



**STANDING COMMITTEE
OF
TYNWALD COURT
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**RECORTYS OIKOIL
BING VEAYN TINVAAL**

**PROCEEDINGS
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**ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Meat Plant

HANSARD

Douglas, Friday, 21st May 2021

PP2021/0161

ENVI-MP, No. 2/2021

All published Official Reports can be found on the Tynwald website:

www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard

Members Present:

Chairman: Mrs C L Barber MHK
Mr C R Robertshaw MHK
Mr R J Mercer MLC

Clerk:

Miss F Gale

Assistant Clerk:

Mr K Skehan

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Standing Committee of Tynwald on Environment and Infrastructure

Meat Plant

*The Committee sat in public at 10.30 a.m.
in the Legislative Council Chamber,
Legislative Buildings, Douglas*

[MRS BARBER *in the Chair*]

Procedural

The Chairman (Mrs Barber): Good morning and welcome to this public meeting of the Environment and Infrastructure Policy Review Committee. I am Clare Barber, MHK, and I chair this Committee. With me today are the other members of the Committee, Chris Robertshaw, MHK, and Mr Rob Mercer, MLC, along with our Clerks.

5 Before we begin, please can we ensure that all mobile phones are either off or on silent. For the purposes of *Hansard*, I will be ensuring we do not have two people speaking at once.

Today we are taking evidence for our inquiry into the Meat Plant. We will be finding out more about how the abattoir is regulated, in particular in terms of food hygiene and animal welfare.

EVIDENCE OF

**Dr Valenti Canal, Official Veterinarian at the Meat Plant;
Dr Tanya Gunnarsdottir, Chief Veterinary Officer; and
Mr Ian Mansell, Director of Regulation,
Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture**

10 **Q104. The Chairman:** So just to begin, if I could ask each of you to state your name and the title, and how long you have been in that role.

Dr Gunnarsdottir: Tanya Gunnarsdottir, Chief Veterinary Officer since June 2020.

15 **The Chairman:** Thank you.

Mr Mansell: Ian Mansell, Director of Regulation for DEFA since May 2019.

20 **Dr Canal:** Valenti Canal, I am the Official Veterinarian in the Meat Plant. I have worked in this job for 25 years.

Q105. The Chairman: Thank you. I wonder if I could ask what role you play in terms of regulating the Meat Plant, and then also who reports to you and who you report to. I do not know if you can ... again, maybe in turn if you could answer that question just to start.

25 **Dr Gunnarsdottir:** Sure. So as the Chief Veterinary Officer I report to Ian, the Director of
Regulation. In terms of the Meat Plant, my role is around animal health and welfare, and in that
role I supervise the contract Official Vet, which is Valenti. So if there are animal health or welfare
concerns Valenti reports to me on those, whereas if there are food hygiene concerns he reports
down a different route through Environmental Health.

30

The Chairman: Thank you.
Mr Canal?

Dr Canal: Yes, I report what is about welfare problems to Tanya, but if it is hygiene and health,
35 I report to Glen. I report to Gordon, and he reports to Glen.

Q106. The Chairman: Okay, thank you. I know we have taken evidence before from you,
Mr Mansell, so I think we are reasonably clear on where your role sits.

40 So just to start off, if we can start with food hygiene as a starting position, I wonder if you could
describe what the Official Vet's role is in relation to food hygiene in the plant, what your
responsibilities are and how you execute those on a daily basis.

Dr Canal: My responsibility is to keep in control all the actions, all the situations in the Meat
45 Plant to ensure the health of the final product. I have a team and they work for me, meat
inspectors. They check any carcass in the slaughterhouse. If a carcass is not good or they have a
problem, we detain it. Afterwards I personally check this carcass, and I decide if it is good for
consumption or not by the law, because it is all the regulation related about this. And everything
that happens in the plant is my responsibility.

50 **Q107. The Chairman:** Okay, because we understand that your responsibility starts from the
lairage, from bringing the animals in, stunning, everything all the way through to the point at
which the meat is packed to be sold.

Dr Canal: Yes, my responsibility starts when the animal arrives with the wagon in the plant,
55 inclusive the wagons, if they are good or have any problems or if they are not great for the
transport of the animals, until the meat goes out from the Meat Plant. All of it is my responsibility.

Q108. The Chairman: Okay, and how do you oversee? Because that is a huge area to cover
with lots of different dynamics, and we have obviously been to the Meat Plant. But how do you
60 ensure that you are able to oversee all of those elements?

Dr Canal: My job is concrete ...There is guidance by law in the European Union, there is
guidance to follow. Here in the plant you use the guidance of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) –
the name is Manual for Official Controls (MOC) in the specific – and they have a lot of specific
65 things for every part. I have some examples for you. For example, I have ... for the *ante mortem*
inspection, I have legislation or guidance of 20 pages for these specific things. The system for
slaughtering has another specific guidance to check; what I need to do, what I need to find, what
I need to control, what is the situation, what I need to do. This is for every part of the process I
have guidance. The guidance is around 600 pages or something like that and is improved – every
70 month or every two months there are amendments of this legislation. I use the FSA guidance.

Q109. Mr Mercer: So is that produced by the Meat Plant? How is that –?

Dr Canal: Yes, it is specifically for the Meat Plant. I have a guidance for a poultry plant, I have
75 a guidance for pig plants or bovine or everything.

Q110. Mr Mercer: Is that in electronic form?

80 **Dr Canal:** That is an electronic form, but I print in paper sometimes and I need to use all of this because the law ... it is not specific, it is just general things and I have the guidance that I use.

Q111. Mr Mercer: So do you update that, or is that updated by a third party?

85 **Dr Canal:** I receive the updates from my company, but anyway we find in the FSA we receive ...

Mr Mansell: So the FSA, the Food Standards Agency, they are the food hygiene body for all food-related matters. They are the ones that will send the updates through.

90 **Mr Mercer:** Right.

The Chairman: Okay. And –

Q112. Mr Mercer: Sorry, so that is the food safety –

95 **Mr Mansell:** Food Standards Agency.

Mr Mercer: Yes but is that the same as food safety controls created by the Meat Plant?

100 **Mr Mansell:** Yes. From Valenti's point of view, he would look at them as official controls, so that would be his guidance on how he operates within the Meat Plant to make sure the Meat Plant is operating in accord with those official controls. With Valenti being there, obviously he would convey any changes to the Meat Plant operator and record any incidents and discuss them with the Meat Plant staff while he is there.

105 **Q113. Mr Mercer:** So there is an interplay there between the Food Standards Agency checklist (**Mr Mansell:** Yes.) and then that feedback to the food safety control system. I think it was the HACCP, is that right?

110 **Mr Mansell:** Yes, HACCP (**Mr Mercer:** HACCP, yes.) which is a risk-based system. So we can identify a process and it is up to the food business operator to determine where along that line are the critical control points.

Mr Mercer: Okay.

115 **Q114. The Chairman:** You talked about the Food Standards Agency stuff, so that covers the same period, from the van all the way to when it has been discharged from the plant in terms of their guidelines. There are no other guidelines for any element; that all comes from the FSA?

120 **Dr Canal:** No. Well, I can use the guidance from friends or from a union, but we use this ... More or less the guidance is the same in all the countries.

The Chairman: Okay, and then anyone who came in, if they were needed to cover your role, then they would be familiar because that is industry standard.

125 **Dr Canal:** Yes.

The Clerk: It is European legislation, isn't it? (*Interjections*)

130 **Mr Mansell:** We would normally use somebody with the Official Veterinary qualification. The arrangement we have with Valenti is he is a contractor. Occasionally he wants a holiday, so we would get the agency to provide another contractor who will be familiar with the set-up of all meat plants in the UK, and the Isle of Man obviously.

135 **Q115. The Chairman:** Perfect. And we have talked before about the daybook and the role that that plays. Obviously we have seen copies of the daybook and you put in on each day when there is a kill day, any feedback. Some of the stuff seems to be pretty much the same every day. These are just, 'We've done a check, it is fine.'

So I wonder if you could talk through how the daybook interaction works and your role within the daybook and responsibility for it.

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Dr Canal: Yes. Every day in the daybook I write the animals' kill on the date, if there are any incidents during the day, any type of incident, and after this is one of the points to ... the point we start enforcement. If it is something during this date in the plant, immediately I report in the daybook.

145 In the daybook I use this to create the enforcement system. I write the legislation filed at this point, the problem, when it happened, what day they corrected it; if it is corrected or it is not corrected; if it is not corrected, the date and what is discussed. We start the procedure to write a letter. If they do not improve this ... of course if it is a minor point, they need to correct or go to the prosecution. If it is a major issue, I stop the plant at this moment. There is no discussion about this.

150

But the procedure is that we start the daybook; I write in the daybook, what the problem is, I use the daybook to write the enforcement, and after I write to the prosecution if it is the case. I have no prosecution experience here, but I have a lot of prosecution experience in the UK about this. This is the normal system in the daybook, I write the date and time when the plant is working, the quantity of the animals, if there is an incident. If there is, of course I report the *ante mortem* problems every day. For the operational system I check if everything is okay, and if there are any welfare problems on this date. This is written every day in the daybook, I have had the daybooks in the plant for the last 15 years or something like that ...

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160 **Q116. The Chairman:** Okay. The sheet you just showed, obviously I am looking at it from across the room, but I do not recall having seen them. So are they actually secured into the daybook or is that something that you fill in off the back of the daybook information?

165 **Dr Canal:** No, the daybook is on my desk, my desk is closed. It is sure. And I write in the daybook because the FSA of the plant, they need to have access to the daybook. Some things are not agreed from him, he writes in the daybook because it is the base of the enforcement, and it is the case of the prosecution.

170 **Mr Mansell:** And the sheet that Valenti showed, that is in addition to the daybook. So that is an action that is done in accordance with the FSA official controls guidance that we said. So as he explained, all the corrective actions go on there and they are signed off when they are finished. Most of the ones that are on there, which obviously we cannot show you because there is commercially sensitive information on there, I think all but one have been closed off and they are usually closed off within the day or the very next.

175

Q117. The Chairman: I think we previously asked about that process about how stuff from the daybook is managed, to get the assurance, and I do not recall that sheet ever being mentioned, so this is a great revelation. I wondered if it is a brand new scheme that has been introduced.

180 **Mr Mansell:** No, it has been there all along, but it is within Valenti's domain –

The Chairman: Okay, so you just did not know about it. *(Laughter)*

Q118. Mr Robertshaw: Why is it commercially sensitive? If we were shown it and did not reproduce it, we could surely see it.

185

Mr Mansell: We would have to probably redact some of the things that are on there, so ...

Q119. Mr Robertshaw: Give me an example in generic terms of something you would redact that we could not see because it was commercially sensitive.

190

Mr Mansell: We have names on there so it would be a GDPR issue, or we would certainly would have to ask somebody's opinion whether it could be shared.

Q120. Mr Robertshaw: Only in so far as it is the GDPR. Where would the commercial sensitivity –?

195

Mr Mansell: We would need to look through it to make sure that there was nothing on there that could be interpreted as being commercially sensitive. **(Mr Robertshaw: Okay.)** I appreciate you would not share it with anybody.

200

Q121. Mr Robertshaw: No, we would like to see the one that has not been closed, if you would arrange that for us, please, and give it to Francisca, and redact it as appropriate. Is it longstanding? Can we ask you that?

205

Mr Mansell: It does not relate to food safety. **(Mr Robertshaw: Fine.)** It relates to somebody's behaviour.

Mr Robertshaw: Ah, right.

210

Mr Mansell: So I do not know if you still want to see that.

Mr Robertshaw: I do not. No.

Q122. The Chairman: No.

215

Okay, so when you talked about if there are concerns you were going to put them on there, that is the stuff that is coming out of the daybook that you have identified – ?

Q123. Mr Robertshaw: Just a minute. When we say it is somebody's behaviour, is it somebody's behaviour in a significant sense?

220

Dr Canal: Yes, of course.

Mr Robertshaw: Fine, then we would like to see it please. Thank you.

225

Mr Mansell: That is fine.

Q124. The Chairman: Okay. It may be worth just ... if you can pick out a sample. I think that would be helpful for us to understand how that works and include that one.

230

So you talked before about the reporting to the daybook, you put the stuff in, that is the routine and then anything that is exceptional so that there is a ... As I say, we have seen the daybook and we have seen examples of where things have been put in that are exceptional, we would say. And

235 then you put it onto the sheet that we have just talked about, where it is something that is a concern. Do all concerns go onto the sheet, or are there just some concerns that go on to the sheets?

Dr Canal: No, everything that is written in the daybook that is exceptional, it is written. (The Chairman: Okay.) Everything that is in the sheet that is in the daybook is correct. It is 100% correct.

240 **Q125. The Chairman:** Yes. And you are the owner of those, so you are the responsible person. And so then that triggers a ... you feed that into the plant manager, the plant operator? Who do you feed that in to get the action that needs to happen to resolve it?

245 *Dr Canal:* Well, when there is an issue, on the same day I talk with the manager of the plant to report the level of the problem to correct it. If it a major issue, I stop the line. If it is minor, we talk. We have a meeting on the same day, we maybe have a meeting the next day or in a week. This is all reported in the daybook to improve and resolve the problem, because what is most important is to keep the product in good health. And of course, the SRM, the welfare, the rest of
250 the problems in the plant, and for this we need to react in the moment, it is not possible just to write in the daybook and do nothing. I write in the daybook just to have proof that I have acted on this problem. But of course, I have a meeting with the management.

Q126. Mr Mercer: So what would the escalation path be there? If the management have not
255 resolved something, what is your next step in terms of enforcement?

Dr Canal: If they do not resolve, I write a letter to inform officially. I write another letter, I write a third letter. After three letters we go to the court, if it is a minor problem or is unacceptable in one ... problem. If not, we stop the plant immediately. Until they resolve it, we do not start.

260 **Mr Mercer:** Okay, so that is within your power. That is part of your role. (*Dr Canal:* Yes.) Okay, thank you.

Q127. The Chairman: So if we talk about ... you talked about SRM, which is the Specified Risk
265 Material, just for anyone who might be listening in. So we noted in the daybook and we have talked about this in other evidence sessions that there were a number of times when something in regard to that was raised by you as a concern. So each time something like that is raised that there has been an issue ... and I appreciate that they were rectified, that it is something that has been picked up and it has been rectified, so we are not suggesting that there has been anything
270 that would put risk to the public, to make that absolutely clear. It was picked up, as it should be. But if that then happens a number of times and you see it happening, even though you have obviously reported it, you have sought assurance, it has been resolved, would that then trigger a training issue, that something is happening again and again? How does that happen?

275 *Dr Canal:* The SRM is considered all the time as a 'major' problem: we do not discuss about the SRM. The SRM of the plant will be in closed skips, stained in blue. It does not arrive to the food chain, and I need to be sure that they send it directly to the waste plant, to destroy it.

I check this every day in the plant, that this has happened. The bins are closed, they are stained every day. I check this regularly to ensure the SRM never arrives at the food chain in any case.

280 This plant is relatively easy for us because all the SRM goes to the bin, and the bin goes directly to the waste plant to be destroyed. But anyway, it is painted every day with this special blue paint, by legislation. With this I am sure that they go to be destroyed and never arrive to the public.

The Chairman: Okay.

285 **Q128. Mr Mercer:** In the last audit, I think it flagged up that there was a problem with one of those bins on the outside.

Dr Canal: Yes, because they have some small points in the bins but the bins were repaired at this moment, and it is not possible to have more problems.

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The Chairman: Okay. I think what I was trying to get at was that within the daybook on a number of occasions over a month or two towards the end, I think, of last year, it had come a few times that there was retained SRM. That was documented in the daybook.

295 **Dr Canal:** Yes, yes. But in the daybook with the SRM we need to talk about two different things (**The Chairman:** Okay.) because for us it is very easy ... The SRM of the plant may need to go to the waste plant point (**The Chairman:** Yes.) – and this is point of the last point, how they had some small things to repair. This is one thing.

300 Another thing is that during the normal day in the cattle or in the sheep, we have SRM in the carcase which we need to remove. Sometimes it has failed in this position. At the moment it has failed in this position because we have new people who need training: this carcase is not stamped, it is not accepted until they have repaired this thing, and this needs to be corrected on the same day. In the daybook, this sometimes arrives and in the form there are these problems, because it is a major problem and we need to resolve it on the same day.

305 But it has nothing to do with the animal –

Q129. The Chairman: No, what you are saying is absolutely what I am trying to get at actually, but we are just slightly at cross-purposes.

310 So, it has been identified and it has been resolved. What I am trying to ascertain is that that is what has happened that day. If there is a persistent problem which appeared to be the case where it happened on more than one occasion, is there then a process that identifies that maybe there is one person and there is a training need for them?

315 So that pulls all those pieces together, with the paper, with the daybook, and says, 'We have resolved it every time', because absolutely, it has been identified, it has been rectified, the meat carries on and gets stamped. But what happens to make sure that it does not happen again?

320 **Dr Canal:** The Food Business Operator (FBO) needs to correct them, to prevent it from happening again. For this, the enforcement system is we write the date and what happened, that this is a persistent problem. I decide that it has not been resolved. If it is not resolved, I stop the plant until it is resolved and they prove that it is resolved, because I do not accept ...

325 Every day you have training people, every day you have the same problem for years. It resolves nothing. They take no care, they change the person. It is not my problem. They need to correct the problem, they need to resolve the problem. For this, if it is persistent I do not accept it. You have a problem with training a person in January and another in October, one day is acceptable. But if it is three weeks, one by one, it is not acceptable. I stop the plant until this is resolved (**The Chairman:** Okay.) in my eyes, no discussion.

Q130. The Chairman: So you can make recommendations (**Dr Canal:** No.) on training or –

330 **Dr Canal:** No, I cannot make any recommendations because it is the FBO's problem and he needs to resolve it. It is not my role to decide what they need to do. I decide the result. (**The Chairman:** Okay.) It is by law, it is not possible for me to decide to do this or do the other.

335 **Mr Mansell:** So it is Valenti's job to –

Q131. Mr Mercer: You are searching for the correct outcome.

Dr Canal: Yes.

340 **Mr Mansell:** Exactly that. It is Valenti's job to make sure that nothing with SRM will leave that plant. It is up to the Food Business Operator to decide how best to do that.

When Valenti says shut the plant down, they can also stop the line. So as soon as the line is stopped to put these corrections in place, effectively the Meat Plant is losing money, so it is in their best interests to prevent that from happening anyway.

345 **Dr Canal:** And when they stop the line, I do not produce unsure food. **(The Chairman: Yes.)** This is the point.

The Chairman: Yes, of course.

350 **Q132. Mr Robertshaw:** So you have described very clearly your set of responsibilities separate to the plant management *per se*. Is there a process whereby the board are aware of your reporting as opposed to that which the plant management themselves would report? Because we have had sight of board minutes and we did not see your reporting. Perhaps I can ask Ian this. Would you expect serious areas of concern to migrate to the board on a regular basis from the –

355

Mr Mansell: Not directly from Valenti *per se*, that would be up to the plant management team to inform the board. I do not know if there is any formal process for us to bypass management and go straight to the board. **(Mr Robertshaw: Okay.)** I am right there, aren't I? **(Dr Canal: Yes.)**

360 **(Mr Robertshaw: You did.)** We have Food Business Operator meetings that Valenti attends, the meat inspectors attend, with plant management to discuss issues. We produce minutes of those meetings. Now, we have those minutes. I do not know whether those minutes are actually passed onto the board.

365 **Q133. Mr Robertshaw:** Thank you.

Can we – this is to you Ian, really ... We have heard that we are migrating towards a statutory regulator and in previous discussions we have examined concerns that we have about the inter-relationships between the Department, the various functions and the operation of the plant. Could you describe to us, hopefully, significant improvements in that area once the statutory regulator is properly established? Could you talk to that for us, please?

370

Mr Mansell: So the difference between what happens now and what could happen in the future?

375 **Mr Robertshaw:** What *will* happen in the future, I hope, yes.

Mr Mansell: I cannot really comment on that. As you know, that is out for consultation at the moment.

380 **Q134. Mr Robertshaw:** How would you expect it then to emerge?

Mr Mansell: I honestly could not say. I do not know whether there would be a great deal of difference because, as I say, we are already operating under official controls, we have to satisfy Europe and the UK that we are operating to those official controls. If we do not, then we run the risk of not being able to trade with anybody, so we do take it extremely seriously. The guidance is UK and European guidance, so I do not think we would change the way we operate at all.

385

390 **Q135. Mr Robertshaw:** It is a matter of, from our perspective, which I am sure you understand, of seeing the intimate relationship of the Department with the operating company in the sense that they populate the board, and I have no doubt that we will be addressing that matter in more detail. Will you be contributing to the consultation then from your regulatory side? Because you are going to be in a very senior position in that organisation.

395 **Mr Mansell:** Possibly. I have not decided yet. (**Mr Robertshaw:** Okay.) The Department will be making a comment, I would imagine, on the consultation –

400 **Q136. Mr Robertshaw:** Well Ian, with respect, this is about the regulator being independent. Therefore, it would be a question of having more than the Department's opinion. Surely you would agree with that? Please answer the question.

Mr Mansell: I will be giving my opinion.

Q137. Mr Robertshaw: Good. Thank you very much.

405 Okay, well we will move on then, I think. Maybe you will not be able to answer this question now, the Committee will fully understand that, but when did mince first start being produced and dispatched from the plant? I will understand if you cannot answer that question, but can you remember the date it started?

410 **Dr Canal:** I have noted this ... several months ago. Anyway, it is in the daybook: it is right, the date we started, and we have the checking and audits, and we have regular audits. But I do not have the date here.

Mr Mansell: It is fairly recent, isn't it?

415 **Dr Canal:** Yes, it is very recent, not a long time ago. But I do not know exactly the date, I do not have it here.

420 **Q138. Mr Robertshaw:** Okay, because when we were looking at the daybook, we found a very detailed audit on 26th June last year (**Dr Canal:** Yes.) conducted by yourself and others, and it was very detailed. We could not find any follow-up to that report. It was just a summary of findings concerning the mince audit, and it concerned itself with the production room and some talk about the alternative room and a lot of issues you wanted to see addressed before, I presume, it went live. Were there further reports that you have produced after that, which showed rectification? Did you get rectification on them all?

425 **Dr Canal:** We had our last audit on the room something like three or four weeks ago, to rectify and to see whether the majority of the problems were resolved –

430 **Q139. Mr Robertshaw:** Could we see that please? Could we have a copy please? (**Dr Canal:** Yes.) Because presumably that is sitting in the daybook.

Dr Cana: Yes.

435 And the point is the quantity of the meat they produce in the mince room is very ... we are talking about 20 to 50 kilograms per week. Yes.

Q140. Mr Robertshaw: So this is quite small then.

440 **Dr Canal:** Quite small. This is not important, because the quantity is not important. For me, one kilogram is enough, or one piece is enough. But this is important, the way when we produce a very small quantity, it is easy to use the rules properly.

I will try to explain. We work in a room with a small quantity. We open the room, we put everything in the room, we close the room. We produce the mince. We open the room and we are finished on the day. This is if a small quantity is possible to do on one day, we do it like this.

445 If there are bigger quantities it is not possible because we need to open and close the door and afterward there are a lot of problems with this door, because it is a corridor, there are a lot of things. At the moment it is kept under control because they are very small quantities. They would like to grow and increase this product, and it will not be possible. We would need to make new installations, new machinery and everything. They work on a project, they consult me if it is good or not. We have a plan, but it is not my business to decide this plan because as we talked before,
450 I collaborate with the team, with the FBO, but I do not decide anything.

Q141. Mr Robertshaw: So it is clear, if we have understood you correctly – and do tell me if I have misunderstood what you have just said – but if there was going to be a determination to increase the volume, there would have to be significant investment. I think, is that fair? In plant, etc. Is that what you said?
455

Dr Canal: No, the big investment is in the machinery, the system to make this. The structure will not be a big investment.

460 **Q142. Mr Robertshaw:** It is the plant.

Dr Canal: It is just the new machinery. The professional automatic machine is now like a butcher, what we would find in a butcher. If they pass to the industrial we need to pay.

465 **Q143. Mr Robertshaw:** So has the level of mince production since its inception been pretty stable at a low level?

Dr Canal: Yes.

470 **Mr Robertshaw:** It has.

Q144. Mr Mercer: It has been constrained by the limitation of the plant. (**Dr Canal:** Yes.) The physical structure.

475 **Dr Canal:** Yes, and we have swabs and control over the laboratory and everything, and it is okay.

Q145. Mr Robertshaw: Okay. Just closing on the issue of the audit of the mince production, you say there was a report a few weeks ago. Was there a report between your initial significant report on 26th June ... was there another report before the mince went live – well, that is the wrong phrase, isn't it – started being sold? Went active, effectively? If we could see that audit as well? So we have the 26th, if we can see the one before it started production proper and also your most recent one, that would be really helpful.
480

485 Chair, can I go on to... (**The Chairman:** Yes.) In our discussions with Ian previously, we had started to examine lab reports. If you could talk us through lab reports coming back into you, presumably, could you talk to us about how you respond to them and your relationship with the management of the plant? Because we have swabs on the line, and examinations of product, as well as mince. Could you tell us how that process works?

490 **Dr Canal:** Well, my report to the management of the plant is something ... I do not work for them.

Mr Robertshaw: Yes, we understand that.

495 **Dr Canal:** It is clear. I need to work with them very closely, and work with them every day. (Mr Robertshaw: Yes.) This sometimes maybe creates problems because I can ... we talked before, it is not possible for me to tell them what they need to do. But at the same time we are in discussions and we discuss. I work for DEFA. I am checking the plant. I do not work for them but I need to collaborate with them.

500

Mr Robertshaw: We understand.

Dr Canal: For example – one example to understand – it is the FBO duty to make a HACCP plan. A HACCP plan defines what the problems are in any situations in the plan, to make corrections, to make correction actions, to control. I cannot do the HACCP plan for them, but I check the HACCP plan to check if the plan is correct. But I cannot do it for them. But one of my duties is to check this HACCP plan regularly, every two or three weeks, regularly to be sure the plant is working correctly. I do not know if you –

510 **Q146. Mr Robertshaw:** I think it draws me back to an earlier question about the inter-relationship between your specific and separate responsibilities, the plant management and their duties and responsibilities in their requirement to report to the board, and it is reasonable for anybody to understand that from time to time in these circumstances there are going to be disagreements or areas that maybe cannot always be resolved. I am just struggling to understand if a frustration occurs, how it actually is resolved. Is there a third party arbitrator? How is that
515 dealt with?

Dr Canal: There is one point. It is sometimes complicated to understand. We talk about 35 years ago or something like that. The responsibility of the food is not any more in the authorisation. It is not in the Government. It is with the FBO. He is responsible for the food. If
520 something happens in the market, it is his responsibility, and our responsibility is to check that the FBO does its best possible to protect the public.

We have no control of the plant, they have the control of the plant. This is our role. Do you understand? (Mr Robertshaw: Yes.) It is very important because ...

525 Here is a simple example. If some things go in the market, the FBO [*get in trouble*], not me. I [*get in trouble*] if I do not do the enforcement, I do not report, I do not stop the plant, I accept everything. If everything is good, it is not my problem. It is the problem of the FBO, because I cannot control the plant. I just control what they make under control of the plant, and if it is not at that moment, I stop the thing or I report and ... This is important. The FBO has his duties and I
530 cannot decide and I can do nothing about this.

Q147. Mr Robertshaw: Fine. So it is authoritative but yet it is only advisory, effectively. The responsibility lies elsewhere.

535 I think the Committee's concerns revolve around the ... perhaps it is the wrong word, but one could use the word slightly 'incestuous' interaction between the Department, the board, the management and the regulatory authorities would appear to require greater clarity. At least that is our feeling at this stage. We have further inquiries to make yet, obviously.

Dr Canal: One example to understand. I never spoke with the worker in the slaughterhouse.
540 Never spoke with the staff. (Mr Robertshaw: Yes, I understand.) I talk with the manager if there are some things and he needs to talk with the staff. I never have any order with the staff. It is not

my business, it is not my people, it is nothing. To understand the report between the FBO; because if not, it is complicated ...

545 **Q148. Mr Robertshaw:** Fine. I think, for the record, we just need to examine the inter-
relationship between yourself and the Chief Vet insofar as if there is an animal welfare issue, you
have spoken so far about those other reports. Could you just walk us through the process if you
arrive at a situation where you have a welfare matter between – I do not know what the phrasing
is – stunning and spiking, is it?

550

The Chairman: Stun-to-stick.

Mr Robertshaw: Stun-to-stick. How that is dealt with.

555 **Dr Canal:** This is my guidance for welfare. The guidance for welfare is just this. This is to remind
me what I need to check for welfare, everything.

In the moment I detect a problem of welfare, we need to detect three types of initial problems.
The welfare in the farm; the welfare during the transport; and the welfare in the lairage. The
moment we detect a welfare problem, my first priority is to reduce the suffering of the animal.
560 For this I stop the line, I kill this animal to reduce the suffering of this animal. After that, I report
the details of the animal, the farm, the time, what happened with this animal, maybe in the lairage
or maybe after because sometimes the welfare is detected after. With this, I make a report, I take
pictures, I keep the records of the cameras. I make a report to DEFA, in this case to Tanya. If they
start a prosecution or it does not start, or whatever.

565 This carcase, after I determine if it is good for the food or not, if it is safe or not, this is another
way, and I keep the evidence – the carcase, skin, everything – for if we go to the prosecution or
not. At the same time I ring the farmer, ‘We have a problem, I have the evidence, if you would like
to come here to see the evidence I have pictures, I have everything, it is possible to see.’

570 After that, if there is a problem in the lairage, I talk with the FBO to improve and repair this
problem if it happened. If it is during the transport, I talk with the transporters to repair or correct
this action. If it is in the farm, it is not in my power or situation. He needs to start to work about
this.

575 **Q149. Mr Robertshaw:** So if you have a concern within the plant itself related to animal
welfare, and you document it in your normal process and feel that it should be taken further and
you report to Tanya, is there not a conflict there that the Department would be, as it were, almost
prosecuting itself? Tanya, could you comment on that please?

580 **Dr Gunnarsdottir:** Yes, so the way I see it is that, as the Chief Vet, I fall within the Directorate
of Regulation, and most of our activities are governed by legislation, Animal Health Act, welfare
of farmed animals, welfare in transport, welfare at time of killing, with set procedures for how to
deal with those kind of problems.

I recognise that within the same Department, there is a closer relationship with the Meat Plant
as a business, but that is not something that I, or indeed anyone in regulation, is involved with,
585 the business side. So my view, if I had a report from Valenti about a welfare problem, it is nothing
to do with the fact that the Department that I work in is involved with the Meat Plant. My priority
is about protecting the health and welfare of animals under the legislation that we work with.

So, I suppose personally that does not present a problem for me to stop me doing my job.

590 **Q150. Mr Robertshaw:** Okay, and the Department itself generates the prosecution process.
Have they got in-house people, does it go externally, or does it go to the AG’s or ...?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: It would go to the AG’s if it was getting to that –

595 **Mr Mansell:** I think the last time I appeared before the Committee, I did explain that we did
prosecute our own Department last year, so that would not preclude us from taking action the
same way. Having said that, the Meat Plant technically is not part of the Department. We do have
a member of the Department that sits on the board, but that is it.

600 **Mr Robertshaw:** Okay, thank you, Ian.
Thanks, Chair.

605 **Q151. Mr Mercer:** At our last evidence session, we heard that the welfare of animals at time
of kill (WATOK) is to be brought into Isle of Man legislation. Do you have a timeline for that, and
why is it necessary?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: There is already welfare at time of killing legislation in force.

Mr Mercer: Okay.

610 **Mr Mansell:** That was our mistake last time.

Mr Mercer: It is okay.

615 **Mr Mansell:** When we spoke of it, we were not ready for that question.

Mr Mercer: Right okay.

620 **Mr Mansell:** There is a bit of confusion there because we used to produce licences for slaughter
men on the Isle of Man, which one could argue was above and beyond what is required in WATOK.
But all these slaughter men have undergone WATOK training, and as Tanya says, there is
legislation there. (**Mr Mercer:** Yes.) And that was all part of the official controls that we brought
in as a result of Brexit.

625 **Q152. Mr Mercer:** So right now, what would you say the main difference is in legislation
between the UK and the Isle of Man? Are we on a par, are we better or worse?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: We are very similar, and that is the aim. The overall aim is to get equivalence
with the UK.

630 **Mr Mansell:** From the outset of Brexit negotiations, we committed as a Department that we
would align with whatever was necessary to continue trade with the UK and further afield, so that
is what we have done. Obviously it makes life easier for us if we have this alignment, because as
Valenti has shown you, the Food Standards Agency operates under certain legislation. We have
the same legislation so it makes sense to follow their guidance.

635 **Q153. Mr Mercer:** Yes, you pre-empted the question I was leading to, whereby we are using
those updated monthly official controls from the Food Standard Agency, but that is based on UK
legislation. So are there any remaining gaps in our own that make that a challenge?

640 **Dr Canal:** Well, with the legislation, the European with the UK, they have gaps, they have
problems. Small things. It is not always graded, because when the Union published the legislation,
they made it public in 16 languages at the same time. They published directly in English. To be real
in any country, they need to re-publish in every country by the legal system, and then they have
corrections to the original, and so there are some gaps in one way or another. This is clear. But
645 what happens is we always have the European legislation to go to report. If we do not apply the

European legislation, it is exactly what they take, it complicates the commercial things. They do not accept it. For this, if there are small gaps or small problems or things of translation or very technical points to correct, we go to the European, because we need to sell. But it is the same with the commercial relations with South America or North America, on everything that is international, we do not accept meat from countries that do not have the same rules. It is very international. Of course we have gaps, but it is not important.

Mr Mercer: Yes, okay.

Another question for Tanya with regard to audit failures, because I believe that is a part of your responsibility within your role. So if we see that ... in the result of the last audit there were a couple of things that needed to be resolved. How much involvement do you have in that? Do you have to chase that down until it is completed, or is that something that then becomes the responsibility of the OV?

Mr Mansell: If I could answer that? (**Dr Gunnarsdottir:** Of course.) Yes, everybody sees the audit in the Regulatory Authority. It is more likely to fall to Glen's team to make sure that the corrective actions are put in place with Valenti's. Valenti would be on that same panel, if you like, that would look at the audit and review it. Not necessarily Tanya, but obviously Tanya would have oversight where Valenti is involved.

Mr Mercer: Okay.

Q154. Mr Robertshaw: Thank you.

This is slightly outside the specific remit of the Committee, which is looking at the operation of the abattoir, but we have the pleasure of Tanya's company this morning so it would be good if the Committee could have an outline of how your role works in relation to live export and satisfaction that farm to boat and on, presumably onto the boat, works. Could you just walk us through that process please?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: Yes, so again we have specific legislation governing welfare of animals in transport that is equivalent to the UK devolved England, Wales and Scotland. They all have the same legislation for welfare of animals in transport. Again, that is an implementation of a wider EU set of regulations. So for live exports, the farmers and the exporters have to follow those laws. My involvement mostly would come in if there was a reported problem that needed an investigation under that piece of legislation ... Sorry what was the –

Q155. Mr Robertshaw: Where would that report come to you from, Tanya?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: I suppose with any welfare report, if somebody sees that there is a problem and they are concerned about welfare, it is the Chief Vet that that report should be directed to. It can come from the transporter, the farmer, a member of the public, a member of the Steam Packet staff, for example.

Mr Robertshaw: And is it the case – I am asking this out of complete ignorance – are the regulations related to live movement – I say export, but live movement – of cattle particularly, and sheep? Is that under review away, is it changing radically or has it arrived at a position that is fairly stable?

Dr Gunnarsdottir: I think it is fairly stable, yes. We would have brought that legislation in shortly after the UK did, but I am not aware that it is under any particular review.

Mr Robertshaw: Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

700 **Q156. The Chairman:** I wonder if we can just touch on small-scale and home slaughter and how the monitoring works for that? Because I assume that there will be some element of your role, I do not think it falls under –

705 **Dr Gunnarsdottir:** To be honest, that does tend to fall under Environmental Health.

Mr Mansell: Yes, as far as I am aware there aren't any on the Isle of Man. **(The Chairman:** Okay.) All animals presented to the Meat Plant have to go through the Meat Plant, so the only things that fall outside that would be poultry.

710 **Q157. The Chairman:** Okay.

Okay, and you talked earlier about the CCTV in the lairage, in the abattoir. Is there CCTV extensively through the abattoir?

715 **Dr Canal:** Yes, it is –

Q158. The Chairman: Yes. So just because, obviously, your responsibility covers everywhere. So if there is something that is raised with you, you can go back and then review –

720 **Dr Canal:** There is a review, and it is a full wall of the HACCP system. Of course, always in all systems there as things to improve, and there are files, but it is a regular. At this point of view, the level of HACCP plan of the plant is a good level in the UK and Europe. It is a normal level and it is okay.

725 **Q159. The Chairman:** Okay.

And your access is to everywhere and you are comfortable with how everything it is?

Dr Canal: It is open, and I arrive and I check regularly. It is not a problem. It is good.

730 **The Chairman:** Okay.

Q160. Mr Mercer: So would a failure of a camera go into the daybook, for example?

735 **Dr Canal:** Yes, well, the camera, I have here the procedure. The system of the camera in the guidance is a recommendation, but it is not 100% legal – it is not *by law*. It is a guidance, if you like. It is here. I have –

Mr Mercer: It is nice to have, not a must.

740 **Dr Canal:** Yes, it is nice to have, it is better if we have it, but it is not by law. If you do not have it in the slaughterhouse, it is okay. But the cameras, of course, are good. I have cameras in the lairage, 24 hours. This is the guidance for the cameras, but it is just a guidance. And I review the system of cameras every week. I use one hour, two hours, to review what happened, because with the system of cameras there is one point. I am in the lairage during the day. During the night – this is by law – the animals need to have feed and water. I am not in during the night in the plant, but I can check during the day, or two days before, to see if this has happened.

745 There has never been any problem with this for welfare because sometimes for the arrived cattle, we work on the cattle on Tuesday. Some of them arrive on Monday. Some of the sheep arrive on Tuesday for Wednesday, and they stay during the night in the lairage. Because I am not in the lairage during the night to check everything, the last thing I check is to go to the lairage at

750 the last moment when we close to check everything, and the next day to check everything in the morning. But we have no problems with this, and I check my cameras, and if a camera is not working they repair it immediately. I have no problems with the cameras at the moment.

Q161. Mr Robertshaw: How many cameras do you have?

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Dr Canal: In the lairage?

Mr Robertshaw: Well, from start to finish, just out of interest.

760 **Dr Canal:** Oh. I am interested in the lairage ... Six in the lairage, another one in the stunning area, and inside I do not know ... four or six in the room and in the cutting room there is another one. Around 20 or 25, if you like.

Q162. Mr Robertshaw: And how long does the plant keep the record –

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Dr Canal: They keep it for around three months. At some points legally they have to keep it for one month, and all of the camera systems are in the FBO room because it is protected by law, by confidence, or sorry I do not know the English ... system because it is carefully protected and it is in the room of the top manager. But I have access and I go to check my lairage problems.

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Q163. Mr Robertshaw: You have open access to them?

Dr Canal: Yes, and I have a record in the plant of the date when I go to check with my signature and the signature of the FBO. He knows when I check.

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Mr Robertshaw: Thank you very much.

Q164. Mr Mercer: Just going back to the audit thing, just looking through the roles and responsibilities of the GVO, under official audit of food, business operators, hazard and critical control points procedures and controls, how does that fit in to your role?

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Dr Gunnarsdottir: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

Q165. Mr Mercer: One of the ... in the information we have been provided, it says there is an official audit of the FBO's hazard and critical control point procedures and controls via a contract OV service. So is that you are responsible for the audit or the audit of that service? It is not quite clear to me from the –

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Mr Mansell: Generally that comes from Environmental Health, so Environmental Health would speak with a contractor, whether it is the FSA, whether it is Eville & Jones, and we would source and arrange the audit.

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Q166. Mr Mercer: So this is not quite right then, the information –

Mr Mansell: Well, I suppose it is because we are all working in the same Department and it is just easier for Environmental Health to do that, but Tanya would be involved in the outcome of that audit, as would Valenti.

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Mr Mercer: Right, okay.

800 **Q167. The Chairman:** Okay, because that is a submission I think from yourself, Mr Mansell, about each person's role, so I think that is probably why there is the confusion.

Just one other question. Are there any concerns around the capital infrastructure within the plant, so the equipment in terms of the lifespan of it, is that something that you would ever be engaged in or comment on about if you are seeing faults in the equipment, things are failing?

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Dr Canal: No, if there are files on a regular date, I start the normal procedure. And the special or big idea is to improve all the time.

I will give one example. Several months ago we bought new machinery to keep out the skin of the sheep. We bought a new machine, it was okay. We detected one month ago – nobody knew until now – that there is a small contamination at the top of the leg of the sheep, because the sheep touch a part of the structure. Immediately, the next day they cut – it is a line, hopefully – they cut to improve. This is the idea: to improve and improve.

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Q168. The Chairman: Continuous improvement.

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Dr Canal: This machine was bought to reduce the contamination in the carcass. After some time, just looking at it one day we detected this, we improved. Several months ago when the machine arrived, the carcass was flopping and they have contact with the part. I talked with the FBO and he put in a procedure, one person, he put in a paper and he stopped the carcass from having contamination.

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Some of them, there is one from 20 ... but this is the procedure. We need to improve. We have some things in the infrastructure or in the machine, we need to improve – always. We are never 100% sure, but we need to improve because at the end, every one of us, the public goes to the shop, we like to buy some things. Probably this piece, not the percentage. The percentage is just an indicative to improve, and this is ... we never finish improving.

825

Q169. Mr Mercer: Would you say that the culture of continuous improvement is well embedded in the Meat Plant?

830 **Dr Canal:** Yes, yes. And everyone, the staff, the manager, they know, and we have meetings, we have training to do. And some of these things start from the staff. 'Look at this, what do you think, okay – we improve.'

Q170. Mr Robertshaw: Just going right back on something that we were discussing earlier, and forgive me if you have already been explicit, but just for the record: what volume limit have you placed on the mince production at the moment? It can go, in your professional opinion, up to what level with the current plant? How much?

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Dr Canal: Normally now, we work one day per week. Just in the morning, and we produce 50 kilograms, something like that. It is 100 per day, maximum 500 per week.

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Q171. Mr Robertshaw: 500 kilograms per week is –

Dr Canal: Maximum reasonable with the current system, but this is the thing you need to produce every day. We need to work on Sundays to do this because if we produce on Friday it will not arrive in the market until Monday, we have lost three days. We need to work Saturdays or a part of Saturday and Sunday to produce for Monday and Tuesday, maximum 400 kilograms.

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Mr Robertshaw: 400 –

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Dr Canal: And it is very complicated because the volume is more complicated.

Q172. Mr Robertshaw: So, if we were taking it down to a daily maximum, what would – is it 100 kilograms or less than 100 kilograms?

855 **Dr Canal:** Less than 100 kilograms.

Mr Robertshaw: Less than 100 kilograms. Thank you very much.

Dr Canal: In my opinion, but –

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Mr Robertshaw: It is your advised opinion, I understand.

Dr Canal: It is not my decision or –

865 **Mr Robertshaw:** No, we understand that, sir, yes.

Dr Canal: It is my experience, I make ... I was director of production in mince rooms and all my experience is my opinion, but it is not official, it is not –

870 **Mr Robertshaw:** No, no. Thank you.

Q173. The Clerk: This is for Valenti, really.
So I think you have worked in meat plants all over Europe, haven't you?

875 **Dr Canal:** Yes.

Q174. The Clerk: Is there anything noticeable about the Isle of Man's Meat Plant or any issues that are unique to it, or is it comparable to other places?

880 **Dr Canal:** It is comparable to the rest of the plants, and in my opinion it is a good and safe plant. It is a different thing in Europe ... well, just from what I know.

In France, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, the plants are big, big and big. In the UK there are still a lot of small plants, and in small plants they have some very good things, and some more complicated things. The good thing is ... we talked about contamination, for example. In a small plant, if they have a contamination and there is an owner and his family, he will lose the money. It is not in a company, nobody knows anything about it, and for this they are very accurate, because it is his money then, and his clients. In the UK there are a lot of plants, they have the farmer, slaughterhouse, meat plant and shops altogether by the same family, and they are very accurate. But these plants ... sometimes this is good because they are his business; sometimes it is not good because they do not have possibilities to improve or grow.

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From my point of view, the Isle of Man Plant is a professional plant, it is a good plant, and the standard is a good standard everywhere in Europe. Of course, it is not a massive plant of 2,000 people working, 20 people for quality control. But it is a good plant in my opinion.

895 **Q175. The Chairman:** Okay.

There was just one last question actually, and it is on a slightly different tack, but as we have you here I would love to ask. Just to ask primarily to Ms Gunnarsdottir, the animal welfare legislation that recently came through, what involvement did you have in that as the Chief Veterinary Officer for the Island?

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Dr Gunnarsdottir: Which legislation exactly are you referring to?

905 **The Chairman:** So this was the recent Animal Welfare Bill that came but did not pass successfully through the House of Keys at this time, which was ostensibly to bring some elements of UK legislation. I just wonder what involvement you have had in the creation, formation of that piece of legislation in terms of seeking your input as to how that could have best been brought?

910 **Dr Gunnarsdottir:** I had a small amount of involvement, but to be honest the bulk of the work was done by my predecessor, Alistair Breed, who left last June. Since I took over from him, there has been a small amount of discussion between me and our legal colleagues to get it ready to go, but to be honest I was not involved in getting it to the stage that it was at in June. It was already going into motion of the procedure it had to go through to get to Tynwald. So we had some small amount of consultation on it.

915 **The Chairman:** Okay, that is fine. Thank you very much.
So thank you very much for your time today and for your openness with the questions. It has certainly given us a bit more insight into the processes. The Committee will now sit in private.
Thank you.

920 **Mr Robertshaw and Mr Mercer:** Thank you very much.

The Committee sat in private at 11.41 a.m.