

FSA successfully prosecutes abattoir for serious breaches of food safety

Higginshaw Abattoir Ltd, based in Royton, Oldham, was ordered to pay £12,000 after being found guilty of charges relating to the dispatch of over-temperature meat.

The law states that meat must be immediately chilled and kept below 7°C, and below 3°C in the case of offal, before it can be dispatched from a slaughterhouse. On various dates between December 2018 and June 2019, sheep carcasses and offal were found on transport vehicles ready for dispatch from Higginshaw Abattoir while well above the legal temperature limits. The abattoir was therefore found to have failed in its duty to ensure that meat was properly chilled and maintained below the required limits.

A Remedial Action Notice (RAN) was served on the abattoir to ensure compliance with the legal limits. However, on four separate dates following the issue of the legal notice, the company was found still to be transporting warm meat.

The abattoir was found guilty of 11 out of 15 charges including breaches of the RAN. In addition to fines paid for the offences, the Judge ordered Higginshaw Abattoir Ltd to pay £20,000 towards the FSA's legal costs and the statutory victim surcharge of £170.

"This case demonstrates just how seriously breaches of public health regulations are taken by the FSA and the courts, and we welcome the court's decision.

"It is vitally important, for consumers and the wider industry, that food safety regulations such as these are followed, and that public health is protected."

Rob Tindall, Head of Operational Delivery (North of England) at the FSA