

BRITAIN'S WORST FARMER

Fears over lamb scam

Marion Scott And Jim Lawson

BANNED farmer Julian Jones is today exposed as the mastermind behind a multi- million-pound trade in infected meat.

He organises the distribution of disease-ridden sheep across Britain after their barbaric slaughter.

Jones, 40, fled Wales for Scotland three years ago after being banned for life from keeping animals.

Last week, we found him on an isolated steading surrounded by a dozen Highland cattle, cows, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, ducks, five horses and numerous cats.

He is involved in the illegal distribution of "smokies" - a meat delicacy sold by gangs to West African communities in England.

Environmental health officers have already raided his home three miles from Cullen, Morayshire.

A number of carcasses were seized and a report is being sent to the procurator fiscal.

Old, diseased and scraggy sheep are killed in illegal slaughterhouses in the Scottish countryside to make smokies for the gangs behind the trade.

Animals aren't even properly stunned or humanely killed.

Their fleece is removed and their skins blasted with blowtorches to create a burnt appearance and to disguise the foul, rotting meat.

Profits are high for the gangs - up to £15,000 for a small vanload and between £100 and £150 per carcass. By the time the meat hits the table, its value has trebled

Smokies are eaten at religious and holiday festivals by immigrants from Nigeria and Ghana.

What they don't know is that the charred meat is often infected with E.coli, salmonella and other life-threatening diseases.

Environmental health officer Dr Yunes Teinaz, 40, who has had a £10,000 bounty put on his head by the gangs, warned: "If this trade is not stamped out, it will destroy the good name of Scottish lamb and confidence in your meat industry.

"I've seen smokies that aren't fit to be eaten by a dog."

Dr Teinaz, who studied in Dundee and is based at Haringey Council in London, said: "The price on my head makes me even more determined to fight these gangs.

"This is a dangerous trade with big money at stake. I've seized many carcasses contaminated by faeces, brain and spinal matter, as well as a variety of potentially- fatal bacteria.

"Some have also been covered in cysts and riddled with disease.

"Police and local authorities in Scotland should make themselves aware of the smokie trade before it takes an even bigger hold."

Jones has been transporting tons of meat for years, first in Wales and now in Scotland.

Two years ago, he was stopped on the A9 Perth-Inverness road and 250 smokie carcasses were discovered.

He's due to stand trial in England next month on a number of charges.

Trade insiders say desperate farmers are easy targets for the gangs. With legitimate prices low, they are snapping up offers of £20- £30 for each sheep killed illegally.

Jones was banned for life from keeping animals after a sickening cruelty case at his farm in west Wales in 1999.

Investigators found 31 dogs roaming his farm at Bangor Teifi, Llandysul. They were feeding off maggot-infested carcasses of cows, calves, sheep and pigs.

As well as the lifetime ban, Jones was put on probation for two years.

Last week, he was reluctant to talk about his new venture.

When confronted, he would only say through a broken window: "No comment. Leave me alone. I've had a lot of hassle over this."