job. I would also like to thank Mik Chevis, who had hoped to take on the role, but regrettably has had to step aside for various reasons.

This year, I am delighted to report that the seminar made a very welcome return to Harper Adams University in September. It was great to be able to meet up with friends and colleagues from across the whole of the United Kingdom, including MHI's from Food Standards Scotland and DAERA. It was very interesting to learn about the different ways in which our role in delivering Official Controls is managed. My thanks to the delegates for the valuable contributions they made to the whole weekend.

Of course, it would be wrong not to mention the events which over shadowed the weekend, following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As Civil Servants this meant that we had to follow the guidance for the period of National Mourning. The biggest impact that we encountered was the loss of a number of senior speakers, as public appearances were cancelled. However, I would like to thank the Chief Executive, and Director of Field Operations, amongst others at the Food Standards Agency for allowing the sponsored delegates to attend, and for working with the Council to minimise the impact on the seminar. We have already invited them to join us next year.

I would like to thank the speakers that were still able to join us, including our two overseas speakers from the United States of America, Paula Schelling and Dr Pat Basu. They both gave a very interesting, and at times concerning insight, into how Meat Inspection is conducted in the US. We will be including some details of their presentations for all to read. I would also like to thank Dr Jane Clark who kindly made her presentation available to be presented in her absence, and to Dr Claire White who delivered the presentation with only a few hours to prepare, in addition to her own presentation on how the Demonstration of Life protocol was developed. Both presentations were very warmly received by the delegates. Our thanks also to the Humane Slaughter Association and everyone else who contributed to such a successful seminar.

On the Friday evening, we were also delighted to be joined by the winner of the Trainee Meat Hygiene Inspector of the Year for 2021. The award is given to the student who the panel believes was the outstanding learner from all the Agencies currently training Official Auxiliaries in Meat Inspection. This year students from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) were considered for the award, and I'm delighted to announce that Terry Keir from Food Standards Scotland was chosen. Dave Clapham, Trustee and Association Education Officer, commented on how high the standard of work produced by everyone considered was, but especially the portfolios from FSS and DAERA. Our congratulations to Terry on his achievement. Terry is pictured below with our Vice President John Pratt, and Steve Lomas, Head of Operational Delivery at Food Standards Scotland.



During the sessions on the Saturday, we also had the presentation of The Robin Irish Award. This year it was decided to depart from the usual format, and present it to an organisation that has supported the Seminar for over forty years, by attending and exhibiting their products, which are used extensively by Meat Hygiene Inspectors and throughout the butchery and catering industries. The award was presented by Angus

Lowden MBE, standing in for our President Archie Anderson, to David Wright, on behalf of WR Wright and Sons. A couple of pictures are included below of the presentation.



Professional recognition

After a period where Professional recognition has been somewhat quiet, there has been some developments throughout this year. I will allow Ian Robinson, to bring you fully up to date with all the detail, but suffice to say that after initially being notified that our preferred model was not being progressed, there have been potentially some further developments. I hope you find Ian's report interesting, as it is a subject that we will eventually have to bring to the membership for further debate.

The Retained EU Legislation Proposals

On behalf of the Association, I have written to both the Chair of the Food Standards Agency Board, and the Chief Executive of Food Standards Scotland, to offer our support to their respective concerns about the proposed changes to the Retained EU Legislation. Of particular concern is the intention to 'sunset' the existing EU Legislation that is currently still in place in the UK. Each Government Department has been asked to look at the legislation and notify the Government of what they wish to keep, otherwise it will be repealed on December 31st 2023. According to the Governments own figures, this affects in excess of two thousand pieces of legislation. This has the potential to impact on Public Health, Animal Health and Animal Welfare, as well as the export market to Europe and further afield. These changes were brought in by the previous Prime Minister, so let us hope that the current Government will reconsider the timeframe, and allow for a thorough debate on any change in Parliament.

EWFC

The EWFC recently held their first physical meeting since October 2019 in Luxembourg. It was an opportunity to meet again with our European colleagues, and also to see for the first time some Board members that joined during the pandemic. I would like to thank our host, Josiane for ensuring we all were made very welcome during our stay.

The Board have been looking very closely at the way in which each Member State trains their Official Auxiliaries and Food Inspectors, especially given the possibility of

the UK diverging from the rest of Europe, as a result of the work undertaken by the Operational Transformation Programme. Each Vice President outlined how training was carried out in their respective Countries, and it was very interesting to compare both the similarities and differences to how the Legislative requirements are fulfilled. My thanks to the whole Board for the large amount of work put in to the presentations, and for translating it all into English.

During the National reports, a recurring theme was the additional work that has been generated since the UK left the European Union. Principally, this is caused by the need for export certificates. Something we have seen within the United Kingdom too.

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. Currently, little has changed, but you can be assured that the EWFC will keep a close eye on any proposals or changes coming from the EU Commission. 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.

National Annual General Meeting

The planning of next year's Annual General Meeting has begun, and the date for your diary is Saturday April 29th 2023. Further details of the meeting will be published when available, but it is likely to be held in the Bristol area. All members are welcome to attend, but I will need to know in advance to make the required arrangements with the venue when confirmed.

Finally, you have possibly noticed a lack of updates on our website at present. This is entirely down to my workload, and a lack of time to spend on keeping it up to date. I am therefore looking for a volunteer, to help with keeping the site current. If you would like to get more involved with your Association, and feel that you can spare some time to assist, please get in touch with me by email. My contact details are inside the cover of this edition.

Whilst this year will undoubtedly be difficult for some, with the current cost of living crisis, I would like to take this opportunity in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and peaceful New Year.

Regards,

Jeremy