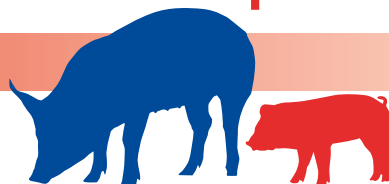


Abattoir Update

July 2016 – Issue No. 10



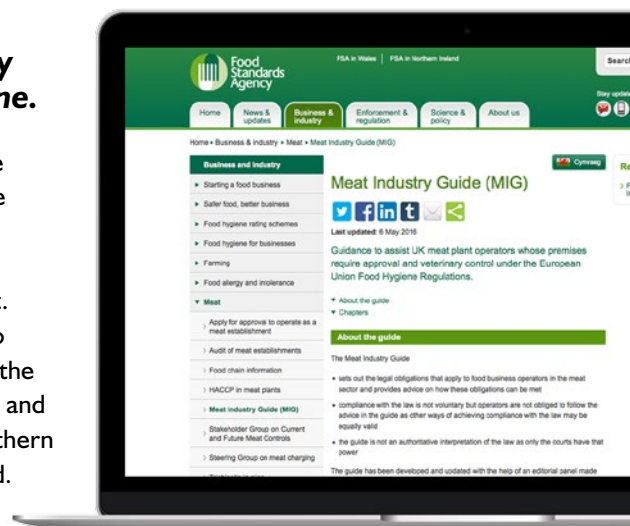
Revised meat industry guide available online

The guide to food hygiene and other regulations for the UK meat industry, more commonly known as the 'Meat Industry Guide' or 'MIG', has been updated and is now available online.

Over several months, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and industry representatives reviewed the content of the guide and worked on the design to give it a fresh new look. It has also been restructured into 20 chapters, which makes it easier to navigate and, within each section, identifies the legal requirements, useful tips and the good practice principles.

For those not in the know, the guide contains legislation and best practice protocols for policy makers and businesses involved in the slaughter, cutting and processing of fresh meat. It is particularly useful for those who are subject to veterinary control by the FSA, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland and Food Standards Scotland.

Click here to access the guide.



Software solution available to improve temperature and alarm management

A new, easy-to-use, cloud-based platform is available to help ensure all of your refrigeration equipment remains 100 per cent compliant with food safety standards at all times.

To find out more, **click here** (opens in new window)



Salmonella findings to be tested for antimicrobial resistance

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is required to test Salmonella from pig carcase swabs taken at the abattoir for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

Processors have been asked to report any positive samples to the VMD and send isolates through to the Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA) labs for testing and serotyping until 31 December 2020.

All results will be anonymised and reported to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in an aggregated 'UK' format.

Guidance for food business operators and private laboratories on the collection and processing of samples can be found **here**.

If anyone has any further questions, please send them to: **c.harris@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk**

Ultra High Frequency pig tag pilot project update

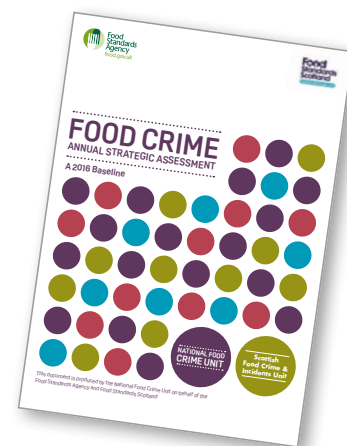
A pilot project to test the practicalities of using ultra-high frequency (UHF) tags on farm is making good progress and early results are looking promising.

The trial has been evaluating the ease of tagging, the retention rate and reading of data at different stages. It has also tested the practicalities of integrating unique ID into existing management systems on-farm and at the abattoir.

To date, approximately 2,400 JSR pigs have been tagged as part of the project. These have been destined for the Morrison's abattoir. Notably, a retention rate of >99% has been achieved, as long as ear tags are placed in the ear in the correct way (ie the female part of the tag on the inside of the ear) and piglets are tagged shortly after birth.

Most importantly, all of the tags have been readable post-processing at Morrison's and it has also been possible to associate the pig ID with individual slaughter data.

The initial results are really encouraging. The next phase of the trial will involve the assessment of the automatic integration of data at the abattoir and feedback loops to the farm management system.



Assessment of food crime in the UK

Earlier this year, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) published the 'Food Crime Annual Strategic Assessment' (FCASA), the first assessment of food crime in the UK.

Carried out by the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) on behalf of the FSA and Food Standards Scotland, the assessment examines the scale and nature of the food crime threat to the UK's £200 billion food and drink industry, with the view of helping inform the NFCU's priorities over the next year.

The assessment recognises that opportunities for dishonesty exist at various stages of the red meat supply chain. These may manifest themselves in single large-scale issues or smaller and more numerous incidents.

Based on reporting received over a 12-month period, misdescription and diversion of red meat are areas of considerable concern. Livestock theft, illegal slaughter and meat species substitution are other issues of note.

The full assessment is available to [read here](#).

New trial to review the impacts of heavier carcasses on boar taint



With the help of a major processor, AHDB Pork is looking at the impact of heavier carcass weights on boar taint.

The trial will see a total of 100 samples being taken from carcasses weighing 85kg to 110kg, in 5kg weight bands.

Sampling is due to commence this month. Once collected

and frozen, the 100 samples will be packed in dry ice and sent to the Department of Animal Biosciences at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada.

Chemical analysis for androstenone and skatole levels will be measured. It is envisaged the full results from the trial will be shared in the autumn abattoir newsletter.



Undercover auditor: Pig tails

Tail biting is undoubtedly a difficult behaviour to manage and its occurrence is not fully understood. However, the consequences are certainly known to be unpleasant for both pigs and producers.

The legal starting point is that tail docking must not be routine and that the need to dock must be evidence based and only implemented where all other management control options have been explored (Council Directive 2008/120/EC).

Environmental enrichment is a key management option available to producers. The provision of environmental enrichment was included in the same directive requiring that 'pigs have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities'.

Now take a quick look in the lairage and count the pigs with entire tails. The likelihood is that they're in the minority. It's still the case that most pigs are docked. However, increasingly the question is being asked whether this is at odds with the legal position.

To address concerns, Commission Recommendation (EU) 2016/336

was issued in March this year.

This clearly outlines best practice expectations in terms of the need to formally risk assess the need to tail dock and what can truly be classed as 'optimal' enrichment (as opposed to 'sub-optimal' or 'of marginal interest'). Companies can help their supply chains by ensuring the content of the recommendation is communicated and clarified.

This will undoubtedly help, as the detail of the recommendation inevitably starts to filter into audit and inspection criteria... and of course the Chinese market loves a long tail!



Meet the team: Kim Matthews



Kim Matthews, head of animal breeding and product quality at AHDB.

Where did you study?

I studied agriculture at the University of Reading and always enjoyed the animal science aspect of my course. For this reason, I chose to take it as my major option in the third year.

After graduating I enjoyed a six month placement in India, attached to a small rural hospital which ran an agricultural programme. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the farmers to gather information on how they were coping with water shortages.

What is your career history?

I joined the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) in 1992 in the 'meat quality unit' and remained with the organisation as it transitioned to the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB).

Over most of that time, I've worked on carcase and meat quality, including boar taint and carcase classification in pigs. As head of animal breeding and product quality, I've got the responsibility for the research and development programme on meat quality and animal breeding for beef cattle and sheep.

What do you do in your spare time?

I'm active in our local church and in my spare time I play the flute in a local wind band. I also enjoy gardening (under my wife's supervision!), travelling and walking in the Great British countryside.

AHDB Pork contact

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