



Top award for HSA's poultry welfare training DVD

Poultry Welfare – Taking Responsibility, the latest training DVD from the HSA, has received 'Training Initiative of the Year Award' at the 2006 Meat Industry Awards.

Now in their seventh year, the Meat Industry Awards recognise excellence across the UK meat industry. Natalie Smith, Technical Officer, accepted the award on behalf of the charity at the Awards Dinner held at London's Sheraton Park Lane Hotel in December.

The DVD and its accompanying booklet feature best practice for catching, handling, transport and slaughter, providing comprehensive practical welfare guidance to catching teams, transport drivers, lairage workers and all involved with the slaughter of poultry.

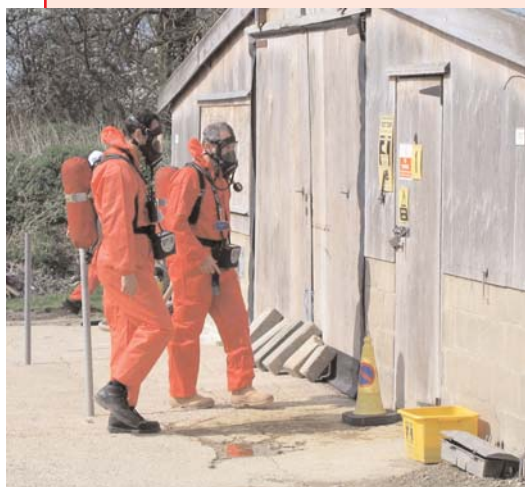


Natalie Smith (centre) collects the 2006 Meat Industry Award for 'Training Initiative of the Year'

International training workshop a success!

After months of busy and detailed preparations at the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA), the day finally came for the start of the *International training workshop on welfare standards concerning stunning and killing of animals in slaughterhouses or for disease control reasons*.

We were very pleased to welcome 85 participants, from state veterinary services and other authorities with responsibilities for livestock welfare at slaughter and killing, from 52 countries (24 EU and 28 non-EU) to the Hotel Marriott City Centre in Bristol on 26 September.



One of the aspects discussed at the International Workshop, was methods for killing farmed food animals in disease control situations.

The three-day event included presentations from 21 tutors from seven countries as well as a day of abattoir visits to observe and discuss modern practices. The workshop sessions covered a wide range of aspects including the EU and international legislative framework; the scientific basis for, and methods of, handling, stunning and killing; monitoring and auditing, and experiences gained in killing for the control of infectious diseases. There is a very great need for events of this kind for discussion of current challenges in these fields, for sharing of experiences and for the promotion of best practice around the world.

It was an honour for the HSA to present this important European Commission-funded workshop and we are most grateful to all the tutors and abattoir staff for their excellent contributions and to all the participants for making it such a constructive and friendly event.

Chairman's comment

It gives me the greatest pleasure to introduce you to the HSA March Newsletter. Since first becoming acquainted with the workings of the Association, it has always amazed me how much difference can be made by a small team of enthusiastic and competent staff.

One aspect of this is the successful conclusion of a major international workshop on welfare standards in slaughterhouses; this provided a platform for the HSA to help promote humane methods. Several participants requested assistance in developing specific training materials for use in other countries. Other workshops have also been held since then, dealing with a range of topics relating both to slaughter and contingent activities, directed at ensuring the best possible welfare of animals in the period leading up to this.

The staff have continued the preparation and publication of Technical Notes and Guidance Notes, including a publication on the on-farm killing of poultry for disease control purposes, building on the success of the award-winning poultry DVD.

I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter as much as I have. However, these pages describe only a small part of the HSA's activities and you will find more on the website - www.hsa.org.uk

Bryan Howard
Chairman

Smallholder training course

In November 2006 the HSA was awarded a grant under the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) to run a training course for small producers on the on-farm slaughter of poultry.

The course was held on 15 November at the Hawkshead Campus of the Royal Veterinary College and was attended by 13 smallholders. The day proved to be very successful with the course comprising a half-day classroom teaching session covering the legal and welfare issues of capture, transport and slaughter of poultry, followed by a practical session.

Attendees were assessed for their Certificate of Competence by the attending State Veterinary Service (SVS) Veterinary Officer and all 13 delegates successfully gained their certificate, which can be used to apply for a full Poultry Slaughter Licence from the Meat Hygiene Service. The feedback from the course was very positive and all those attending thought it effectively met their training needs. Subsequent enquiries have been received from smallholders interested in attending a future training course, and we will be investigating the possibility of holding another course this year.



Spanish VPHA meeting

In mid-October the HSA's Technical Director travelled to Palma, Majorca at the invitation of the Spanish equivalent of the Veterinary Public Health Association to speak at their annual meeting.

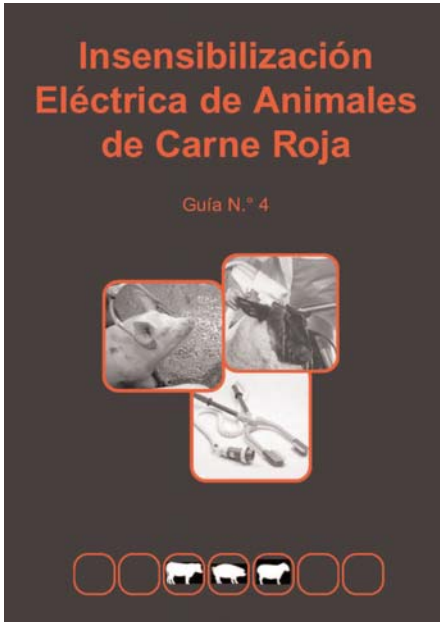
The conference included six other speakers, who spoke on subjects relevant to animal welfare, public health and the Spanish meat industry. The HSA presentation was entitled *Animal Welfare and Public Health – a British Perspective* and identified and examined those areas where animal welfare and meat hygiene interests might be seen to be in conflict.

New transport legislation

The new EU Regulation on the welfare of animals during transport came into force on 5 January 2007. This Regulation is implemented in England by the *Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 (WATO)* which replaces WATO 1997.

WATO 2006 will affect livestock, poultry and equine hauliers, farmers, animal breeders, performing animal transporters and those working at markets, assembly centres and abattoirs. For the first time, drivers or attendants responsible for transporting farmed animals, horses and poultry, over 65km will have to obtain an independently assessed Certificate of Competence in Animal Transport, by 5 January 2008.

Further details can be obtained from the Defra website www.defra.gsi.gov.uk



STOP PRESS!!

With a grant from the Persula Foundation, *Captive-Bolt Stunning of Livestock* and *Electrical Stunning of Red Meat Animals* from the HSA's Guidance Notes series of publications have been produced in Spanish – which is the second most spoken language in the world. We are most grateful to the Persula Foundation for funding the translations and for helping us, in this way, to promote high standards around the world.

Thanks to the donation from an individual supporter, the trainee manuals which accompany the HSA's award-winning video package, *Humane Slaughter – Taking Responsibility*, are now available in Welsh.

Please contact the HSA office if you would like further details.

Market research

The HSA has now completed the first part of its joint research project with the Royal Veterinary College, which involved visiting 24 markets in England and Wales and collecting information about how well animals move through markets.

The results are expected to lead to the production of a set of guidance notes that will be of use to any market operators redesigning their facilities or buildings.

The markets selected were chosen to represent the variation in throughputs and species handled. There were some repeat visits to certain markets to

view different categories of stock, ie store stock (normally younger and more active) and fat stock (animals on their way to slaughter).

The second stage of the project is to analyse the data and identify the common difficulties in order to produce practical information for those involved in animal handling in markets.

SVS firearms course

On Thursday and Friday 23–24 November a pilot firearms course for the State Veterinary Service (SVS) took place at the SVS offices in Worcester and at the West Mercia Police Firearms Training School at nearby Hindlip Hall. HSA's Technical Director

was the main tutor on the course, with 16 Animal Health Officers and vets attending.

Day one was a theory session and covered: SVS policy and protocol; firearms; captive-bolt equipment; and dart guns. The second day



was a practical session and took place on the police firing range. All delegates took part in live firing of captive-bolt equipment, including the Cash Poultry Killer, and dart guns. Demonstrations of free-bullet humane killers and high-powered rifles were given by the HSA and a police marksman. First indications were that the course was very successful and it is hoped that more will be held in the near future.



Fish transport workshop

The HSA held a forum on *Fish welfare during transport* in Inverness on 26 October. The forum was attended by over 50 delegates from a wide range of companies including; farming, vets, welfare groups and researchers.

At this one-day workshop speakers presented on a number of different issues relating to transport of fish for slaughter, to stimulate discussion amongst the delegates.

These topics included fish welfare and water quality, assessment of fitness to travel, transport management and contingency planning and specific requirements when transporting by road, wellboat and helicopters.

Implications of new regulations as well as indicators of stress in fish were also discussed.

All of the delegates participated

fully in the day and a number of good points came out of the workshop. The proceedings and ideas for further development and research are currently being written up and will be sent to all delegates shortly.

Thanks are given to all the speakers who gave their time and helped contribute to the success of the forum.

Dorothy Sidley Award

Each year the HSA offers these awards, named in honour of one of the HSA's great champions, Dorothy Sidley, to enable students to undertake projects and develop their interests in fields relevant to the charity's objectives.

The winners of the 2006 awards Mr Robert Barker (MSc Meat Science and Technology student at Bristol University) and Miss Claire Lees and Miss Joanne Widdicombe (Veterinary

Medicine students at the Royal Veterinary College) successfully completed their projects and submitted reports on them to the HSA. Presentations on their work were given at the Vacation Scholars Meeting (run jointly with the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare) on 6 December 2006 at Newcastle University. Robert's project involved comparisons of the effects of different stunning currents, frequencies and waveforms on carcass and meat quality in broilers; while Claire and Joanne's joint research looked into whether variations in the volume of the sound made by captive-bolt cartridges reflects variation in efficacy.

The closing date for applications for the 2007 Dorothy Sidley Awards was 26 February. The winners will be announced in the Annual Report in September.



HRH Princess Anne visiting the HSA exhibition stand at the 2006 Royal Smithfield Christmas Fair

The Royal Smithfield Christmas Fair

This year the Royal Smithfield Show moved from Earl's Court in London to the Royal Bath and West of England Showground at Shepton Mallett in Somerset. The move was brought about by the Earl's court event being cancelled in January, leaving the Royal Smithfield Club pondering the future of their show. Several of the major agricultural societies showed interest in hosting a new winter livestock event and in March it was declared that the Royal Bath and West of England Society had been successful with its bid to build a winter fair around the Royal Smithfield Club's livestock classes.

The HSA has exhibited at Smithfield since 1988 and secured a prime spot for its stand at this new event. The two-day show proved to be one of the busiest for the HSA in many years and the icing on the cake came with a royal visit to the stand by HRH Princess Anne on Friday 1 December. She demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the problems facing livestock farmers and the slaughter industry by asking about small and medium-sized abattoirs and the integrity of locally-produced meat.