

Our ref:

Your ref:

When telephoning please ask for:



To: Eric Poudelet, Director SANCO.E (Safety of the food chain)
Cc: Linda McAvan MEP
Carmen Garau, Head of Unit SANCO E.5 (Enforcement)
Dr. Serge Losch, President, EWFC
Steve McGrath, Chief Executive, Meat Hygiene Service UK
Tim Smith, Chief Executive, Food Standards Agency, UK
Lord Rooker, Chair, Food Standards Agency, UK

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Dear Mr Poudelet,

UNISON is the largest trade union in the Public Sector in the United Kingdom, representing 1.4 million members. We also represent 80% of employees of the Meat Hygiene Service, the Government agency whose responsibilities include the inspection of all meat produced in Great Britain.

We read with interest the report of the Food and Veterinary Office (DG(SANCO)/ 2009-8225 - MR – FINAL) into Official Controls Related to the Safety of Food of Animal Origin in the UK.

The concerns contained in the report correspond with concerns which UNISON has raised with the Meat Hygiene Service over the last five years. Principally, our members tell us that the 'clean livestock' policy and HACCP simply do not work in the meat production industry. Faecal contamination of carcasses is the norm, rather than the exception.

More recently, the number of Official Auxiliaries (or Meat Hygiene Inspectors as they are called in Britain) has been repeatedly reduced to such a level that in many plants there is clear evidence that the Official Controls Related to the Safety of Food of Animal Origin are not being enforced, and the 'health mark' is applied to carcasses without them being properly inspected.

As evidence for this, we attach a survey of UNISON members (published 2010) demonstrating the views of Official Veterinarians and Official Auxiliaries. Further, we point to the significantly higher incidence of Tuberculosis amongst cattle herds than is identified amongst slaughtered cattle. The most likely explanation for this is that inspection is not being done to a high enough standard.

It gives UNISON deep concern to bring these facts to your attention, as it is our members who are not able to do their jobs properly. However we believe that Official Auxiliaries and Official Veterinarians are placed in an invidious



position by the Meat Hygiene Service and Food Standards Agency which are determined to cut costs irrespective of the impact on public health.

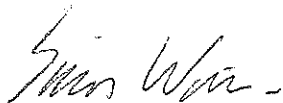
For this reason UNISON believes that the Meat Hygiene Service is a "Failing Service".

We have identified a number of slaughterhouses where we believe the high speed of production and the low number of Meat Hygiene Inspectors give concern as to whether the Official Controls can be properly applied.

Plant	Location	Country	Ref. No.
Dawn Cardington	Bedfordshire	England	5106
Tulip Foods	Cheshire	England	4085
Dawn Carnaby	East Yorkshire	England	2100
Dunbia Preston	Lancashire	England	4071
Dunbia Sawley	Lancashire	England	4486
G Woods and Sons	Nottinghamshire	England	4414
Euro Quality Lambs	Shropshire	England	4451
Lambert, J H	Suffolk	England	5214
Scotbeef	Stirling	Scotland	1560
Welsh Country Foods	Anglesey	Wales	7017
Dunbia Llanybydder	Carmarthenshire	Wales	7015
St Merryn Meat	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales	7176
Randell Parker Foods	Powys	Wales	7135

We would welcome your comments on this, and would be happy to contribute in any way we can to the raising of standards in the meat production industry.

Yours sincerely,



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