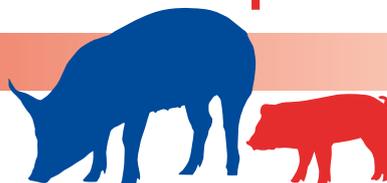


Abattoir Update

December 2015 – Issue No. 8



AHDB Pork
would like to
wish everyone a very
Merry Christmas
and a prosperous
New Year

Health and safety in abattoirs

John Nevitt, group health and safety manager for Tulip, gives advice on reducing slips and trips in abattoirs this Christmas.

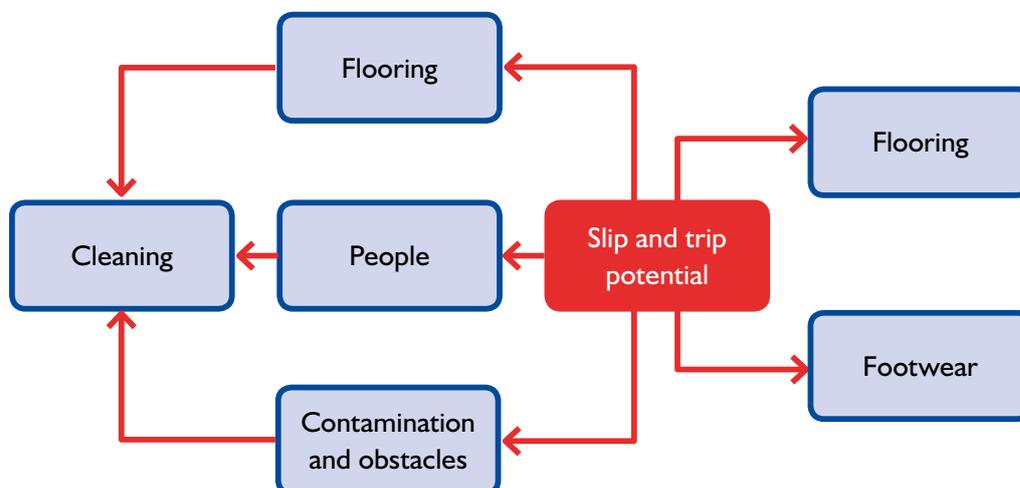
An occupational hazard of working in abattoirs, butchery and meat processing plants is the risk of slipping or tripping due to the amount of waste hitting the floor and the constant use of water during cleaning.

However, in the run up to, and over the Christmas period, the risk generally increases due to surges in production to meet seasonal demands.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance document, Recipe for Safety [HSG252], provides clear advice on carrying out a slip and trip risk assessment and recommends that the factors below should be considered:

The draft HSE document, Common Strategy 2015-20, makes additional recommendations for reducing potential slips and trips. In addition to a thorough risk assessment, the Common Strategy suggests:

- Focus on eliminating or reducing slips and trips by considering floor, walkway, stair and gantry design
- Employee engagement; assisting in identifying areas of risk, participation in safety campaigns and engagement in footwear trials.



Top tips to reduce slips and trips ✓

1. Previous incidents

It's important to plot all slip and trip incidents on a site drawing as accurately as possible. This will assist in identifying both existing and emerging risk areas and enable a focused approach to tackle the risk.

2. Footwear

There is a direct correlation between the number of slips and trips and the material used to construct the floor, the footwear material, and the nature of any contamination likely to be present.

For this reason, make sure you discuss these three factors with your footwear supplier to ensure that your employees are wearing the most appropriate anti-slip footwear possible.

3. Chequer plating

Despite being used in the sector for a long period of time, stainless steel chequer plating offers little or no slip resistance.

For this reason, its use on a walkway, step or gantry should be avoided wherever possible, unless it is acid etched, which will help to improve resistance.

In instances where chequer plating cannot be removed, consider overlaying it with a more suitable material which provides a better surface roughness.

4. Steps and changes in floor level

All steps and changes in floor level should be clearly highlighted. Fitting bright coloured nose treads on steps, landings, etc should help employees using these areas and assist safe movement of older workers around the site.

5. Cleaning

During operational cleaning it is common to see 'squeegees' being used to drag debris from one area of the floor to another before it is cleaned up. Dragging debris in this way tends to leave a grease film behind and may actually increase the risk of slips.

For this reason, rather than using a 'squeegee', it is recommended that a spade or shovel should be used to pick up the debris to lessen the risk.

There have also been some successful trials that have applied degreaser, using a watering can, after the debris has been moved, without any impact on nearby activities.

6. New floors

When planning the design of a new floor, the nature and viscosity of any potential contaminate should be considered. This will help determine a suitable surface roughness.

HSE Information Sheet – Food Sheet No 22 provides some general guidance on this subject:

Table 1 Minimum levels of Rtm roughness required to allow satisfactory CoF values

Contaminant viscosity (cPs)	Workplace analogue	Minimum Rtm floor roughness
<1	Clean Water	20µm
1-5	Milk	45µm
5-30	Stock	60µm
30-50	Olive Oil	70µm
>50	Margarine	>70µm

7. Risk assessment

An area often overlooked in the slip assessment is the actual source of the contamination. This is critical as controls can frequently be introduced to minimise or mitigate the contaminate coming into contact with the floor in the first instance.

8. Hazard spotting

Simple exercises conducted as part of a 'near miss programme' or 'proactive inspections' specifically looking at potential slip and trip risks, the efficacy of the 'clean as you go' policy and speed of reaction to maintenance issues, such as leaks, can equally play an important role in reducing the risk.

Health and Safety Guidance Notes, specifically for the meat industry, have been developed by the British Meat Processing Association (BMPA) in conjunction with the HSE.

To download a copy of the guidance please [click here](#).

Introducing the Pig Health and Welfare Council Food Safety subgroup

What does the Pig Health and Welfare Council do?

Since its inception in 2003, the Pig Health and Welfare Council (PHWC) has continued to collaborate to bring benefit to the British pig industry.

In 2014, the PHWC was restructured and four specific subgroups established, to focus more effectively on key strategic priorities:

1. Enhancing pig meat food safety
2. Improving preparedness for exotic and emerging diseases
3. Enhancing pig welfare
4. Reducing antimicrobial use in pig meat production



What is the PHWC food safety subgroup?

The food safety subgroup forms part of the wider PHWC and aims to support the whole UK pig meat supply chain in the delivery of safe and traceable pig meat.



Who makes up the PHWC food safety subgroup?

The food safety subgroup is made up of technical representatives from the following organisations: APHA, Agricultural Industries Confederation, Assured Food Standards, AHDB Pork, British Meat Processors Association, British Retail Consortium, Defra,

Food Standards Agency, National Pig Association, Pig Veterinary Society, Quality Meat Scotland, Ulster Pork and Bacon Forum and pig meat processors.

What are the objectives of the PHWC food safety subgroup?

- Focus on zoonoses identified by industry, current research and survey findings to identify the most relevant biological hazards to public health
- Facilitate and promote the implementation of a risk management plan which drives the reduction of risks to consumers from significant hazards of food safety and public health concern in UK pig meat products (eg Salmonella) by the following activities:
 - Evaluate, coordinate and promote new knowledge and effective protocols for reducing food safety and public health risks from zoonoses of pigs
 - Promote the open exchange and timely dissemination of information on the management of zoonotic risks
 - Promote an integrated whole chain approach to improving pig meat safety with all stakeholders, allied support industries, retailers, foodservice and Government
 - Provide expert support to the communications teams in respect of pig meat safety
- Review progress in reducing food safety risks and changes in the prevalence of zoonotic or indicator organisms at key cost effective stages, such as on pig carcasses in abattoirs
- Support development and implementation of a National Control Programme, if required by statute
- Support the implementation, and revision, of meat hygiene controls in regulation 854/2004 that require the collection and reporting of

Food Business Operators (FBOs) testing against Salmonella criterion, and an action plan, including strict supervision of its outcome, for FBOs who regularly fail to comply with the Salmonella criterion limits in regulation 2073/2005 as amended

- Provide expert evidence to the competent authority when required.

Introducing Jane Downes



Jane Downes, Pig Health and Welfare Council Food Safety Group chairman

Jane Downes is an independent vet consultant with extensive knowledge of the regulatory framework for the hygiene of food stuffs and the zoonotic hazards and risk management structures required to minimise the risk to the consumer from meat.

Her past roles include eight years as the veterinary director of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Meat Hygiene Service, and working for retailers as a key member of the FSA Joint Working Group to reduce food borne pathogens in the poultry sector. This plethora of knowledge is put to good use as Jane chairs the Pig Health and Welfare Council Food Safety Group (PHWC FS group), which reports to ex Defra Chief Veterinary Officer, Jim Scudamore.

Jane lives in York with her husband and enjoys spending time outdoors, especially golfing, skiing and walking.

The season of Good Will (Hunting)?

Although you may think you have nothing to hide, it's not only elves that see Christmas as an opportunity for mischief... Seasonal peaks often involve recruiting additional cover for busy periods. And unfortunately, there is no guaranteed way of knowing if these people, or their friends, have ulterior motives.

While many of the big abattoirs have cameras in the lairage and stun/slaughter areas to monitor animal welfare; staff undoubtedly behave differently when someone else is physically present.

Under Regulation 1099/2009 there is a compulsory requirement for all staff involved in animal handling to hold a certificate of competence. However, it's been a long and slow process to set the wheels in motion in England, due to delays in introducing Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing in England (WATOK).

It's more important than ever for individual Food Business Operators (FBOs) to ensure that good practice is enforced at all times. They should carry out careful monitoring and reviews of legitimate handling aids, such as electric goads for adult animals, to ensure they are

never misused. Unfortunately, if people have access to legitimate tools for moving animals the only way around this is to invest more time monitoring staff activity and ensure that anyone dealing with live animals is compulsory welfare trained.

Remember, the Animal Aid exposé of poor handling practice in UK abattoirs was based on footage from their undercover cameras and in some cases these were positioned next to the site's own cameras. However, no one had ever checked the footage.

With farms being targeted around the clock by thieves and welfarists who are keen to prove some kind of mistreatment, be that with real or staged incidences, abattoirs need to take steps to prevent this happening to them, particularly if their suppliers have been targeted.

The majority of abattoirs have basic site security with some kind of perimeter fence and a signing-in system for visitors. Therefore, in the first instance it's important to make sure that existing measures are implemented consistently.

Always request, and be prepared to challenge visitor ID, and not just when an auditor arrives. Also, enforce a 'no

phones' and 'no recording device' policy to prevent unauthorised footage leaving your site and ensure you have a robust system in place for recruiting reputable temporary staff.

The next steps would be to install CCTV cameras, including motion activated and infra-red beamed barriers in high risk areas. These can be linked to office and smart phones, should you have any unexpected visitors out of hours. Just don't frighten Santa away!



Undercover auditor

Dressed for business?

Foreign body control is typically a HACCP pre-requisite. However, while many site policies reference elements such as hair covering, nail length and make-up use, they're not always consistently enforced.

This is frequently because of sensitivities where (often) male management don't wish to appear to be passing any sort of judgement on (female) appearance. The problem is not helped by sometimes vague site policies open to very subjective interpretation.

From experience, one person's idea of 'minimal' make up can be very different from the next. Third party audit/inspection teams often enforce a 'no make-up' requirement on their inspection staff. As

a result they may be rather more harsh about assessing the foreign body risk from wearing mascara, powder eye shadows and foundations than an abattoir QA team (after all, if auditors have to go through life completely un-gilded and unglamorous we tend rather bitterly to feel that everybody else should!).

However, perhaps it should be everyone's New Year resolution to look at the (undoubtedly sound) written policy that is probably already in place and ensure it's consistently enforced for staff and visitors to guarantee:

- **Complete hair/beard covering (no hair nets worn at a 'jaunty' but ineffective angle)**
- **Short, unvarnished nails (or gloves to be worn)**

- **'Minimal' really does mean that in make-up terms.**

Well-placed mirrors in changing areas allow everyone to check elements like complete hair coverage (which can be surprisingly tricky to achieve) and to make sure that the make-up is less 'Vogue' and more 'Farmers Weekly'!





DR Congo: meat is generally sold defrosted on the day



Meeting with importers

AHDB Pork heads to Africa

By Jean Pierre Garnier

I recently visited Central Africa, where I led a group of meat exporters, to understand the scale of the African market. It is now very important to British pig meat as it's the second main export region outside Europe, after Asia. The tour certainly wasn't for the faint-hearted. This was the first ever commercial British mission to take place in Kinshasa, the 12-million metropolis of Central Africa. Visas, immigration procedures and complex logistics only added to the overall difficulty.

However, British exporters responded with enthusiasm and we fielded a 13-strong team representing the main pork and beef exporters. The direct contacts that were made and the relationships we built with importers, as well as understanding their needs, made the trip very worthwhile.

The visit confirmed the current meat price deflation in these low value, price-driven markets, which is affecting the poultry sector so badly, with chicken leg quarters quoted as low as US\$700 per tonne (yes, this means, 46p/kg!), nearly half the price paid in 2014. International offal prices are also markedly down,

however, international pork prices are somewhat firmer.

The surprise came from the limited range brought by many importers in response to local demand. Riblets, pig tails and trotters are strong favourites. However, many other cheap items are simply not sold.

Evidently, the fall in petrol prices, metal and primary commodities is affecting the local economies, some of which are having to retrench. However, there are some exceptions such as Côte d'Ivoire, which has a wider, mainly agricultural economic base and the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), whose economy grew by 9.4% in 2014 and is poised to increase by 6.7% this year, again on the basis of a wider variety of raw material exports.

The RDC is a sleepy giant in Africa; with a young population of around 80 million and 2.3 million square km, it has an extraordinary economic and agricultural potential (so has Angola in smaller measure) who only needs political stability to flourish. However, the large population of the region of Bas Congo,

that includes Kinshasa, will still rely on meat imports for a long time.

In short, we must ensure that we have access to maximum markets in order to optimise the sales for all pork commodities and build on relationships with importers. We have the chance to have entrepreneurial exporters and traders in the UK and we will not leave stones unturned or markets unexplored.

Update to The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015

After several delays, the new Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) (WOTOK) Regulations 2015 have come into force. The SI can be found here.

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