

Heads of Environmental Health Departments

19 October 2005

Reference: ENF/E/05/043

Dear Colleagues

### **The Production and Importation of Skin-on Cattle and Sheep Feet**

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, which will apply from 1 January 2006, contains a provision at Annex III Section I Chapter IV paragraph 8 that allows the production and placing on the market of the unskinned feet of sheep and calves. Paragraph 18 of the same Chapter makes clear that such feet must be scalded and depilated before leaving the slaughterhouse.

An amendment to the Regulation has now been agreed (it can be found at Annex VII 2.(a) of SANCO/2535/2005 rev.3) extending the provision to include bovine feet of any age. The amendment will be published in the OJ shortly.

From next year therefore, the production of scalded and depilated feet of sheep and cattle will be allowed throughout the European Union, and such feet may be imported into the UK from other Member States, as long as the required identification mark has been applied.

In view of the imminence of this change in legislation and the lack of a health risk that these products pose, the Agency does not consider it appropriate for local authorities or the Meat Hygiene Service to continue to prevent the sale of imported health marked sheep and calves feet. The Agency also considers that the same advice can apply to adult bovine feet, once the over thirty month rule changes take effect on 7 November. Until that date, however, sales of adult bovine feet should still be prevented unless adequate guarantees are provided that consignments have been obtained from cattle under the age of 30 months.

Any queries concerning this advice should be addressed to John Furzer on telephone 0207 276 8077 or e-mail [john.furzer@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:john.furzer@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

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