



**HM Revenue  
& Customs**

**Illegal 'Meat' Imports- up date  
Annual Meeting Airport  
Consultative Committees  
June 2005**

Stephen Giles-Medhurst

# Restricting the illegal meat trade : tackling illegal imports

- Customs' enforcement role
- Our progress so far
  - Statistics
  - Trends and findings
- Explain how we are preventing illegal imports
- Way forward – working better together
- Publicity- what been done!

# The role of Customs

- Illegal imports from outside the EU
- Detect and deter ... highest risk of disease flow to the UK
- Included in PSA objective to strengthen frontier security ...
- Risk assessment : low but constant
- £7m per annum for controls on illegal imports of POAO, plants, produce

## Agreed approach

- Take out illegal imports
- Deter : awareness raising (publicity)
  - Prosecute in serious cases
- Target on basis of risk & intelligence:
  - Passengers      - Freight      - Postal
- Respond to disease notifications

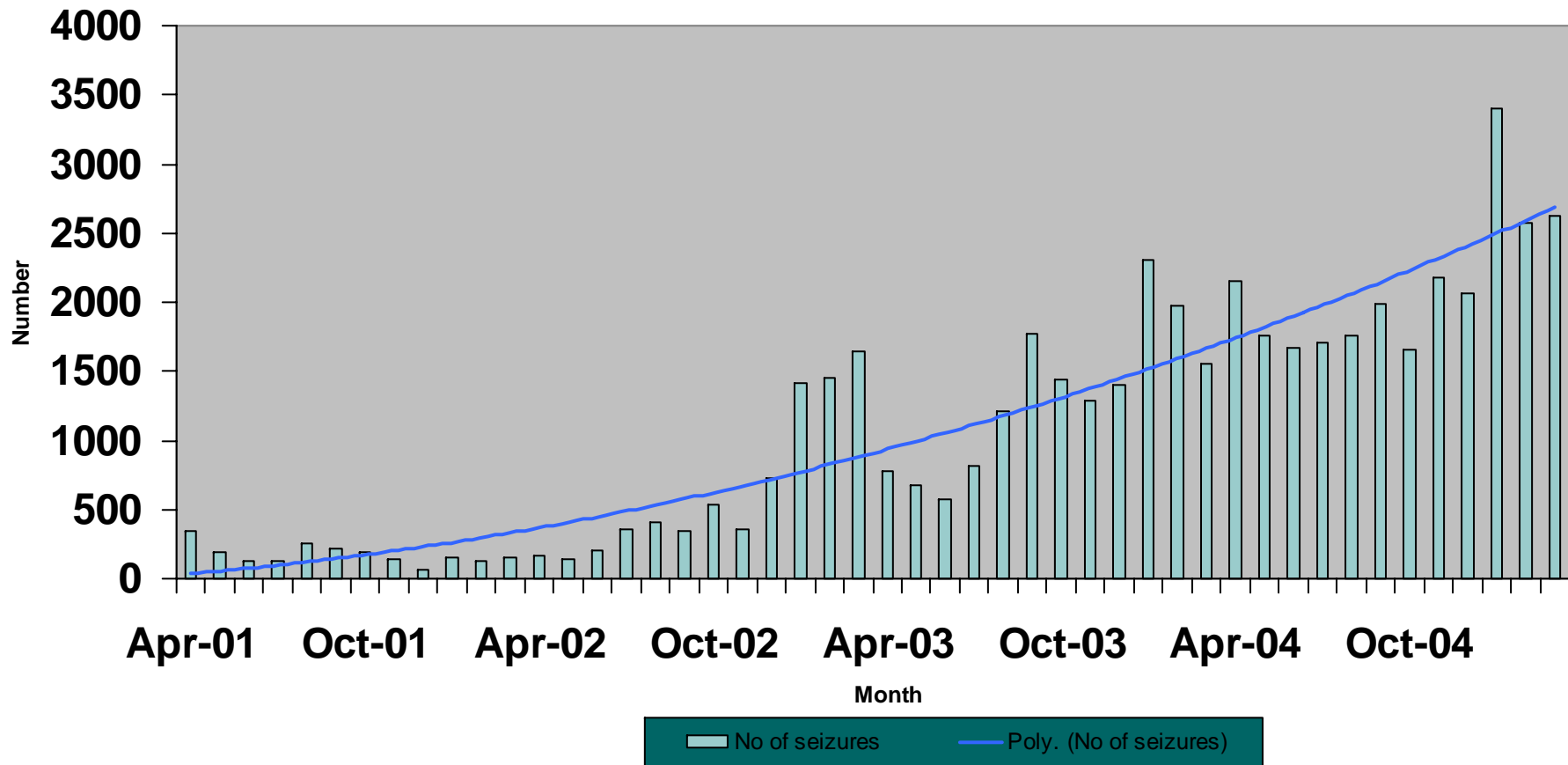
## Resources

- 100+ extra “staff years” – POAO teams
- All 3,500+ front line Detection staff include POAO in their responsibilities
- Detector dog programme : 10 dogs
- Mobile and flexibly deployed
- Intelligence and investigation staff
- Publicity programme(s)
- Technology : scanners
- Support / logistics: storage and disposal

# Results & findings

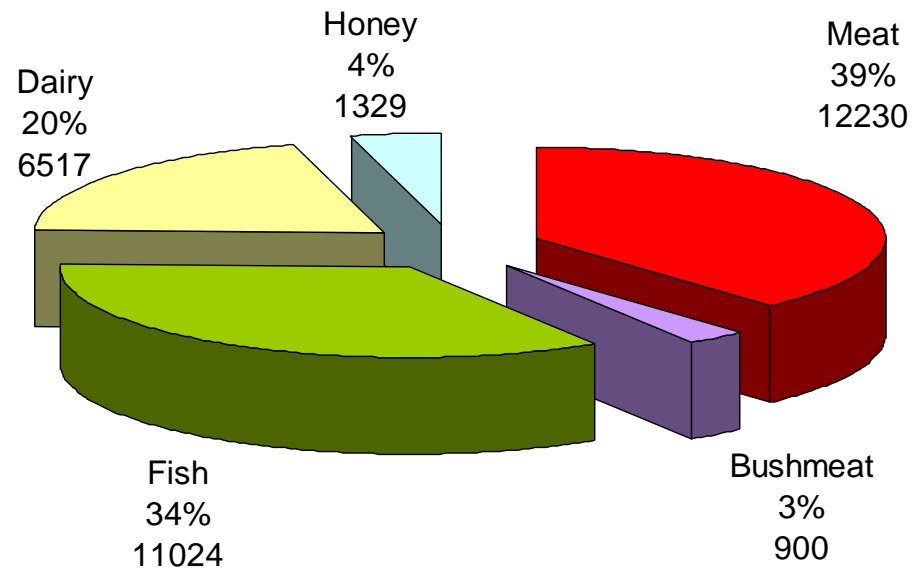
- 15,316 Customs seizures in first year
- In 04/05 : upward trend / deploying more staff: expect above 25,000, 16,684 till Dec 04
- High numbers of breaches on high risk traffic
- Seizures from high risk countries

## Seizures each month since April 2001



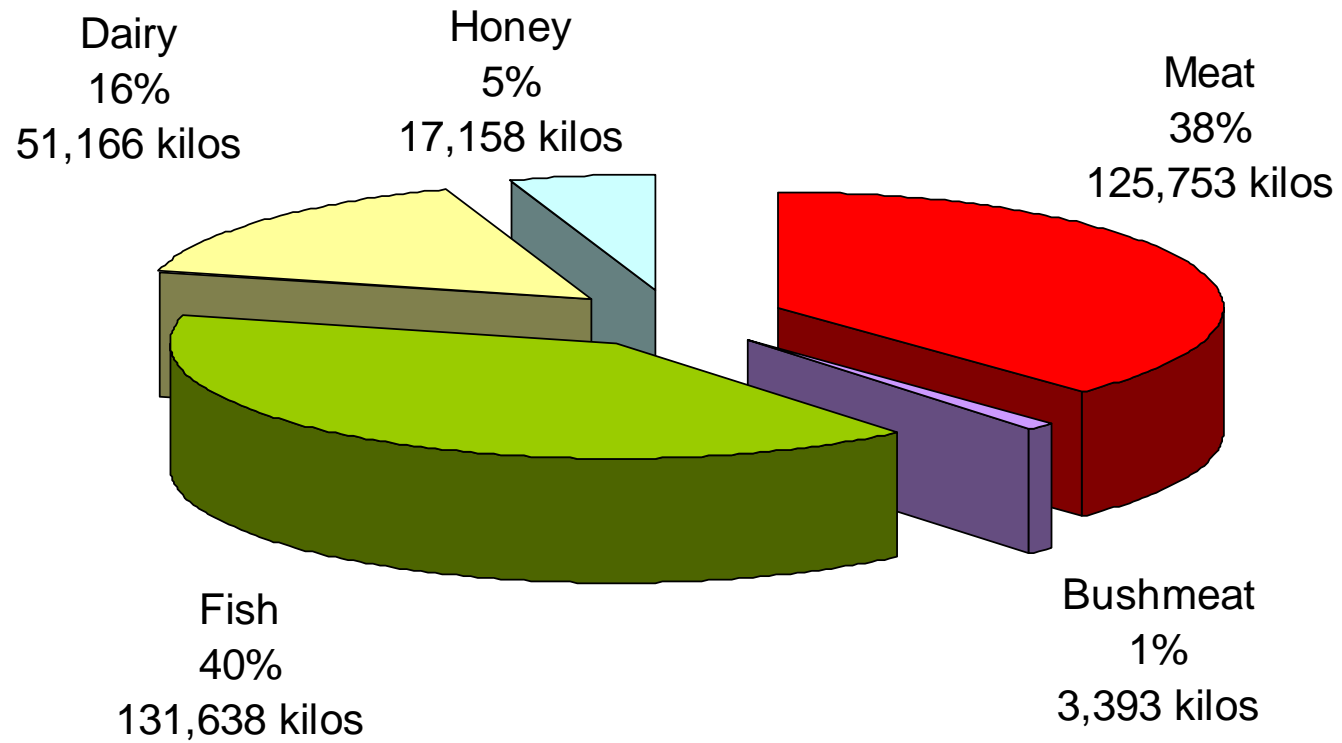
# Customs Seizures – April 03 to Dec 04

## 1. Number of seizures



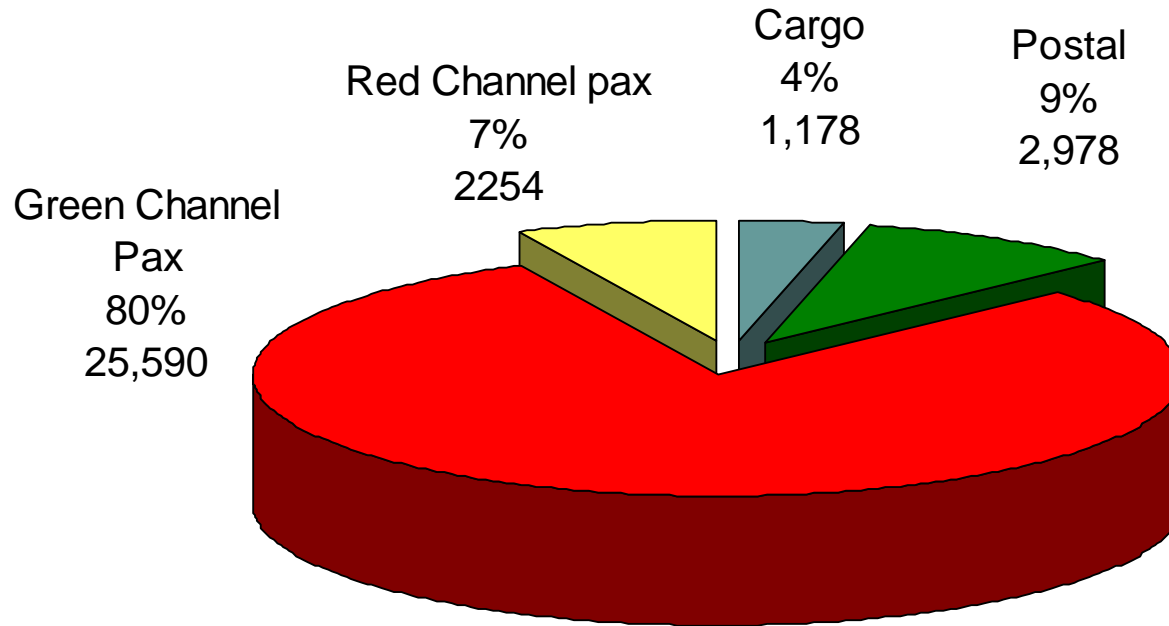
# Customs Seizures – April 03 to Dec 04

## 2. By weight



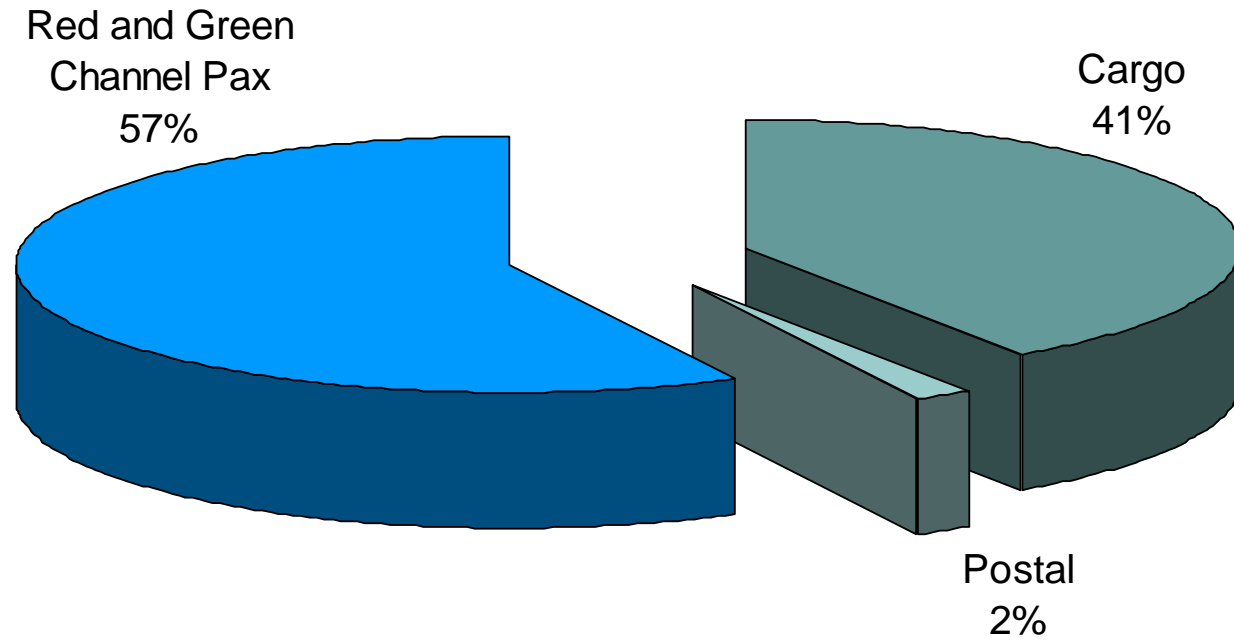
# Customs Seizures – April 03 to Dec 04

## 3. Modal – by number



# Customs Seizures – April 03 to Dec 04

## 4. Modal – by weight



## Who do we think is involved?

- Small family groups ... travelling to UK for first time (since 1.1.03 POAO Regs)
- Business travellers, students
- Gifts, special occasions: taste of home
- “Freight, including
  - dry runs?
  - Conceal drugs
  - POAO amongst produce

# Prosecutions

- Importance in deterrent effect
- Proportionate and public interest
- Very large quantities albeit for personal / family use
- 8 cases so far – 1 custodial (part commercial)
- Where insufficient evidence: seizure, warning letter and copy of the leaflet
- Postal case – repeat parcels

## Way forward

- Increased public awareness (more later) : seizures from casual travellers should fall
- Maintain effective risk-based controls
- Increase collaboration with Local Authorities, Food Fraud Coordination Unit, Illegal Meat Task Force and others
- Intelligence including two-way flows:
  - Add value for inland enforcement
  - Work back up the supply chain from outlets / consumers
  - Build up the picture

# Intelligence framework

- Coordinated by Food Standards Agency
- Customs to Local Authorities:
  - Indication that POAO was intended for a commercial establishment in food chain
- Local Authorities to Customs:
  - Indication of illegal imports from outside EU
- Indication = information our respective agencies can act on



**HM Revenue  
& Customs**

# **ILLEGAL IMPORTS PUBLICITY**

## **CURRENT ACTIVITY**

# PUBLICITY AIMS

- To engage travellers at several points throughout their journey
- To reach key audiences through relevant materials and messages
- Cost effective marketing
- To maximise opportunities for media coverage

# PLANNING A TRIP

- Introducing the rules in consumer travel magazines



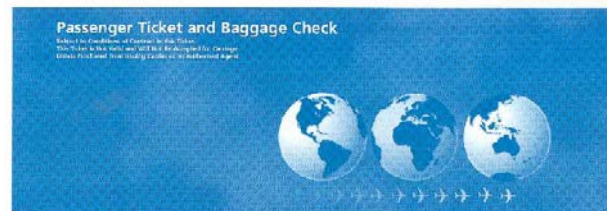
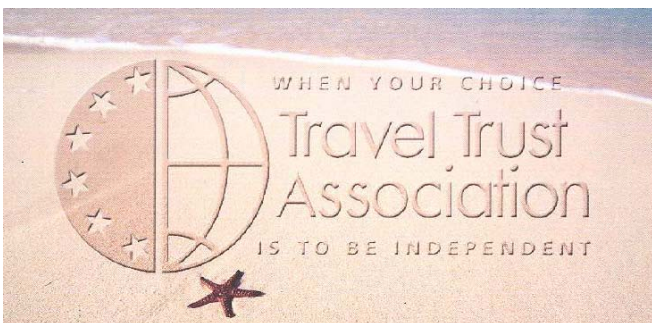
# PLANNING A TRIP

- A 30 second advert explaining the rules on screens in UK Passport Offices in London and Glasgow



# BOOKED UP

- Message printed on over 5.5 million ticket wallets
- Flyer inserted into a further 1 million ticket wallets
- A reminder of the rules which travellers retain throughout their holiday



# AT THE AIRPORT – Leaving the UK

- Details available for travellers to take away
- Posters and leaflets in some departure lounges
- A5 stands on check-in counters



# OVERSEAS

- Country specific leaflets distributed with visas via British Embassies
- TV advert and materials on display in visa waiting rooms
- Country specific leaflets and posters at airports



# AT THE AIRPORT – Arriving back in the UK

- High visibility posters in arrivals and baggage reclaim halls at all UK airports and ports
- Customs officers issue relevant leaflets to passengers



# Raising awareness through the MEDIA

- Good press coverage over recent successful prosecutions
- Ministerial launch of airport posters
- Supplying stories to foreign press titles



## Man fined over raw meat seizure

**An American man has been fined £300 after admitting bringing about 100 kg (220lb) of raw meat into the UK.**

Allen Blumenberg, 43, of Brooklyn Street, New York, was arrested at Heathrow airport on

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DEFRA

- Working together on Defra's UK outreach campaign to increase understanding amongst key Black and minority ethnic communities



# STEADY SUCCESS

Awareness of food and plant import rules amongst UK travellers or potential travellers:

SEP 2002

40%

APR 2003

45%

SEP 2004

50%

- but more to do!

Source: COI Tracking Surveys 2002-4

# thank you

- [stephen.giles-medhurst@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.giles-medhurst@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)
- [david.lowe@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:david.lowe@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)
- [sarah.moore2@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.moore2@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk) (publicity)