

SFQC (Scottish Food Quality Certification) is a privately owned independent company based in Edinburgh specialising in the inspection and certification of food production, processing and service. As a result of the assessments and checks they make throughout the food chain SFQC can help consumers know more about the food they purchase and consume.



#### Lean Team

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#### Problem / Muda statement

To identify bottlenecks and duplication from application through to certification, with the aims of reducing waiting times and increasing electronic communication.

#### Project selection

The team decided to focus their analysis on the cattle and sheep scheme as this is currently the largest scheme within the business.

#### Lean tools utilised and key findings

- Process map - the team commenced with an intensive process flow map utilising flow charting symbols that highlight activities, movement, inspection, delays and storage. During this process they began to identify measures that would lead to improvement.
- 7 Wastes analysis revealed excessive amounts of duplication and significant inefficiencies.

- PDCA – a project management tool which the team used to implement the improvements.
- Spaghetti charts – these highlighted activity and movement around the office.
- Why-why analysis – the team produced a comprehensive root cause analysis to fully understand the administration and processing of the cattle and sheep application packs.
- SIPOC – assessors completed supplier chain evaluations which highlighted that e-mail addresses were lacking, there was poor accuracy of contract information for new members, there were many hold-ups in the arrangement of audits, a high volume of paper usage and duplication throughout.
- 5S – an internal 5S audit sheet was created and the team red-tagged office areas leading to improved organisation and work flows.

#### Perceived barriers to change

The following were identified as the reasons why the current system was accepted and had not been changed before:

- Traditional thinking of assessors and members
- Assessors work remotely and are therefore isolated
- Limited IT skills throughout
- Storage of information
- Multi site location of system users

#### Project implementation

The current application pack system was very labour intensive and paper driven and was costed at £6.91 per pack. A new electronic application process system was piloted at a cost of £3.59 per application pack. During the pilot, 67% of new members easily adapted to the new system and the majority of assessors agreed to the proposed changes.

#### Business Benefits

The team carried out a detailed financial assessment of the impact of implementing the new electronic system across all schemes.

This assessment showed that a 50% uptake of members and assessors to the new system would reduce business costs by £26,722 per annum. Given that the pilot on the cattle and sheep scheme demonstrated a 67% uptake on new members, it was agreed that the 50% objective is well within the scope of achievement. All schemes are planned to transfer to the new system by the end of the financial year.

Wider benefits include better communications, more organised working areas, reduced duplicated effort, improved visit records, reduction in pre-printed envelopes and a general feeling of enthusiasm by all staff. There will be knock-on benefits of Lean thinking to other processes.

#### Environmental impact

On the basis that the team meets its 50% target this will result in a reduction of 330,915 sheets of paper and 54,158 envelopes. This equates to 1.655 Tonnes of Co2 for paper and 0.54 tonnes of Co2 for envelopes.

“We felt that the “Lean Management” programme related directly to our specific business needs and everyone agreed that participation was highly enjoyable, especially the practical exercises. It motivated us all to take improvement back to our jobs”