

Suitable sources of eyes for dissection

From time to time SSERC receives enquires about suitable sources of eyes for dissection. The SSERC Code of Practice *Materials of Living Origin - Educational Uses* [1] states in paragraph 4.5 that *Only materials fit for human consumption obtained from abattoirs, butchers or fishmongers may be used for the purposes of dissection or experimentation.* The measure that controls risk is using materials fit for human consumption rather than where the material is obtained from. It is the regulations for food production that reduce any potential hazard from using animal material for dissection or experimentation.

This has led to considering other sources of materials fit for human consumption that can be used for dissection and experimentation. For example deer eyes obtained from gamekeepers can be used for dissection as long as they come from animals fit for human consumption [2]. Legislation [3] allows gamekeepers to make the decision that animals are fit for human consumption. Recently we have also had enquiries about obtaining eyes from knackers that prepare pet food. Animal by products

that are used for pet food manufacture are controlled by the Animal By-Products (Scotland) Regulations 2011 and so are fit for human consumption although that is not their intended use. Thus eyes or other materials obtained from such a source may be used for dissection or experimentation.

Whatever their source, eyes that are obtained from cattle, sheep or goats that are more than 12 months old at slaughter are controlled by the *Specified Risk Materials (SRM) Regulations* and the guidance on their disposal in appendix 7 of *Materials of Living Origin - Educational Uses* must be followed. ◀

References

- [1] *Materials of Living Origin* (2012), www.sserc.org.uk.
- [2] Eye dissection - Using deer eyes (2013) SSERC Bulletin **242**, 11.
- [3] *The Wild Game Guide* (2011) Food Standards Agency.

Skeletons in the cupboard

On occasion, we have had enquiries from schools about what to do when old human skeletal remains have been found, often lurking forgotten deep in a cupboard and a legacy from previous times. The guidance provided in the SSERC publication *'Materials of Living Origin - Educational Uses; A Code of Practice for Scottish Schools'* [1] states that states that Skeletal material (bones, teeth etc.) may be used for demonstration and for investigative work. The use of such material in school can be of considerable educational value and so long as all involved understand the educational objectives of using the material, there is no reason why the old human bones should not be kept for appropriate study.

It may be, however, that the department does not want to keep the bones and the question then arises of how best to dispose of them. In such an instance, the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification at the University of Dundee would happily take the skeletal remains for teaching purposes. If there are old human bones that you would like to discard, please contact Gillian Malone at the University of Dundee G.Malone@dundee.ac.uk. ◀



Reference

- [1] The Code of Practice can be accessed via the Biology Health & Safety pages on the SSERC website <http://www.sserc.org.uk/index.php/health-safety/health-a-safety-home140>. Please note that to access all resources on the website you will need to register and be provided with a log-on ID and password.