

Humane Slaughter Association



Improving the welfare of food animals around the world

Spring 2017

HSA MAKES SPECIAL TRAVEL AWARD

In September last year, the HSA announced a Special Travel Award for 2017, with funds of up to £10,000 available to help those involved in improving the welfare of animals during transport, marketing and slaughter to gain new expertise and knowledge which will contribute to better animal welfare.

The HSA is pleased to announce that it has made an award to Ellie Wigham, a PhD student at the University of Bristol for her project “*Analysis of the use of CCTV data to monitor and improve slaughter plant welfare in the US – what can we learn from our American friends?*”

The main focus of Ellie’s project is to assess the effects of independent CCTV auditing on animal welfare in lairage and at slaughter. CCTV is now being used more widely in the United States of America, often as a customer requirement to ensure optimum welfare. Ellie’s project aims to gain a detailed understanding of the process to identify where improvements can be made in order to improve the welfare of animals at slaughter in the USA. The project will also look at how the knowledge acquired by this study in the US can be used in slaughterhouses in the UK and Europe to improve animal welfare. ■



Credit: Jade Spence

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENT



A warm welcome to the Spring newsletter. As the recently elected Chairman of Trustees I am delighted to introduce our newsletter and highlight a sample of the breadth of work of the Humane Slaughter Association. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my predecessor, Professor Richard Bennett, for his guidance and contribution to the Association over the past three years.

The charity is heavily focussed on improving stunning methods – millions of animals are killed every year for food using controlled atmosphere stunning methods, for example by exposing them to carbon dioxide gas mixtures. In June, the HSA will co-organise a special meeting, hosted by its sister charity UFAW, to look into whether these methods are humane or whether some new different methods may offer better welfare for animals. You can read more on page 2.

2017 is the 90th anniversary of the HSA beginning its work to assess the welfare of animals in livestock markets and it is the 200th anniversary of the first purpose-built livestock market in the UK. We will mark these events by taking part in a survey of some of the 120 markets which remain in England and Wales. Please read our “From the Archives” section on page 4 and find out how you can support this initiative for our Spring Appeal on page 8.

Your commitment to animal welfare and to the HSA has enabled us to do the work highlighted in this newsletter. We simply couldn’t do what we do without your support, for which we are deeply grateful. Thank you and enjoy the read.

Andrea M. Nolan

Professor Andrea Nolan OBE, Chair

Humane Slaughter Association joins forces with UFAW to look at the welfare impacts of controlled atmosphere methods for stunning or killing animals

Millions of animals are killed every year using controlled atmosphere stunning methods – for instance many chickens and pigs are slaughtered for food by exposing them to carbon dioxide gas mixtures.

Most laboratory rats and mice are killed with carbon dioxide at the end of studies too. There is on-going debate about whether these methods are humane or whether some different methods may offer better welfare for animals. One alternative being considered is Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS), which involves the use of low pressures to cause unconsciousness. The Humane Slaughter Association and Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) are co-organising a two-day scientific meeting later this year to discuss the latest evidence regarding the humane qualities of these techniques. The meeting will bring together scientists, engineers, government regulators and representatives of the meat and laboratory animal industries to discuss which methods are most humane, share latest advances and how they might be improved, and consider how to overcome



Credit: HSA

practical barriers to the adoption of the most humane methods. ■



Further information can be found on UFAW's website – www.ufaw.org.uk/cas2017

Kenya update

Following the HSA's visit to Kenya in November 2015, The Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (KSPCA) has been sent a range of additional educational materials on humane handling and stunning of livestock for dissemination to slaughter persons, vets and meat inspectors.

The HSA has also created a syllabus covering farm animal welfare during transport, marketing and slaughter, as an online resource for educators wishing to develop tertiary education modules on this subject. The syllabus has been circulated to those met in Kenya, including the veterinary universities and Manor House Agricultural Centre, Trans-Nzoia county government and slaughterhouse veterinary officials,



Credit: Jean Gilchrist

“The visit to our institution helped me a lot in understanding the scope of work done by HSA and I was particularly impressed with the stunning methods that can be used in the event of slaughtering animals to prevent pain and preserve meat quality. This is the message I still faithfully pass to those who have an ear to protect animal welfare.”

Wilfred Otieno, Kenya

and NGOs operating in Kenya and in other African countries. Key, relevant educational materials produced by the HSA and other organisations can be easily accessed via the web links in the syllabus. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), whose membership comprises eight African nations, has already informed the HSA that the syllabus “will be very useful to our task force that is developing Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa” and it will be circulated amongst colleagues at the African Union and the FAO.

Where the opportunities arise to do so, the HSA will continue to work with recognised organisations in Kenya to improve farm animal welfare during transport, marketing and slaughter. ■

WATOK Seminar

Following the success of the one-day seminar on the changing role of the Animal Welfare Officer, held in April 2015, the HSA organised a similar event in October for the meat and livestock industry entitled “WATOK One Year On – Meeting the challenges...Where are we now?”

The seminar attracted upwards of 90 delegates from across the UK to discuss the challenges faced since the new Welfare at the Time Of Killing (WATOK) Regulations were introduced in England in November 2015.

Delegates heard from speakers who explained the changes from an administrative perspective and provided examples of how the change in legislation had impacted on members of industry. Large and small-scale producers were represented and the discussion forum which followed the



Credit: HSA

presentations, gave all the delegates the opportunity to share their experiences and raise questions.

The main theme of the discussion was the finite life of the Temporary Certificates of Competence, which expire permanently after three months, causing particular problems for seasonal producers and people operating in small slaughter plants. This short timeframe leads to difficulties in gaining sufficient practical experience, being assessed and proving competency. Delegates felt this was an area which should be addressed in the future, both by the industry and relevant competent authorities.

HSA staff members were encouraged by the widespread support for the seminar and thank all the delegates for their active and honest participation. ■

Veterinary Public Health Association (VPHA) and Association of Government Veterinarians (AGV) Autumn Conference

Towards the end of last year, the HSA was invited to the Veterinary Public Health Association (VPHA) and Association of Government Veterinarians (AGV) Autumn Conference.

The HSA provided delegate packs containing educational and promotional materials for the charity at the Conference. Technical Officer Susan Richmond, who represented the HSA said; “The main theme was one of people working together, sharing information towards a common goal of improved health and welfare and working together internationally too.”

There were over 100 attendees at the event and speakers covered topics including new ways of teaching veterinary students and also how human health and animal health are interlinked.

Added Susan: “The discussions were genuinely interesting and informative and it was a very constructive event.” ■

Fish welfare at slaughter

On 14th December 2016 HSA Technical Officer Jade Spence gave her seventh lecture in six years at the University of Liverpool, on fish welfare at slaughter for approximately 150 students of veterinary medicine. Jade’s lecture discussed the scientific research on the capacity of finfish to suffer, the limited legislation



Credit: Shutterstock

protecting farmed fish at slaughter and how to improve fish welfare and meat quality through the use of electrical and percussive stunning equipment. The students are often amazed to see how humane slaughter of fish is achieved and the topic complements information they have been given on humane slaughter of mammals and poultry earlier in their degree course. ■

Technical Information Poster translated into 21 languages

Effective neck-cutting of poultry protects bird welfare by ensuring that birds die as quickly as possible. In the European Union it is a legal requirement (EC Regulation 1099/2009) that birds are effectively bled and, worldwide, there is a need for guidance on effective neck-cutting.

In 2016 the HSA provided industry and small-scale producers with guidance on this method, in the form of a Technical Information Poster 'Effective neck-cutting of poultry' which illustrates the anatomical location of the most critical blood vessels, how to reliably sever them and how to assess the quality of a neck cut. The HSA is now in the process of translating this poster into 21 languages including Dutch, Filipino, German, Indonesian, Persian, Swahili (the KSPCA have kindly offered to distribute the posters at markets and slaughterhouses in Kenya) and Turkish. ■



The posters will be available free-of-charge online at www.hsa.org.uk.

HSA collaboration on Defra project

Since February 2014 the HSA has been collaborating with the University of Bristol on a Defra-funded project to investigate the use of a non-penetrating captive-bolt device, as an alternative to manual blunt trauma, for humanely dispatching neonates (lambs, kids and piglets) up to one week old.

The main part of the project is now finished and a report has been submitted to Defra. The device has been found to be effective at killing kids and piglets, using the recommended power-load and the correct target area and position. Some supplementary work, using a higher power-load, will be carried out to ascertain the optimum propulsion required for lambs. ■

Following completion, the aim is to produce accompanying training materials which will be accessible on the HSA website.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

1927 – 90 years ago this year a generous benefactor agreed to pay the travelling expenses of staff over the next five years to enable them to travel to livestock markets to assess them in terms of animal welfare and to make recommendations for improvements. The following year, Miss Dorothy Sidley reported on what work had been done to improve conditions for animals in markets. As a result of her activities, loading banks and pens were constructed at several markets. At one market gangways were provided for pigs and calves and, at another, roofing was added to



Credit: HSA

calf pens. Closed pens had been adopted as opposed to open pens, which prevent ill-treatment of the animals by the drovers. However, improvements were needed in nearly every livestock market in the country. Ramps and gangways were needed to stop the practice of lifting animals by their ears and tail during loading. There was also a need to prevent poultry being offered for sale with their legs tied together. See page 8 for information on the HSA's latest market research which forms the basis of our Spring Appeal. ■

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Training activities



Two training courses have been given by HSA staff to RSPCA Freedom Food Inspectors and Auditors, a veterinary group, and farm staff on the humane killing of pigs and their emergency slaughter when on farm.

Information/training on WATOK for suppliers and processors for Waitrose has also been given. ■

Welfare assessments

Since September 2016, the HSA has provided six animal welfare assessments at slaughterhouses for cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry throughout the UK. ■



Lectures

HSA Technical Director Charlie Mason has recently given lectures on animal welfare to students at Harper Adams University, the Association of Meat Inspectors (AMI) Seminar at Harper Adams University, the Royal Smithfield Festival at the East of England Showground and the Winterbotham Darby Research Open Day at the University of Bristol.

In November 2016, Technical Officer Jade Spence visited Edinburgh to give a presentation on controlled atmosphere stunning and on-farm killing of pigs and poultry at the Pig Veterinary Society and British Veterinary Poultry Association inaugural joint Autumn meeting.

DG Sante Livestock Transport Working Group

In September, Charlie travelled to Brussels for a meeting of the DG Sante Livestock Transport Working Group. DG Sante is planning to produce guides on best practice in livestock transport as part of SANCO/2014/G3/006 Pilot project on best practices for animal transport. To this end, groups have been established covering cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and poultry which are being co-ordinated by Hans Spoolder of Wageningen UR Livestock Research in the Netherlands. The groups comprise stakeholders from different member states and the HSA is taking part in the cattle transport working group.

The meeting in September was for the cattle, horse and poultry groups to be briefed on the objectives, opportunities and limits of the transport guides and to discuss progress of the draft guides. ■

Advice

Since June 2016 the HSA has provided advice on the welfare of different species of fish, poultry and mammals to a variety of individuals (eg students, professional academics, smallholders, consumers) and organisations (veterinarians, retailers, NGOs, consulting organisations, a film company, poultry transporters, farms and slaughterhouses) in the UK, USA, Ireland, the Netherlands, Japan and South Africa. ■



Norfolk & Suffolk Poultry Association



Credit: Blue Moondog

On 26th September 2016, Technical Officer Jade Spence gave a presentation to update small-scale poultry producers and the large-scale industry on the UK legislation covering poultry welfare at the time of killing. Jade discussed the legal requirements for Certificates of Competence, Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (WATOK) licences for slaughtering animals, and the permitted methods of slaughtering poultry in the UK, under the stricter national legislation now implemented in all countries of the UK. ■

Come along and see us!

The HSA is planning to exhibit at agricultural shows in the Spring/Summer of 2017. At the time of going to press, shows confirmed are the National Beef Association 2017 Expo in Warwickshire (18th May), the Royal Welsh Spring Festival (20th and 21st of May) and The Small Holders and Country Show, West Sussex (1st and 2nd July). As more shows are confirmed, we will update the website accordingly. If you're planning on attending one of the shows, then please come and visit the HSA stand. ■

New online resource highlighting HSA training materials developed

A model syllabus on animal welfare at slaughter, which references HSA publications and training materials, has been produced by the HSA. Staff have created a course outline to provide a resource for educators wishing to develop tertiary education modules on the welfare of animals during transport, marketing and slaughter.

Topics and specific subjects relating to these areas have been identified and captured in a table, in which key relevant educational material, developed by the HSA and others, is listed under appropriate headings. Many of these resources are freely available on the HSA website and can be easily found using the hyperlinks provided in the table.



Credit: HSA

This resource, which has been widely promoted to relevant audiences, should be particularly useful for course co-ordinators in veterinary schools and those teaching animal welfare undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. It could also be tailored to meet the specific interests or needs of people working directly with the animals for training or CPD purposes. ■



The new resource can be found at www.hsa.org.uk/courseoutline

On-line guide for disease control

Work on the online guide Killing of Livestock for Disease Control is now nearing completion and should be available to download, free-of-charge, from the HSA website shortly. The guide will offer practical information on the emergency killing of cattle, sheep, goats, deer, pigs and poultry.

It is intended to provide assistance throughout the planning and operation of the emergency killing of livestock during notifiable outbreaks, such as Foot and Mouth Disease and Avian Influenza. The guide is aimed at livestock producers, veterinary surgeons, knackermen and killing personnel, animal welfare inspectors, animal health officers, students and any other people who may be involved in the emergency killing of livestock during an infectious disease outbreak. Topics covered include the logistical and biosecurity issues associated with disease control, practical points for the humane killing of animals in emergency situations, killing methods and the disposal of carcasses.

As part of ongoing development of HSA training materials, the charity is looking into the possibilities of using an interactive multimedia approach for the on-line guides. The aim is to enhance the users' experience of the guides by allowing them to test their knowledge and take part in simulated situations in which their actions directly affect the outcome. ■

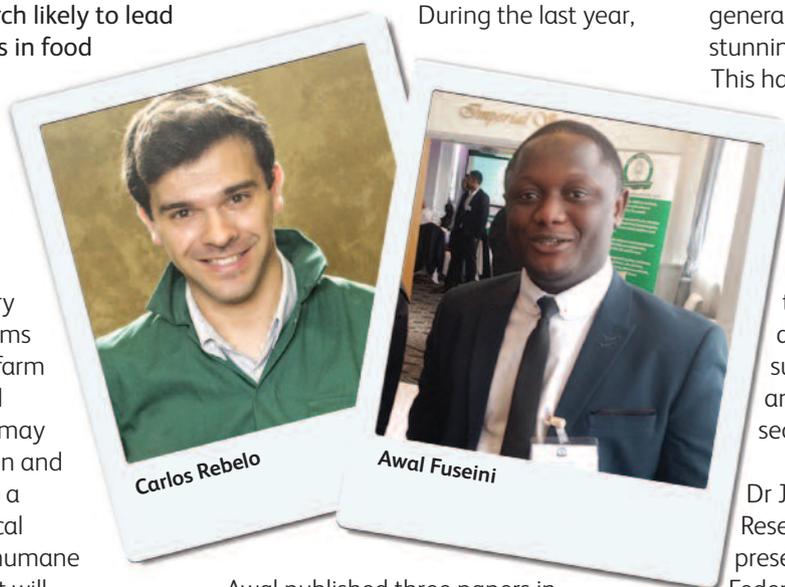
GRANTS AND AWARDS

2015 RTS Winners Carlos Rebelo and Awal Fuseini

In 2015 the HSA awarded Research Training Scholarships to Carlos Rebelo at the Royal Veterinary College and Awal Fuseini at the University of Bristol to carry out high quality scientific research likely to lead to substantial advances in food animal welfare. Carlos and Awal are in their second year of research.

Carlos is working to improve bird welfare by refining the design of dry electrical stunning systems used for small-scale on-farm slaughter of turkeys and waterfowl. His research may inform gaps in legislation and Carlos hopes to develop a constant-current electrical stunner for small-scale humane slaughter of poultry that will appeal to producers, both in terms of bird welfare and meat quality. Awal aims to develop and implement a

new type of humane electrical stunning system for adult cattle (Single Pulse Ultra-high Current, or SPUC), which has the potential to be compliant with Halal slaughter requirement. During the last year,



Awal published three papers in the scientific journals Meat Science (volume 119, pages 132-7; vol. 123: 143-150) and Animal Welfare (vol. 25:

365-376), on Halal meat production, including the acceptability [to Islamic scholars and consumers] of stunning animals during Halal slaughter. In one review, Awal states: 'there is currently no generally approved method of cattle stunning for the EU halal beef market. ... This has led to the slaughter of thousands of cattle each year without stunning'. SPUC technology offers a potential alternative to non-stun slaughter and may also have significant benefits for meat quality, throughput and personnel health and safety. SPUC might also be suitable for non-Halal slaughter and may therefore interest many sectors of the food industry.

Dr Jess Martin, the HSA's first Research Training Scholar in 2011, presented a paper to the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) Animal Welfare Student Scholars at their meeting in Stirling University at the end of January. ■

Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholar 2016

In September last year, the HSA invited applications for a special travel award, its Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarships 2017 and the Humane Slaughter Award 2017. As reported on the front page of this newsletter, the special travel award was awarded to Ellie Wigham for her PhD project "Analysis of the use of CCTV data to monitor and improve slaughter plant welfare in the US – what can we learn from our American friends?"

The winner of the Humane Slaughter Award and the successful applicants for the Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarships will be announced later this year.

In 2016, the HSA awarded a Dorothy Sidley Memorial scholarship to veterinary student Alexandra Bearman at the Royal Veterinary College for her project assessing captive-bolt gun performance and maintenance in UK cattle abattoirs. Although captive-bolt stunners are generally thought to be a humane way of stunning livestock, their performance can be compromised if they are poorly maintained. Alexandra examined the performance of stunners in a number of abattoirs and found that poorly maintained stunners had a reduced performance in terms of the bolt velocity, which could compromise their ability to stun an animal effectively. Alexandra's work should provide an impetus for all those using stunners to carry out regular maintenance of their equipment. ■



Credit: HSA

HOW YOU CAN HELP – SPRING APPEAL

The HSA 2017 Spring Appeal is for funds to assist with the costs of carrying out a robust and structured survey of a sample size of 24 of the 120 markets in England and Wales. The purpose of the survey is to provide an updated snapshot of UK livestock markets and to evaluate the animal welfare provisions currently in place. This includes resources available to the animals (in terms of facilities, equipment, personnel and procedures) and management practises, for example implementation of a specific animal welfare policy.

The survey aims to identify specific features which may impact upon the welfare of the animals in the markets and to compare these findings with those from the last survey in 2005-2007, where the HSA visited 24 markets as part of a Defra project on animal movement.

The information from the survey will be used to disseminate good practice and so improve the welfare of animals in markets in the future. The project is likely to cost in the region of £10,000 to complete. If you would like to contribute, please complete and return the enclosed form, or you can donate online at www.hsa.org.uk. Should funds exceed the amount required for this project, the HSA will apply funds to other projects.

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to “Make a difference for poultry”. Due to your generous support, we were



Credit: HSA

able to translate the technical information poster on the effective neck cutting of poultry into 21 different languages so it can be distributed and used world-wide, particularly to rural areas in parts of the developing world where there are many back yard farm producers and small-holders – see page 4.

Without our members and supporters, the work we've outlined in this newsletter would not have been able to take place. Slaughter is never pleasant, but it can be humane and, with your support, the HSA continues to make significant improvements and a lasting difference. Thank you. ■

HSA gifts

The new range of HSA gifts and cards has proved extremely popular with bags, brollies, pens and pads selling like the proverbial hot cakes. Thank you to everyone who has supported the HSA and its work by purchasing from the gift collection – all the profits from sales go towards enabling the charity to continue its work caring beyond the farm gate. The current gift catalogue is enclosed with this newsletter for those wishing to make first time or additional purchases. ■



The HSA needs you!

Thank you to all our members who have already transitioned across to membership of the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

We cannot automatically transfer members across and so, as a matter of formality, members of the HSA and CJA need to apply to become members of the new HSA CIO.

All our members are highly valued by the charity and, for those who haven't already done so, please can we ask you to complete the enclosed form to apply to transfer your membership to the new CIO. ■



Humane Slaughter Association

The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN

t: 01582 831919 • e: info@hsa.org.uk

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