

ANGUS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL & LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28 AUGUST 2003

AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

ABSTRACT

This report advises the Committee of new regulations to control BSE type diseases, and proposes that officers within the Department be authorised to enforce them.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee authorise the Department's Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers; and Animal Health and Pest Control Adviser, to act as Inspectors for the purposes of the TSE (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/255).

2. BACKGROUND

New Regulations designed to combat BSE have come into force in Scotland.

They relate mainly to controls over Specified Risk Material (SRM) which is those tissues of cattle, sheep and goats that are most likely to contain the BSE agent. This material must be removed from the human food chain and destroyed.

The Regulations also seek to further control the standard of feedingstuffs fed to these animals.

BSE belongs to a family of diseases known as TSE (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies).

New EU rules have now come into force, and previous Specified Risk Material regulations have been replaced by the TSE (Scotland) Regulations 2002.

The new TSE controls refer to enforcement in licensed slaughterhouses and cutting plants under Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) supervision. However, Regulation 46 prohibits the placing on the market and use of SRM in food or in the preparation of food for human consumption, and is applicable in retail premises, processors and caterers etc, hence the enforcement involvement of local authority staff.

Local authority officers should only come across SRM if there has been a failure of controls at licensed premises, or if the meat is from an illegally slaughtered animal.

The advice of the Food Standards Authority is that officers already authorised under the Food Safety Act 1990 are not authorised to inspect and seize meat under these new Regulations. There is a need, therefore, to separately appoint inspectors under these TSE Regulations.

Local authority officers may need to seize, detain and then store suspect meat pending the outcome of investigations. Chiller or freezer storage will likely be required for storage purposes.

Seized SRM must be disposed of in an appropriate manner. It must be stained blue and sent to a licensed collection centre, rendering plant or incinerator.

Liaison with other agencies such as SEERAD, MHS and the Food Standards Agency will be paramount in the event of the discovery locally of SRM.

3. PROPOSAL

It is proposed to authorise suitably qualified officers within the Department to carry out necessary duties under this new legislation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time except in respect of the possible need to acquire freezers for storage purposes. However, such costs should be containable within our existing revenue budget.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights implications in respect of this report.

6. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law and Administration have been consulted on the contents of this report.

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Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection

JM/FMCI
17.7.03