**Ministerial launch for Infection Control Course**

Scottish Government Minister for Public Health and Sport, Shona Robison MSP, launched the REHIS Elementary Control of Infection Course at Dundee College on Monday (16 March). This new short course is aimed at care staff employed in non-NHS care premises such as homes for the elderly and nurseries. The syllabus is designed to provide candidates with the underpinning knowledge to enable them to develop the following core competencies: a knowledge of the hazards, a knowledge of the risks, an ability to assess risks, an understanding of how to break the chain of infection, an awareness of local and national policies, an awareness of their accountability and responsibility, and an understanding of how to comply with the law.

Pictured with the Minister (centre) are Gary Westwater, Assistant Principal of Dundee College and Colin Wallace, REHIS President. Full details on the course are available from the REHIS office.

---

**Further action to reduce smoking in Scotland**

Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Public Health and Sport, has announced measures aimed at protecting future generations from the devastating health effects of smoking. In legislation published yesterday, cigarette vending machines and tobacco displays in shops are set to be consigned to history in Scotland as part of radical measures designed to reduce child smoking. Among the measures included in the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill are the banning of cigarette vending machines, the banning of tobacco displays in shops, the introduction of a registration scheme for retailers, the introduction of powers to issue fixed penalty notices for retailers who sell cigarettes to under 18s and the introduction of banning orders to prevent retailers selling cigarettes who continually break the law.

Smoking in public places in Scotland was banned on 26 March 2006, and on 1 October 2007 the minimum age for buying cigarettes was raised to 18. REHIS has an excellent record of support for measures introduced to control tobacco in Scotland and fully supports the introduction of the Bill. Full details can be found on the Scottish Government’s website www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases.

---

**Advice to pregnant women during lambing season**

Pregnant women who come into close contact with sheep during lambing may be risking their health and the health of their unborn children. This is because infections such as chlamydiosis (enzootic abortion of ewes - EAE), toxoplasmosis and listeriosis - all common causes of abortion in ewes - can be passed on to them. While the number of reported infections and human miscarriages resulting from contact with sheep is extremely small, pregnant women need to be
aware of the potential risks. If they do become ill, experience fever or influenza-like symptoms, and are concerned that they could have acquired infection from a farm environment, they should seek immediate medical advice. The Scottish Chief Medical Officer issued a seasonal notice advising pregnant women to avoid close contact with sheep during the lambing season. The CMO advised that, in particular, they should not help to lamb or milk ewes, should avoid contact with aborted or new-born lambs or with the afterbirth and, wherever possible, avoid handling clothing, boots, etc, which have come into contact with ewes or lambs, or if they must, wear rubber gloves. Further advice is available from Employment Medical Advisory Service offices, which are listed under the Health and Safety Executive in the telephone directory.

Crackdown on hospital superbugs

A superbug supremo is to be appointed to spearhead Scotland’s new inspectorate which will scrutinise hospitals’ performance in dealing with infections such as MRSA and C. Difficile. The Care Environment Inspectorate, to be set up following responses to last year’s consultation, will carry out random inspections of every Scottish acute hospital to ensure the highest possible standards of infection prevention and cleanliness are adhered to. Inspections will focus on infection control practice, hygiene and cleanliness standards, waste management, the fabric of the building, standards of essential equipment and access arrangements for visitors. Further details can be found on the Scottish Government’s website www.scotland.gov.uk/news/releases.

New Members of SFAC announced

Professor Graeme Millar CBE, FSA Board Member and Chairman of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee, recently announced the appointment of three new members to the Committee. Dr Lesley Ann Stanley (an Investigative Toxicologist), Bernard Forteath (President of the International Federation of Environmental Health and a Past President of REHIS) and James Wildgoose (a former Head of the Scotland Office) have now taken up their posts.

Scottish appointment to FSA Board

Dame Deirdre Hutton, Chair of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) recently announced that Dr David Cameron (pictured below), Chair of NHS Grampian, had been appointed as the second Scottish FSA Board member. Dr Cameron, a former President of REHIS, has also been appointed as a member of the independent Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) from 1 March and will serve three years on the Committee.

Dates for your diary

The University of The West of Scotland - Certificate of Competence in Environmental Noise Measurement course - 30 March to 3 April 2009, Hamilton. Further information from Cameron Procter at belnoisecourses@sky.com.

The University of Strathclyde Centre for Lifelong Learning - Certificate of Competence in Environmental Noise Measurement Course - 20 to 24 April 2009, Glasgow. Further details from scosh@strath.ac.uk.

IFST, REHIS and SFDF Seminar ‘Healthy Routes to Profit – Healthy Planet, Healthy Plant, Healthy Products’, 12 May 2009, Dundee. Further information from joan.creelman@sfdf.org.uk.

REHIS Annual Conference, 13 and 14 May 2009, Western House Hotel, Ayr.

‘Walking, Cycling, Connecting Communities’ Conference, 13 May 2009, Perth Concert Hall, Perth. Further information from Mary Doig (mary.doig@pathsforall.org.uk).
If you wish to feature any Environmental Health or Public Health initiative, event or activity in the REHIS Newsletter, please contact Tom Bell, Chief Executive, on 0131 225 6999 or tb@rehis.com