



**Humane Slaughter
Association**
Newsletter March 2015

Chairman's comment

Welcome to the Spring 2015 Newsletter. Welcome also to Huw Golledge who, since the last newsletter, has joined HSA as Senior Scientific Programme Manager. The number and diversity of activities undertaken by HSA to promote the humane treatment of food animals worldwide during transport, in markets and at slaughter are well reflected in this issue. These include the one-day seminar on the changing role of the Animal Welfare Officer, research training and Dorothy Sidley Memorial scholarships, a project to promote humane slaughter and handling methods in Liberia, research into humane stunning and slaughter of guinea pigs in Peru, the development and use of animal models in training, the provision of welfare advice as well as training to various organizations and a new online guide to humane harvesting of fish amongst other activities. Perhaps most apparent is the international reach of HSA, demonstrated not only by its international projects but also by staff speaking at various conferences and venues around the world, and notably by the HSA International Symposium in Zagreb in July 2015. Of course, all this work would not be possible without your generous support for which we thank you most sincerely.



R.M. Bennett

**Richard Bennett,
Chairman**

Which animals should the HSA be concerned about?

The HSA has traditionally concentrated its efforts on animals farmed for human food consumption, but the charity's objects also allow it to deal with other animals. Part of a recent strategy review examined the focus of the charity's efforts. The HSA has built an impressive reputation by providing expert advice, training and funding research on the welfare of animals farmed for food, beyond the farm gate. Worldwide meat consumption is increasing and the numbers of animals farmed worldwide to meet this demand is enormous; over 1 billion sheep, 1.4 billion cattle and around 20 billion chickens (FAO 2013). The review concluded therefore that, while not excluding other animals, the charity should focus the majority of its efforts on the improvement of transport and slaughter of farmed animals, and to seek opportunities to advance the welfare of these animals in countries where slaughter legislation and standards need improvement.

EC Regulation 1099/2009

The HSA's understanding is that the regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing has been implemented in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but not yet in England following its revocation in May 2014. It is highly unlikely this will now take place before the General Election in May 2015. The situation is that the provisions of the regulations apply but certain areas, such as the licensing of slaughter personnel, remain under the provisions of WASK '95. The Regulation makes changes to the requirements of, and for, animal welfare officers (AWOs). The HSA has received many enquiries about these changes over recent months and, in an effort to provide answers, is running a seminar for AWOs and others at the end of April 2015 – see below.

Animal Welfare Officer Seminar

The HSA is holding a one-day seminar for the meat and livestock industry on "The changing role of the Animal Welfare Officer in the light of EC 1099/2009". Speakers from government, industry, training bodies and others will relate their experiences in meeting the demands of EC Regulation 1099/2009 in each of their working environments. This will be followed by a chaired discussion. Speakers include Steve Wotton (University of Bristol), Clare White (Dunbia), Tony Higginson (Woodhead Bros.) and Rebeca Garcia (Defra)

The seminar is aimed at Animal Welfare Officers, veterinary surgeons, meat inspectors, food business operators, slaughtermen and others associated with animal welfare at slaughter, and will be held on Wednesday 29 April 2015 at the East Midlands Thistle Hotel, Castle Donnington. For further details, please contact the HSA at info@hsa.org.uk or go to www.hsa.org.uk/awo



Research Training Scholarships

Jessica Hopkins, the inaugural HSA Centenary Research Training Scholar, is close to finishing her project on humane mechanical methods for killing chickens. Jess was based at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) in Ayr whilst undertaking the HSA-funded project and she received a number of awards and commendations for her PhD research and presentation skills. Jess will be presenting her research at the HSA International Symposium, Croatia July 2015.

As part of its endeavours to encourage high quality science likely to lead to substantial advances in animal welfare, in 2014 the HSA again offered a research training scholarship (RTS) to enable a promising veterinary or science graduate to undertake a three-year program of research leading to a degree at the doctorate level. Thirteen applications, 63% more than for the inaugural Centenary RTS, were received from countries in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Australasia. The winner of the 2015 Scholarship will be announced in the next few weeks.

Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarships

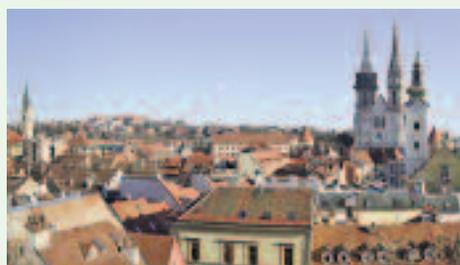
Two HSA Scholars gave presentations at the UFAW Animal Welfare Student Scholars meeting in December 2014, held at Newcastle University.

Thomas Elwes (Royal Veterinary College), presented his project titled "An Investigation into the Causes of Stress in Cattle During Handling and Restraint Before Slaughter Without Stunning".

Nikki Mackie, of the University of Glasgow, presented her project titled "Behavioural Responses of Broiler Chickens During LAPS". This study video-recorded chickens undergoing Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS) to observe welfare-relevant behaviours. The results suggest that LAPS might improve bird welfare at the time of slaughter.



HSA's Nathan Williams (left) with Dorothy Sidley Scholars Nikki Mackie and Thomas Elwes



HSA International Symposium 2015

Plans are now well underway for the HSA International Symposium 2015. The HSA received a good number of abstract submissions and has been able to put together what promises to be a very interesting programme of speakers and posters.

Places are still available for the event, to be held at the Hotel Dubrovnik, Zagreb, Croatia on the 16-17 July 2015.

Speakers include:

- **Prof Yvonne Thaxton** Professor and Director of the Center for Food Animal Wellbeing at the University of Arkansas: From Idea to Reality: The Development of the Low Atmosphere Stunning System;
- **Dr Mara Miele** Reader at the Cardiff School of Planning and Geography: Making slaughter of livestock acceptable to the consumer: how science, technology and religion affect the public debate about slaughtering practices;
- **Mr Tozie Zokufa** Program Manager for Africa at Humane Society International and Chairman of PAAWA: Humane Slaughter: Is Africa there yet? Challenges and Opportunities;
- **Dr Denis Simonin** Animal Welfare Unit at the European Commission: The European Commission's work to improve food animal welfare at slaughter.

The full programme is now available on the HSA website, along with further information about the event and details of how to register to attend. Please visit: www.hsa.org.uk/internationalsymposium



*Delegates at one of the LAWCS training sessions
(photo courtesy LAWCS)*

HSA supports project in Liberia

The HSA has funded a six-month project in Liberia to promote humane methods of slaughter and handling of animals in markets and during transportation. The project, delivered by the Liberia Animal Welfare and Conservation Society (LAWCS) received funding through the HSA's Grants Scheme.

As part of the project, five-day training sessions were delivered to 350 people including slaughtermen, drivers, marketers, farmers, local journalists and the local authorities at the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture.

In addition to the training, a weekly animal welfare education programme was broadcast via local radio stations and LAWCS staff worked alongside official livestock inspectors in the country during inspections of slaughter houses.

Three district committees were also established, consisting of representatives from slaughterhouses, farmers, the drivers' union and marketers to "ensure and enforce the humane treatment of animals in the transportation sector, slaughterhouses and on the farms".



*An example of inhumane transport of animals that the LAWCS training aimed to address
(photo courtesy LAWCS)*

The HSA's Grants Scheme supports essential scientific research and other projects aimed at improving animal welfare during transport, in markets and at slaughter. Applications are welcomed year-round.

Research into humane stunning and slaughter of guinea pigs in Peru

The HSA has supported a research project investigating humane stunning and slaughter methods for guinea pigs in the Andean region. Guinea pigs are an important meat source in the region, and the fourth most important meat source in Peru with over 12 million animals reared per annum. Their suitability for rearing at altitude has seen them promoted as an affordable meat source for impoverished communities at high altitude in other parts of the world.

The study was conducted at the San Marcos University Experimental Station slaughterhouse in collaboration with researchers from the Royal Veterinary College, UK. The project evaluated the use of electrical stunning, spring-powered captive-bolt stunning and CO₂, comparing these methods to the currently-used methods of neck dislocation. The study also considered the practicality and meat quality implications of the different methods.

The project forms the first detailed assessment of the humaneness of stunning and slaughter methods for guinea pigs for human consumption and concluded that spring-powered captive-bolt appeared to be the most humane, effective and practical method of stunning guinea pigs in small-scale subsistence production.



Animal models for training purposes

The HSA has designed a specification for a model chicken and model turkey, for use in the training of novices in performing certain handling and slaughter procedures. Working with models may allow trainees to relax more and learn more effectively, and it may reduce the number of live animals used in teaching.



A prototype HSA model chicken and two other turkey models were first used in November 2014 at the HSA course on poultry welfare at the time of killing held at Plumpton College, East Sussex. Good-practice techniques were demonstrated, and tried by attendees, using the model poultry. The HSA also teaches the techniques for cervical dislocation where it is appropriate, eg in emergencies to prevent birds from suffering.

Animal welfare advice, training and welfare assessment

During 2014 the HSA provided animal welfare advice on poultry, rabbit and fish transport and slaughter to many companies, private individuals and government officials responsible for animal welfare. In addition, assistance was provided to a research project investigating captive-bolt stunning of turkeys.

Four training courses in humane dispatch of livestock were undertaken for BQP, AHVLA Pirbright, Irish Ferries and the Lancashire Pig Discussion Group, two animal welfare lectures were given to students at Harper Adams University, and a firearms familiarization course to trainee RSPCA inspectors.

An animal welfare assessment was undertaken at a hatchery in East Anglia.

Chinese Veterinary Conference

HSA Technical Officer Jade Spence was invited to give a presentation on animal welfare requirements during poultry slaughter at the 5th Chinese Veterinary Conference (CVC) held in Qingdao, China, in October 2014. Approximately 2000 delegates attended the event and included a large number of China's veterinarians, scientists, students, NGOs, industry representatives and equipment manufacturers, and the Chinese media.



On the final day of the conference, the HSA participated in a discussion group on animal welfare and food safety with members of the Chinese Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), NGOs and other stakeholders. This was a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and the HSA hopes to continue contact with these organisations.

The HSA thanks the organisers of the CVC, the CVMA, the China Animal Disease Control Center, the Shandong Bureau of Animal Husbandry, Animals Asia for kindly supporting HSA travel costs, and the University of Edinburgh for inviting the HSA to speak at this event.

Welcome

Dr Huw Golledge joined the HSA staff in September 2014. Huw has a background in neuroscience and before his appointment was a Senior Research Associate at Newcastle University working on refining methods used to euthanase laboratory animals. Huw's position is as Senior Scientific Programme Manager and he is helping to develop the HSA's research and educational activities as well as working on the general management of the charity.

Humane Endings

HSA Technical Officer Jade Spence presented a poster entitled "Future priorities for farmed fish welfare" at the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) "Humane Endings" conference, held in November 2014 in Chicago. The conference was attended by approximately 175 delegates from the USA, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and New Zealand, and included government personnel responsible for animal welfare and destruction, scientists, NGOs, industry representatives and equipment manufacturers. Jade's poster provided a guide to the principles and practice of humanely handling, stunning and killing farmed finfish for slaughter for human consumption. The HSA hopes to maintain contact with a number of American fish biologists and fish veterinarians who expressed interest in the topic.



The HSA's Jade Spence with her poster on farmed fish welfare at the AVMA conference in Chicago

Following the conclusion of the conference, Jade and the HSA's Senior Scientific Programme Manager, Huw Golledge, were invited to join the 'Harmonization Workshop'. This aimed to review the differences between international guidelines for humanely ending the lives of animals when necessary and what might be done to produce more consistent recommendations.

Online Guides translated into Spanish

In an effort to increase the international reach of HSA publications, the online guide series has been translated into South American Spanish. The translated versions of the online guides were published on the HSA website towards the end of 2014 and will be promoted through South American contacts.



New Online Guide to Humane Harvesting of Fish

The HSA has also produced a new online guide to Humane Harvesting of Fish. This guide is a comprehensive and practical guide to the humane handling and stunning of farmed fish for commercial producers. It primarily covers salmon and trout and a further guide addressing the humane handling and stunning of additional species is in the pipeline.



Just before going to press we were saddened to hear of the death of Professor A M 'Mac' Johnston, vice-president, veterinary advisor and supporter of the HSA for many years.



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photo courtesy Bluenoodog Pictures