

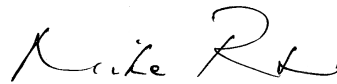


**Humane Slaughter
Association
*Newsletter March 2012***

Chairman's comment

Welcome to the 2012 Spring Newsletter. The last year has been a very busy one for the HSA: in addition to all the regular work, the HSA undertook a number of successful activities to mark its Centenary, including a very well-received symposium which attracted a great deal of international interest, and the awarding of its first research scholarship. Work has now begun on this, researching humane slaughter methods for small-scale poultry production – an important area for welfare development. The demand for HSA education, training and advisory services continues to grow and will continue to be a vital element in the HSA's work to improve welfare standards worldwide. Your interest and support in this task, as we embark on our second 100 years, is sincerely appreciated.

I would like to offer my condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of John Ace-Hopkins, winner of the HSA's 2011 Significant Advances Award, whose death is a sad loss to us all.



Mike Radford, Chairman



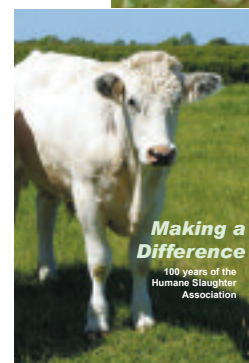
HSA's Centenary year

2011 was a notable year for the HSA as the 17 January was the 100th anniversary of its foundation. The Centenary was celebrated during the year by several activities: the reception at the House of Lords on the evening of 16 June 2011; the international symposium on 'Recent Advances in the Welfare of Livestock at Slaughter', Portsmouth, 30 June & 1 July 2011; the publication of 'Making a Difference: 100 years of the Humane Slaughter Association'; and the award of the first HSA Research Training Scholarship (to Jessica Hopkins of the Scottish Agricultural College for investigations into the development of a simple, reliable, portable and humane method for killing poultry). These activities involved many people and we are very grateful to everyone for their support. Through the HSA's history there have been many advances but there is no doubt that much remains to be done.



Centenary celebrations at the House of Lords hosted by Lord Plumb (top) and at the International Symposium: delegates enjoy the reception on board HMS Warrior; presentation by Dr Bert Lambooj; presentation by Professor Temple Grandin

There are still copies available of the HSA book 'Making a Difference: 100 years of the Humane Slaughter Association' - a great gift for anyone who wants to know 'what it's all about'



HSA Award for significant advances in humane slaughter

In 2010 the HSA launched an award to recognise individuals or organisations who have made significant scientific, technical or other advances that have led to improvements in the humane slaughter of livestock. The winners of the 2011 award were Dr Jeff Lines and Mr John Ace-Hopkins for their work leading to advances in electrical stun-killing systems for farmed fish. We were very sad to hear of the death of John Ace-Hopkins in November and are pleased to acknowledge again our great respect for him and for his pioneering work in developing a humane slaughter system for farmed fish.

Nominations have been received for the 2012 award and we will be making an announcement about this in due course.



The HSA was very sorry to hear of the death of John Ace-Hopkins, winner of the 2011 Significant Advances Award for his work on humane slaughter of farmed fish, and is proposing to make future awards in his name

Advice, education and training

The HSA responds to many calls from the industry and public about aspects of animal welfare at slaughter. The HSA technical team also makes advisory visits to processors. At the British Goose Producers' Annual Farm Walk in October, Jade Spence advised farmers of the changes in legislation that will come into effect in 2013, and potential ways to meet the new requirements when humanely killing poultry. Recent education and training activities have included lectures to MSc animal welfare students at Edinburgh University and Harper Adams Agricultural College; to trainee livestock auctioneers attending a foundation course at Harper Adams; to meat inspectors at their annual seminar in Nottingham; and to members of the Norfolk and Suffolk Poultry Association.

Since the summer of 2011, the HSA's technical team has again been in high demand to provide training in various aspects of its work. The Technical Director, Charles Mason, has delivered six humane dispatch courses to British Pig Executive (BPEX) producer groups in the north of England and the Midlands, with two more planned for the southern region in the spring of 2012. Animal welfare training has been delivered to 150 Official Veterinarians (OVs) employed by Eville and Jones, the largest supplier of veterinary staff to the Food Standards Agency (FSA), and the lairage/slaughter staff of two primary processors in Lincolnshire and Somerset. Technical Officer, Jade Spence, has run poultry slaughter training courses for smallholders in Sussex and Somerset, and provided two days of training in animal welfare at the time of killing for stockmen and slaughterhouse personnel at a research facility in Scotland. In October Jade provided refresher training for AHVLA

Veterinary Officers (VOs) who are responsible for monitoring the welfare of poultry on-farm when they are killed ready for sale for consumption over the Christmas period. Defra invited Jade to give a presentation in October to government officials

Many of the HSA training and educational activities include both classroom and practical instruction. A free brochure on HSA education and training is available from the HSA office

from Croatia as part of the European Commission TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) instrument which supports partner countries within the context of implementing EU legislation. The study visit focused on humane killing of poultry as a disease control strategy and Jade spoke specifically about killing on-farm using electricity. In addition to these, the whole technical team was involved in delivering a practical captive-bolt training course for sheep farmers at a veterinary practice in Warwickshire.



HSA-supported research into humane slaughter methods for small-scale poultry production

In 2011 the HSA invited applications for its first PhD Research Training Scholarship. The idea of this is to support research into advances in humane slaughter and to help build and maintain research expertise in this important area. The winner, as we announced in the 2011 Annual Report, was Jessica Hopkins, for her project to develop a simple, portable, low cost method for humane slaughter of poultry. We are pleased to announce that Jessica started this work in September. The research is being carried out at the Scottish Agricultural College under the supervision of Dr Victoria Sandilands, Dr Dorothy McKeegan of the University of Glasgow and Julian Sparrey of Livetec Systems Limited, an agricultural engineering consultancy. Currently many birds are killed by neck dislocation but there are concerns that this may not cause immediate loss of consciousness. There is a pressing need for a better understanding of what is needed to reliably cause an immediate loss of consciousness in birds and for development of an inexpensive method that can be applied wherever access to more high-tech methods may be limited. We wish Jessica and her colleagues every success with this project.

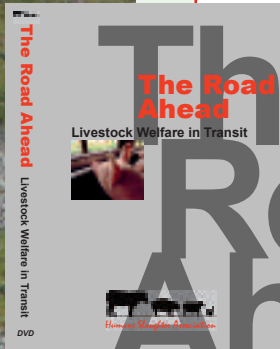
Workshop on developments in automated electrical stunning systems for poultry

On 27 October at Mary Sumner House in London, the HSA held a workshop on developments in automated electrical stunning systems for poultry. Although effective gas systems may have welfare advantages over typical electrical waterbath systems – because they do not require birds to be shackled and inverted – electrical systems are likely to continue to have a role in the foreseeable future. The aim of this workshop was to discuss recent research into electrical stunning systems to help identify where further work is needed in order for refinements to be applied in practice. It was attended by 40 participants including industry representatives, scientists, and veterinarians involved in aspects of the subject.

There were three sessions – chaired by Stephen Lister of Crowshall Veterinary Services, Jade Spence of the HSA and Steve Wotton of the University of Bristol. In the first, Jeff Lines (Silsoe Livestock Systems Ltd) reported work on refinements and improvements to the shackle line, including progress in the development of compliant shackles (to avoid causing pain to the legs) and breast support systems (to help support the weight of the inverted birds); Asif Muhammad Rao (Euro Quality Lambs Ltd) discussed the importance of preventing pre-stun shocks and Paul Berry (Paul Berry Technical Ltd) described details of design and operation that are key to minimising adverse welfare effects. The second session addressed present knowledge about electrical parameters for reliably stunning birds. Paul Berry reviewed the diversity in currents and waveforms presently in use. Simone Prinz (Marel Stork Food Systems) discussed what parameters are acceptable for welfare and Rebeca Garcia of Defra spoke on the potential for developing guidelines for industry. In the final session information was presented on novel systems for automated electrical stunning. Jeff Lines, Willem Heemskirk of Meyn, Peter van Rijsbergen of Topkip and Vincent Hindle of Wageningen University each spoke on aspects of the development of head-only and head-to-cloaca stunning systems.

This was a valuable review of current efforts for improved electrical systems in Europe which indicated various opportunities for progress in poultry welfare. We are grateful to the chairs, speakers and all the participants.





HSA Publications

The humane slaughter of livestock depends on the knowledge and skill of those who undertake the tasks involved – handling, transport and the processes of stunning and killing. Through its publications, the HSA provides clear, practical information about what needs to be done, how and why. To meet a demand for material to be produced in DVD format, the HSA's training publication 'The Road Ahead – Livestock Welfare in Transit' has been published as a DVD this year. As information is increasingly being distributed around the world in electronic forms, we are exploring making more of the HSA's publications available via the website so that they can be accessed widely. Information about the HSA's publications is provided at: <http://www.hsa.org.uk/Publications.htm>.

Market posters

Two years ago the HSA produced a series of well-received instructional posters designed to encourage best practice in the use of slaughter equipment, for display at appropriate processing points in abattoirs. We are now preparing a series for use in markets. These will present best practice handling in a range of market operations eg unloading, raceways, and the sale ring, and for a range of species. It is planned also to include lifting of calves and lambs. The posters are being developed in consultation with the market industry.

Support towards the cost of the posters is the subject of this Spring's Appeal. Your help will be most appreciated.



Dorothy Sidley Scholarships

Each year the HSA offers these scholarships, named in honour of one of the HSA's great champions, Dorothy Sidley, to enable students to undertake projects in fields relevant to the charity's objectives and to develop their interests and expertise in this field.

The winning scholar of 2011 is Eduardo Santurtun Oliveros at the University of Queensland, Australia, for his project into the effects of the motions of sea transport on sheep. Earlier in 2011 the HSA had awarded a second Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarship to Bethan Jones of the University of Bristol. Unfortunately, due to conflicting contractual requirements, Bethan had to withdraw her acceptance of the HSA award.

The first Dorothy Sidley Award (which was modelled on the UFAW Vacation Scholarship scheme) was made in 1986 to Gillian Weyman for a study of cattle loading and unloading procedures. In the 25 years since then, about 40 students have received the award. In addition to supporting research into important areas, the scheme provides an opportunity for promising students to develop their interests in animal welfare in the HSA's sphere of interests and it can also help as a first step towards a career in the animal welfare field.

One early recipient of the Dorothy Sidley award was the then Bristol University veterinary student and now Professor of Animal Welfare at Lincoln University, Daniel Mills (for his 1988 study comparing stress in deer shot on-farm versus in abattoir slaughter). The winner of the 2004 Award was Jade Spence who now works for the HSA.



HSA Technical Director Charles Mason with Technical Officers Heather Barker (left) and Jade Spence, at last year's Pig and Poultry Fair

Upcoming events

Pig & Poultry Fair 2012

The HSA will be participating in the Pig and Poultry Fair 2012 to be held at the Royal Agricultural Society of England's Stoneleigh Park on 15 and 16 May 2012.

NSA Sheep Event

We will also be attending the NSA Sheep Event at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern on Wednesday 4 July 2012.

If you plan to attend either or both of these events, please do come along to the HSA stand and meet the team. We look forward to seeing you.

Staff News

Technical Officer Heather Barker left the HSA in December 2011 before emigrating to Australia in January 2012. We are most grateful to Heather for all her work while at the HSA, which included organising the very successful HSA Centenary International Symposium. We wish her the very best for the future.



Humane Slaughter Association

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