

The Horsemeat Scandal

**How *The Guardian* uses news writing and features to
reflect its political affiliations**

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INDEX

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Theoretical Background	6
Chapter 2: Methodology	15
Chapter 3: Case Study	17
Conclusion	28
Appendix 1	30
Works Cited	37

Introduction

Sustainable development and environmental awareness have gradually been gaining more interest. These issues are often associated with political liberalism: “modern environmental issues [...] for the most part coalesce around the premises of liberal state theory” (Hobson 57). Since *The Guardian* openly advocates “liberal values,” it covers a lot of environmental news (The Guardian). Therefore, a food production scandal such as the discovery of horsemeat in beefburgers, which came to light on 15 January 2013, inevitably takes up a great deal of *The Guardian*’s agenda. The newspaper’s role in representing the horsemeat scandal is, in the first place, providing the reader with trustworthy and objective news. *The Guardian* preserves its credibility by following the standpoint “comment is free, but facts are sacred,” therefore presenting news without being influenced by the political ideology they support (The Guardian). However, in portraying the discourse of the horsemeat scandal in its entirety, *The Guardian* establishes a certain frame for which its journalistic ideology is the basis. This thesis will concentrate on the frame created by news writing and features. Textual and contextual aspects of news writing and features on *The Guardian*’s website will be analysed using Van Dijk’s and Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis of these factors will depict how *The Guardian* has interwoven its ideology in representing the horsemeat scandal.

Since it is quite difficult to obtain paper versions of *The Guardian*’s archive in the Netherlands, this thesis will only focus on news articles and features accessible via *The Guardian*’s website. This incorporates both online articles, as well as articles which were initially published in the print edition. Furthermore, *The Guardian* conforms to a “digital-first philosophy” and thus its main focus lies on “publishing on the web,” which consequently advocates an online research (Guardian Media Group).

The context and history of *The Guardian* will first be provided as well as the discourse in which the entire newspaper finds itself. The theoretical background will explain what factors influence *The Guardian*'s portrayal of the horsemeat scandal. The methodology section elaborates on Van Dijk's and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. Eventually, a case study of provided news writing and feature articles on the horsemeat scandal will illustrate how *The Guardian*'s frame has developed. Finally, a conclusion can be drawn and this will show how a frame functions in illustrating a news event.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Background

The Guardian was originally founded as *The Manchester Guardian* – and only changed its name in 1959 – by cotton merchant John Edward Taylor on 5 May 1821 (“The Manchester Guardian [...] progress”). Taylor had a firm belief that a newspaper should be dedicated to covering trustworthy news. Freedom of religion and politics were his basic principles as well as the notion of news being distributed without “reference to the party from which they emanate” (“The Manchester Guardian [...] progress”). Before the 19th century, newspaper owners often allowed their political preferences to intervene (McChesney and Bellamy Foster 2). Taylor died in 1844, making his son Russell Scott Taylor proprietor of the newspaper. Later on, in 1861, Taylor’s youngest son, named after his father John Edward Taylor, inherited ownership because of his brother’s death. Both sons kept following Taylor’s statement of “comment is free, but facts are sacred” (The Scott Trust). In *The Guardian*’s editorial, which supposedly reflects the newspaper’s general mind-set, “The Manchester Guardian, born 5 May 1821: 190 years – work in progress” the editor claims that since *The Guardian*’s foundation “the paper has essentially changed neither its ownership nor its character during its long life,” which means that Taylor’s creed still ought to be applicable to anything covered in *The Guardian* nowadays (“The Manchester Guardian [...] progress”). From the beginning onwards, *The Guardian*’s core purpose has always been to support “journalistic freedom and liberal values” (The Scott Trust). Even when Charles Prestwich Scott bought *The Manchester Guardian* in 1907 from Taylor’s youngest son – Scott had been editor of *The Manchester Guardian* since 1872 – the newspaper did not turn into a private affair. Scott was the owner until he retired in 1929, when he promoted his two sons, John and Ted, owners of the newspaper. Ted died four months later in a boating accident, which made John Scott sole owner. Scott dearly wanted to preserve the newspaper’s independence and thus wanted to prevent the newspaper from going bankrupt, forcing him to transfer all the

shares to The Scott Trust in 1936 because of financial debts. The collective act of The Scott Trust consisted of four Scott grandsons and one company secretary (The Scott Trust). In June 1936 they formed the Trust Deed and were only required to take into account Taylor's ideals. Nonetheless, because of legal flaws in the Trust Deed debts could have been claimed in 1948 if the trust members did not decide to reinstate the Deed. After this reconstruction The Scott Trust worked according to the same system until the takeover by The Scott Trust Limited, part of Guardian Media Group, in October 2008. Dame Liz Forgan, chair of Guardian Media Group, elaborates on the take-over as being necessary "to secure the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity: as a quality national newspaper without party affiliation; remaining faithful to its liberal tradition; as a profit-seeking enterprise managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner" (Forgan qtd. in Conlan).

Furthermore, the idea that *The Guardian* is more of a centre-left newspaper originates from the fact that founder Taylor "warmly advocated the cause of reform," however he did not want to express support for a specific party ("The Manchester Guardian [...] progress"). Taylor held on to liberal traditions and ideas of progression and improvement, which have always been associated with left-wing political opinion (The Scott Trust). Nevertheless, even though *The Guardian* supports left-wing political ideas, this does not mean news writers are not trying to be as objective as possible; with the qualification that in journalistic terminology objectivity does not have the same meaning as in everyday life. Since newspapers are part of a certain political environment i.e. they all support a different political stance, news writers will always be under the influence of the newspaper's political ideas they represent.

According to Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allen, journalistic objectivity entails gaining and presenting news in an "unbiased, detached and value-free" manner: objectivity refers to both news gathering as well as representing the news without stressing or leaving out information out of political or personal interest (Zelizer, Allen 97). The ethos of objective

journalism goes back until the 19th century, when people thought of objective news writing as a manner to reach out to as many people of different cultural groups as possible (Wiesslitz, Ashuri 1038). News is intended to be based upon factual knowledge, i.e. taking a positivist approach, rather than on interpretations of the person covering the news. The philosophical movement of positivism argues that all knowledge should be based on factual evidence; subsequently to this creed objectivity emanates. However, Zelizer and Allen acknowledge the fact that defining objectivity differs a great deal from practising it in real, news-covering, life (Zelizer, Allen 98). Completely objective news writing is virtually impossible, because any person gaining information inevitably interprets it based on a specific, cultural epistemology. Epistemology is the theory that examines how knowledge comes into being. According to feminist writer Donna Haraway, all knowledge is situated, which means that knowledge production is rather a manner of interpretation based on someone's cultural sphere, than a collection of fixed meanings (Wekker 63). Each culture approaches objective writing differently, which should be taken into account when reading a piece of journalism. News writing is seen as a reproduction of reality, yet "anything coming out of a given time and place inevitably bears the mark of its origin" (Clark 38). The journalist's cultural sphere influences his idea of what objectivity means, therefore, representations of reality are always biased. Moreover, Marie Kinsley writes in *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* that "one absolute truth" does not exist and therefore one representation of truth is also not possible (Kinsley 177). However, many journalists still do strive for objective news writing. In order to present news objectively journalists use the inverted pyramid structure. This structure first provides the reader with factual knowledge, which is then followed by less important news such as comments and opinions (Zelizer, Allen 99). By doing so, the reader can easily distinguish between trustworthy facts and interpretations of these facts. All in all, there is no

such thing as pure objectivity, yet many journalists at least make an attempt to provide news in a just way.

This is also where other journalistic moralities come in; objectivity is surely not the only factor journalists have to take into account. News reporters all practice their profession according to a so-called journalistic code. In *The Elements of Journalism* Bill Kovack and Tom Rosentiel give the nine principles by which professional journalists should abide:

1. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
2. Its first loyalty is to citizens.
3. Its essence is a discipline of verification.
4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
7. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.
8. It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.
9. Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience. (qtd. in McChesney, Bellamy Foster 2).

Ideally journalists would all obey these principles, however, newspaper owners usually determine to what extent their journalists should write according to these principles (McChesney, Bellamy Foster 3). For instance, during the time Rupert Murdoch still owned *The News of the World* and *The Sun*, he did not seem to keep it a secret that the newspapers were politically biased and constantly switched political stance in order to be supportive of the winning party of every election. In the case of *The Guardian*: ownership by The Scott Trust Limited ensures that multiple members of the trust have to cooperate with and control

each other (Forgan qtd. in Conlan). Because The Scott Trust Limited does not have to provide shareholders who favour certain political ideas, *The Guardian* does not support a specific political party. Even though *The Guardian* openly supports the notion of liberalism, the newspaper is not linked to one party. Over recent years, conservatives have criticised centre-left newspaper journalists, such as *The Guardian*'s, and accused them of violating the professional journalism code. Centre-left journalists allegedly used their profession to impose political ideas the newspaper supported on its readers (McChesney, Bellamy Foster 4). Interestingly enough, centre-right critics do not necessarily wish to see that every professional journalist complies with the nine journalistic principles, but rather want to see centre-left news coverage being eliminated (McChesney and Bellamy Foster 4). Centre-right critics use a 1992 survey among journalists in Washington, which has shown that 90 per cent of them voted Democratic for Bill Clinton, to illustrate their argument. However, since Clinton was favoured in the entire country the argument was regarded invalid (McChesney, Bellamy Foster 6). Newspaper and media owners tend to vote Republican, even when the Democratic Party is favoured throughout the country. Nonetheless, political preferences of newspaper proprietors and shareholders do not necessarily have to correspond with a newspaper's political stance (McChesney, Bellamy Foster 6). Therefore pronouncements on newspapers being left- or right-wing are debatable.

Newspaper owners and their journalists indubitably do not determine what is covered in the news. Following the uses and gratifications theory, which originally began with Wilbur Schramm and was later adopted by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, in the end the reader decides what is being published. "All media behaviour is based on the expectation of reward," which means that the audience never gains information from the media without interest, even if it is only a minor notion of vaguely listening to the radio (Whitaker 5). The effort people expend in gaining information is proportionate to the amount

of information they want out of the source. Katz and Blumler specified the audience's motives to acquire information into four needs: "(1) *diversion* – television provides an escape from everyday life; (2) *personal relationships* – television offers companionship and conversation, especially for people who live alone; (3) *personal identity* – television provides personality role models against which viewers can compare their own lifestyles; and (4) *surveillance* – television provides information about many aspects of the viewer's environment" (Franklin 269). The last one, as Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch note, being the position the media takes (Franklin 269). Additionally, the growing facility for people to get mobile access to news at any time of the day analogously strengthens the need for surveillance. Patterns of communications are rapidly changing – the urge for short, highly informative articles is growing. An efficient use of the inverted pyramid structure enables the online journalist to provide the reader with essential news in a short amount of words (Whitaker 282). News still has to have the same value; however, in order to meet the audience's requirements, lengthy stories must be altered into "layers of text with links to other stories, features, opinion pieces, biographical information [...], and so on," (Whitaker 282). Therefore, the audience both determines the content of news as well as the presentation of it.

Virtually any news story covered in a newspaper, either print or online, receives its meaning through the context in which it is embedded. The presentation of a news story is influenced by a number of factors, such as specific lexical choices, photographs and the deliberate choice of putting a story in a particular section, this process is referred to as framing (Franklin 9). The newspapers' editors set rules and guidelines for framing texts and by doing so an "ordering of the world in conjunction with hierarchical rules of inclusion and exclusion" is composed (Zelizer, Allen 48). Its frame portrays the newsworthiness of the article; e.g. front-page news stories receive more attention than news stories the reader can

only reach by clicking on multiple tabs. By making deliberate choices in assigning importance to news events reporters establish a "media-constructed version of reality" (Callaghan and Schnell qtd. in Franklin 85). Journalists mediate between news events and the coverage of those events. They very often do not even witness events; the portrayal of reality is a matter that depends on "preferences and options of media professionals" (Carvalho 13). Furthermore, framing does not only involve the presentation of separate news stories, but rather involves the intertwining relation of all stories covered by one particular medium. Through the process of framing news stories editors constantly make a selection in how happenings in the world should be perceived by the public (Entman in Franklin 85). According to Iyengar, the process of framing can be divided into forming "episodic and thematic media frames" (qtd. in Franklin 85). This distinction is made to differ between an individual level i.e. an episodic frame, and a social, more general, level, i.e. a thematic frame (Franklin 85). Iyengar connects these manners of referring to frames with the degree of responsibility and states "choosing thematic over episodic frames may shift the attribution of responsibility for events from personal to abstract, societal causes" (Iyengar qtd. in Franklin 86). The process of framing thus brings forward what a newspaper considers of importance.

Moreover, newspaper's editors need to decide what to put on the agenda and how many articles cover a specific issue: agenda setting. The hierarchy created by agenda setting provides the reader with an idea what events the newspaper regards as significant (Zelizer, Allen 3). The main reason for coming up with an agenda setting is bringing about "public awareness and debate" on important notions happening in the world (Franklin 12). Since newspapers all differ in their ownership and the political stance that influences the owners, agenda setting does not work according to a fixed set of conventions. A privately owned newspaper, such as *News of the World*, would most likely cover political ideas the owner believes in. Proprietors determine how journalists should interpret the professional code; the

realisation of the journalistic code could hence be influenced by the proprietors' political preferences (McChesney and Bellamy Foster 8). Agenda setting for a corporately owned newspaper like *The Guardian* works differently. When ownership is not a private affair, news covering does not have to reflect a single person's political ideas. Eventually, even though the newspaper's ownership, either private or corporate, determines what the agenda setting entails, they cannot tell the reader "what to think, but only what to think about" (Franklin 12). Moreover, part of the agenda setting is the issue attention cycle. This cycle refers to the degree of attention a news event receives. The beginning of a news story is frequently covered in the news, yet eventually the loss of attention for an event stops it being covered. Once a medium decides to inject new life into an issue the cycle starts over until the public grows bored again (Franklin 9). The so-called gatekeepers of the medium determine the beginning and the course of this cycle. Gatekeepers include editors, contributors and newspaper owners (Franklin 8). Even though gatekeepers are able to decide which news to cover, they still have to abide to the audience's needs and gratifications.

Furthermore, the theory of framing does not give an explicit definition of what it should incorporate (Scheufele 103). Dietram Scheufele states that there is no clear-cut definition of framing; it merely is a concept (103). According to Scheufele there is no common understanding of what this concept entails and therefore no conclusion can ever be drawn from attempts at defining a medium's frame (103). Robert Entman has tried to form a "common understanding [that] might help constitute framing as research paradigm," yet this paradigm can only be regarded as Entman's personal way of looking at framing (Entman qtd. in Scheufele 104). However, to attempt to draw any conclusion about *The Guardian's* process of framing, Teun van Dijk's and Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be used. According to these scholars, journalistic texts can be understood through analysing both textual and contextual matters:

- I. Textual analysis
 1. Layout and structural organization
 2. Objects
 3. Actors
 4. Language, grammar and rhetoric
 5. Discursive strategies
 6. Ideological standpoints
- II. Contextual analysis
 1. Comparative-synchronic analysis
 2. Historical-diachronic analysis (Van Dijk, Fairclough qtd. in Carvalho 16).

Van Dijk's and Fairclough's textual and contextual analyses include various factors and in order to form a proper understanding of how *The Guardian* sets the horsemeat scandal in a frame, all of them should be examined: "the research programme encompasses all the moments in the "life" of a particular news text as well as the wider picture of the media discourse produced on a given topic" (Carvalho 11).

Chapter 2: Methodology

15 January 2013, the day the Food Safety Authority of Ireland published results of studies on the content of beefburgers sold at Aldi, Lidl, Tesco and Iceland, cannot merely be taken as the beginning of the discourse of the horsemeat scandal: the history of previous food scandals contributes to the construction of meaning (Lawrence). The question that arises is which factors determine the start and end of *The Guardian's* framing of the scandal. The analysis of textual aspects finds its boundaries by defining the period of time of the horsemeat scandal; Van Dijk and Fairclough call this "time plane" (Carvalho 12). CDA will only be applied to articles about the horsemeat scandals from 15 January onwards, which is in line with Chouliaraki and Fairclough, who state that CDA begins at the moment society comes to know about a social occurrence (Carvalho 15). Additionally, articles later than the significant date of 23 April will not be used. On this day, Professor Alan Reilly, head of the FSA Ireland, had to appear in court. Moreover, in order to attempt to draw conclusions about *The Guardian's* frame of the horsemeat scandal, the analysis of contextual matters needs fixation as well: only interrelations among articles from the time plane will be used.

The focus will lie on news articles and features on *The Guardian's* website: www.guardian.co.uk. This website offers online articles and web versions of articles covered in the print edition of *The Guardian*; both kinds of articles will be used. *The Guardian's* political and social interest can be illustrated by the analysis of the content of news articles. News articles intend to present objective facts, yet the deliberate in- or exclusion of influencing factors indicate which point of view the newspaper supports. Features provide the reader with more background information on the scandal. Features are not bound by strict rules of objectivity; they elaborate on topical issues from a certain angle, which enables *The Guardian* to include their opinion towards the scandal as well as incorporating links to issues

the newspaper regards as significant. Moreover, the interrelation between news articles and features will eventually illustrate to what extent *The Guardian's* cultural and political mind-set is brought about in supposedly objective news writing.

Van Dijk and Fairclough focus on newspapers, which is in accordance with the examination of *The Guardian*. Their approach advocates the analysis of news writing about a particular issue over a longer period of time and is therefore useful for researching the portrayal of the horsemeat scandal during the time between January and April (Carvalho 21). All factors of CDA will contribute to the image of how *The Guardian's* journalists and editors mediate between the scandal and the depiction of it in the newspaper: a mediated reality.

Chapter 3: Case Study

In line with the CDA, textual analyses of the corpus of selected works – all told 115 articles – follow. The first part focuses on layout, which Van Dijk and Fairclough refer to as “surface elements,” and structural organisation (Carvalho 16). The analyses of surface elements concentrates on the number of words and enclosed photographs, yet since this thesis examines the use of language, these elements will not be analysed (Carvalho 16). Additionally, CDA does not provide a sufficient examination for the structural organisation of *The Guardian*'s website, i.e. its division into sections, which therefore requires an additional method focussing on website structure. CDA is, however, applicable to examine separate sections.

David Griffith, marketing professor at Michigan State University, examines consumer behaviour, which he links to website structure. This structure, either tree- or tunnel-structure, is the underlying element of a website and guides the visitor through the site. A website providing news works according to the same structure and thus Griffith's findings on consumer behaviour can be applied to examine *The Guardian*'s layout. Figure 1 shows how tree- and tunnel-structures are composed. According to Griffith, a tunnel structure “reduces the mental energy left available for processing the information,” whereas a tree structure “allows consumers to move freely and access information easily” (1392). *The Guardian* uses different sections, in which subsections are shown: this resembles a tree structure. *The Guardian*'s layout provides its readers with news easily, which eventually leads to more efficient acquisition of information.

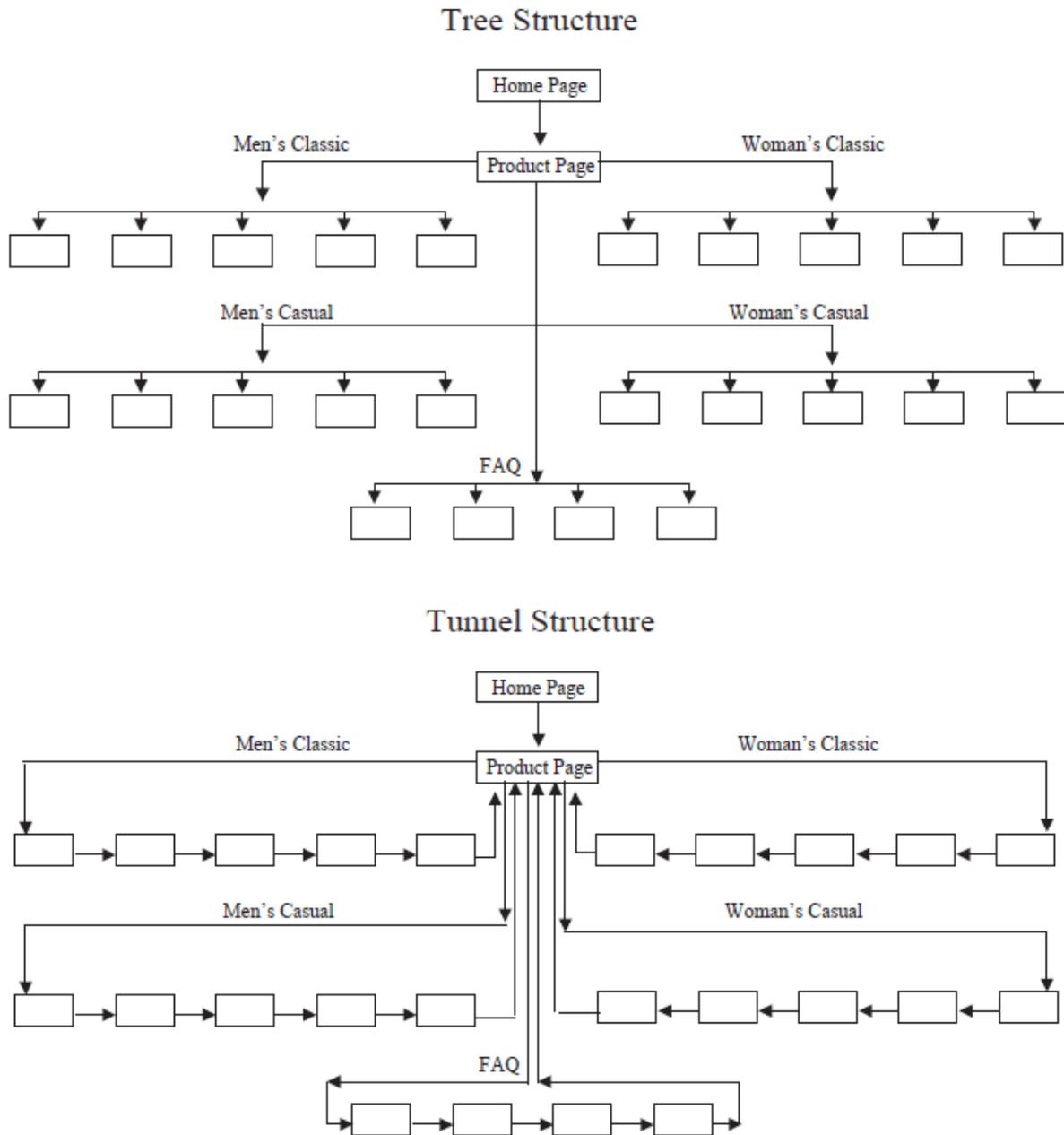


Fig. 1. Web site structures: tree and tunnel.

Moreover, CDA looks at where the articles in question are positioned and how frequently particular sections are used. The table in appendix 1 shows how the sections have developed into other and which appear most frequently. The day the Food Safety Authority of Ireland published their studies on the content of beefburgers *The Guardian* only published a relatively small article in section News > World news > Food safety. Although the covering of the horsemeat scandal's beginning mostly included news articles, the news section was not used most repeatedly. *The Guardian* mostly used the business section, which was split into

“food and drink industry” and a section which covered articles that focused on various companies involved. Four other articles were published in the environmental section, whilst the subject of these articles did not specifically differ from the content of the ones on news, business, or the less frequently used section on politics. The first two articles in the environmental section have headlines which imply they should be in the political section: “Horsemeat burger scandal probably result of criminality, says minister” and “Carcinogen may have entered human food chain in horsemeat, claims Labour.” The third headline, “Horse DNA found in Northern Ireland frozen meat plant,” rather suggests an article focussing on business, whereas the fourth also seems to have more of a political character: “Horsemeat scandal: legal action expected across Europe.” *The Guardian* may have deliberately chosen to put these articles in the environmental section to illustrate how both politics and the business sector influence the environment. Moreover, the incorporation of political parties in almost all the articles indicates that the horsemeat scandal in fact has become a political issue. Several sections on *The Guardian*’s website have covered news articles on the horsemeat scandal until 11 February. On this day *The Guardian* made a special section for the issue, namely News > UK news > Horsemeat scandal. Nonetheless, not all articles are now in this section, which enhances *The Guardian*’s enduring goal to reach out to readers with different interests.

Furthermore, the sections providing the articles also give information about the perspective from which they are written. Van Dijk and Fairclough refer to this as “the notion of objects” (Carvalho 16). This element examines the topical classifications and the incorporation of links to other articles. Additionally, the two scholars mention the analysis of “actors” in a text (Carvalho 16). Since objects and actors both help constitute the general message authors want to convey they can be examined analogously; when readers understand the topic and the actors involved they have already perceived a great deal of the information.

Furthermore, actors often constitute the topic themselves. The preceding examination has shown that articles on the horsemeat scandal are interrelated and do not show very distinct differences. Although *The Guardian* presents the horsemeat scandal in different sections, it still tries to incorporate links to other sections; to strengthen this intertextuality, similar objects and actors come forward in various sections.

Focussing on topics and actors, a few articles from different sections have been chosen for examination. The three main sections are food safety, business and the environment and since politics influences all three other sections, articles covering this topic will also be incorporated. The political section is also relevant for the analysis of *The Guardian's* political stance and whether or not this issue is covered objectively. Interestingly, the food safety section does not seem to have any features on the horsemeat scandal. This may have to do with the fact that this section solely covers hard news: the emergence of horsemeat investigations. *The Guardian* put features on food safety in other sections, which consequently enables the newspaper to reach more readers. Starting with "FSA orders tests of processed beef after horsemeat is found in Findus lasagne," which comes from section News > World news > Food safety, the reader comes to understand the topic is further meat investigations in a number of companies. The actors in the text are the FSA's chief executive and several members of different parties. In the business section the article "Burger King reveals its burgers were contaminated in horsemeat scandal," illustrates the same actors and topic: members of several governmental organisations are mentioned and several concerns are compared in terms of their acquisition of meat products. Another news writing in the News > World news > Food safety section: "Cuts and deregulation fostered horsemeat scandal, says Labour," depicts how politics is interwoven in the scandal. The headline implies the political influence and the following lead shows the Labour party's criticism of food regulations by government: "Shadow environment secretary says drive to deregulate food

safety industry has led to chaotic system with fewer checks.” By mentioning shadow environment secretary Mary Creagh, a Labour Party politician, *The Guardian* marks its political stance. The article is politically biased because the article is written from the spokesperson’s point of view, rather than the environment secretary’s: *The Guardian* only reveals its connection with the Labour party. Furthermore, the feature “The horsemeat scandal: could there be much more to come?” strengthens the criticism of the meat industry from a business, section food and drink industry, perspective by focusing on how the industry produces meat as cheaply as possible and commenting on food quality, whereas “Angry farmer wonder: who’ll end up paying for the new horsemeat testing?” focuses on the industry from an environmental, section farming, perspective. Interestingly, the latter feature, in the environmental section, seems to highlight the topic of business to a greater extent than the feature positioned in the business section. All in all, the sections do not seem to have fixed topics and actors, which increases *The Guardian*’s interconnection of various involving sections.

A key concept of Critical Discourse Analysis is the use of language. Van Dijk and Fairclough acknowledge the analysis of language as being of great significance: “used vocabulary [...] and the writing style are important dimensions of the constitution of meanings” (Carvalho 17). According to German philosopher Martin Heidegger we are able to receive and understand the world through the use of language, which is the essence of human existence (987). Following this creed, an author’s lexical choices could be seen as a manner to get a hold of the world and thus the analysis of an article’s linguistic aspects is fundamental. Not only the words journalist choose to write with, but especially the choice they make in who they quote in their articles aid in conveying a certain message. Whenever someone is quoted, the authority does not lie with the author of the text but with the person in question. The author of the text strategically embeds quotes in an article, which strengthens

the particular message: “The function of the quote is to *illustrate* a point being made in the introductory description” (Nylund 846). For instance, although this is a supposedly objective news article, in “Horsemeat scandal blamed on European meat regulation changes,” the author uses considerably strong language. In the headline the author already points a finger in a certain direction by using the word blamed. The lead, then, contains an emotionally charged phrase: “expert says redefinition of meat meant manufacturers had to look overseas for cheap replacements.” The so-called “redefinition of meat” does not mean that meat has gained a different explanation in dictionaries, but is rather a means of pointing at the meat industry and its consumers that they do not seem to care about the value of meat nowadays. In the second paragraph, the author’s use of a quote works persuasively: the quote indicates the journalist’s presence, which adds up to the credibility of the article. It influences the manner in which the text that revolves around it is perceived: “To be an observer and to see things with your own eyes, rather than hearing them as second-hand knowledge, has a strong epistemological value both in scientific and everyday reasoning. Hence, the reported presence of the news reporter can be seen as a discursive strategy which strongly contributes to the factuality of the news story” (Nylund 846).

The UK's horsemeat scandal was in "large part" the result of a switch from UK to foreign meat suppliers in 2012 caused by an abrupt change in European regulation that the government failed to contest, according to the expert who led the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) surveillance programme for a decade.

Further on in the article FSA’s Dr Mark Woolfe is mentioned. By means of providing the reader with background information of the person quoted, the author attempts to make opinionated information of the quote “factual” (Stenvall 86). The author of the article includes Woolfe’s occupation, thereby enhancing the reliability of the article. Moreover, if

The Guardian's political stance would have been completely different it would not have been likely that journalists would take this particular quote to indicate the scandal: ““You would think it would set alarm bells ringing but it did not,” said Dr Mark Woolfe, head of food authenticity at the FSA until 2009. “There was an obvious risk. The companies were seeking a low price and that is asking for trouble.”” In another article, “FSA orders tests [...] Findus lasagne,” the lead is as follows: “Food Standards Agency chief says situation is ‘appalling’ and likely result of a criminal act rather than mistaken contamination.” Because “appalling” is quoted, the text has a “stronger epistemological value;” this one word is thus used to attract people to read (Nylund 846).

Furthermore, as Van Dijk and Fairclough point out, writing style gives the text its character and plays a huge role in designing meaning (Carvalho 17). Grammatical aspects such as tense and the use of adjectives and adverbs alongside the formal or informal structure of a text contribute to the interpretation of a text (Carvalho 17). In general, passivity and the past tense make a text seem distant. In the news article “Contaminated horsemeat could harm health, warns environment secretary” both the headline and the lead are in present tense: “Owen Paterson says tests may reveal presence of horse drug phenylbutazone, which could be 'injurious' to human health.” This makes the article instantly more vivid and readers are easier inclined to read the entire article.

Moreover, journalists conduct readers into believing their mediated representation of reality by using discursive strategies, which includes the process of framing (Carvalho 18). The purpose of framing is to provide the public with information from various points of view: “By framing and directing attention to public issues, journalism has a key role in contemporary political life” (Hackett 85). Journalists make decisions on what news is being covered and how these articles are being arranged. Framing articles entails representing news as well as linking it to other news events. The emphasis lies on the journalists’ decision in

how to act as a mediator i.e. the point of view he decides to take (Carvalho 18). Additionally, part of the process of framing is the in- or exclusion of political affairs: respectively the politicization or de- politicization of an article (Carvalho 19). For instance, in “Food Standards Agency to review its handling of the horsemeat scandal” the author highlights different aspects of the horsemeat scandal. Since the article gives information about the Food Standards Agency, it addresses both health and environmental concerns. However, the author also mentions Labour shadow environment secretary Mary Creagh, who criticises how the FSA handled before the outcome of the scandal. By mentioning a member of the Labour party the article gets a political mood. Furthermore, another discursive strategy is the “selectivity apparatus,” which is the journalist’s filtering of information provided (Carvalho 19). The journalists’ choice in who they quote is a selective process, because inclusion of quotes illustrates an issue from a certain point of view. For instance, when quoting a politician e.g. a Labour spokesman commenting on the FSA actions, the reader only sees this standpoint. Through the selectivity process the reader is more likely to connect to this political stance.

In addition, ideological standpoints are argued to be “the most fundamental shaping influence of a text” (Carvalho 19). *The Guardian*’s ideology encourages “journalistic freedom and liberal values” (The Scott Trust). Nonetheless, ideological standpoints may be the essence of a news medium; yet, in news articles standpoints should not influence the objectivity of the author. In order to define a newspaper’s ideology “semantic structures of discourse” could be examined. The analyses of features are particularly useful because these sorts of articles reflect the *The Guardian*’s philosophy. The purpose of features is to provide background information. However, features are not bound by rules of objectivity, the editors are able to approach background information from the political discourse the newspaper supports. For instance, in “Horses and burgers bring bad memories for Tories,” the author

expresses his criticism of Prime Minister David Cameron. The author of the text uses the horsemeat scandal to bring back memories of how Cameron has dealt with previous issues. Interwoven in background information on the horsemeat scandal, the feature rather depicts the author's criticism on how Cameron's functions as Prime Minister in general, than political actions following the horsemeat scandal.

Moreover, solely textual analyses do not give a complete image of the frame of the horsemeat scandal. Contextual analyses provide a broader social context and make the reporting on the horsemeat affair provided by *The Guardian* thorough. With their "comparative-synchronic analysis," Van Dijk and Fairclough explain that the simple counting of articles presented is the first indication of how important a newspaper regards a social issue (Carvalho 20). In appendix 1 the total number of articles is shown to be 115 over a period of a little over three months. The beginning of the issue attention cycle corresponds with the publication of findings of the FSA's studies. From this day onwards *The Guardian* set the horsemeat scandal on its agenda; the days following the outcome of the scandal multiple articles were published. The frequency of articles appearing on *The Guardian's* website stays somewhat the same until 15 February, when ten articles represented the horsemeat scandal; eight out of ten were news articles, whereas two of them were features. One news article is particularly significant to indicate the issue attention cycle: "How the horsemeat scandal unfolded – timeline" illustrates the significance of certain dates. These dates can subsequently be linked to the number of articles illustrating new findings in the scandal, which are written from different angles. Every time major news came to light *The Guardian* took a few days to report – both news articles and features – on the scandal. The incorporation of features during days new findings are published depicts what *The Guardian's* standpoint towards these actions is: *The Guardian's* ideology is interwoven in the discourse of the horsemeat scandal. In Van Dijk's and Fairclough's comparative-synchronic

analysis these various representations of the same issue are an attempt to construct a proper representation of a news event: “The comparison of different media depictions of reality involves attempting to reconstitute the original events” (Carvalho 20). Therefore, in order to construct a thorough representation of reality *The Guardian* ought to highlight various viewpoints, cleverly incorporating features showing the newspaper’s philosophy.

Furthermore, Van Dijk and Fairclough mention the notion of intertextuality as being an indication of a broader context present. These scholars focused on print newspapers, yet this notion can be analysed fairly easily on a newspaper’s website. *The Guardian* connects articles by integrating links to other sections. For instance, “Aldi confirms up to 100% horsemeat in beef products” includes several links to food and business sections and is therefore part of a broader context. The hyperlink of “Aldi” directs to the business section of Aldi, yet the hyperlink of “Food” in “Food Standards Agency” does not direct to this agency’s section, but to the food section. Moreover, an inclusion of a hyperlink to the meat section shows various features and blogs in which *The Guardian* comments on contemporary meat consumption. These intertextual relations are “a confrontation of alternative depictions of reality that mainly aims to enhance the critical reading of news discourse and help identify the specific discursive traits of a given news outlet” (Carvalho 21).

Lastly, the historical-diachronic analysis defines the interdisciplinarity that takes place in constructing a frame. Various disciplines are interconnected and have a perpetual influence on each other’s construction. *The Guardian* has shown itself to be an interdisciplinary newspaper by incorporating links in articles to other sections and by mentioning influencing subjects other than the main subject of the article. According to Van Dijk and Fairclough, issue-development, “the sequence of events and construction of the issue,” helps constitute the meaning of the broader context (Carvalho 21). Since the introduction of the horsemeat scandal *The Guardian* has focused on a great spectrum of subjects, thereby positioning it in

different sections and including several disciplines. Although *The Guardian* kept including various disciplines, on 11 February the editors decided to devote one section, News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal, to the issue and thereby giving it some boundaries; the frame has become visible to some extent.

Conclusion

Following founder John Edward Taylor's idea of "comment is free, but facts are sacred," *The Guardian* has stayed close to covering trustworthy news. The examination of news articles has depicted the key component of providing readers with objective and neutral facts, yet the connection with features has illustrated *The Guardian's* general mind-set.

Van Dijk's and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, which entails both textual and contextual aspects, has provided a method for the examination of *The Guardian's* representation of the horsemeat scandal. The layout of *The Guardian's* website has shown to be a tree structure, which enables the reader to access the horsemeat scandal's section directly. *The Guardian's* devotion of a separate section indicates a great interest in the scandal. Preceding the separate horsemeat scandal's section *The Guardian* used various sections to present news articles and features. These sections depicted similar actors and objects, however, by placing them in different sections *The Guardian* opted to reach more readers. Furthermore, journalists mainly used objective language in news articles, yet, *The Guardian's* political interest was still visible because of journalists' choice in who they quoted. Quotes enhance the credibility of a text and thus a politically preferred use of quotes influences the reader's political standpoint. Features on the horsemeat scandal are intended to provide more background information, yet they are written from *The Guardian's* perspective towards the issue. *The Guardian's* discursive strategy to incorporate other sections on politics and the environment helped construct the newspaper's frame of the horsemeat scandal: *The Guardian's* ideological standpoints presented themselves. Simultaneously, contextual analyses, including comparative-synchronic and historical-diachronic analyses, illustrated, respectively, intertextual and interdisciplinary relations between the discourse of the horsemeat scandal and other notion's *The Guardian* regards as significant. To conclude, news

articles on the horsemeat scandal have been represented in a just, unbiased manner, yet there are many paths towards subjective representations of the horsemeat scandal. Following the observations throughout the entire case study the claim can be made that *The Guardian's* liberal ideology has been notably present.

Appendix 1: table with article headlines, dates, sections and a sample survey on the number of words

Headline	Date	Section
1. Horse DNA found in beefburgers from four major supermarkets	15 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
2. Horsemeat-in-burgers scandal prompts food hygiene fears	16 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
3. Cameron tells supermarkets: horsemeat burger scandal unacceptable	16 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
4. Horses and burgers bring bad memories for Tories	16 January 2013	News > Politics > David Cameron Feature
5. Horsemeat in frozen burgers prompts urgent inquiry by food watchdogs	16 January 2013	Business > Tesco
6. Horsemeat burger scandal probably result of criminality, says minister	17 January 2013	Environment > The meat industry
7. Horsemeat scandal: watchdog to test all beef products at UK supermarkets	17 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
8. Horsemeat scandal: discarded burgers to be converted into fuel	17 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
9. Tesco chief uses Talking Shop blog to rein in horsemeat burger scandal	17 January 2013	Business > Tesco
10. Cuts and deregulation fostered horsemeat scandal, says Labour	18 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
11. Tesco tweets itself into more horsemeat trouble	18 January 2013	Business > Tesco
12. Carcinogen may have entered human food chain in horsemeat, claims Labour	24 January 2013	Environment > The meat industry
13. Waitrose pulls beefburgers 'as a precaution' amid horsemeat scare	25 January 2013	Business > Waitrose

14.	Tesco launches horsemeat inquiry after withdrawn burgers found on sale	25 January 2013	Business > Tesco
15.	Horsemeat in burgers traced to Polish suppliers	27 January 2013	News > World news > Food safety
16.	Tesco drops Irish supplier over horsemeat scandal	30 January 2013	Business > Tesco
17.	Burger King reveals its burgers were contaminated in horsemeat scandal	31 January 2013	Business > Burger King
18.	Horsemeat scandal leaves Burger King facing a whopping backlash	1 February 2013	Money > Consumer Affairs
19.	Horsemeat scandal: another Irish company suspends burger production	4 February 2013	News > World news > Ireland
20.	Horse DNA found in Northern Ireland frozen meat plant	5 February 2013	Environment > The meat industry
21.	Lasagne taken off shelves amid concern over horsemeat contamination	6 February 2013	News > World news > Food safety
22.	Findus beef lasagne withdrawn after tests show high level of horsemeat	7 February 2013	News > World news > Food safety
23.	FSA orders tests of processed beef after horsemeat is found in Findus lasagne	8 February 2013	News > World news > Food safety
24.	Horsemeat found in Findus lasagne: consumer Q&A	8 February 2013	Money > Consumer Affairs
25.	Horsemeat scandal: Comigel is huge exporter of French frozen meals	8 February 2013	News > World news > Food safety
26.	Findus knew of potential meat problem days before lasagne withdrawal	8 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
27.	Horsemeat lasagne scandal leaves Findus reputation in tatters	8 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
28.	Police called in to investigate 'criminal' horsemeat scandal	8 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
29.	The horsemeat scandal: could there be much more to come?	8 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
30.	Findus criticised for its handling of horsemeat	8 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry

	crisis		
31.	Aldi confirms up to 100% horsemeat in beef products	9 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
32.	Horsemeat expected to be found in more British ready meals	9 February 2013	Business > Food and drink industry
33.	Contaminated horsemeat could harm health, warns environment secretary	11 February 2013	News> Society > Health
34.	Horsemeat scandal: legal action expected across Europe	11 February 2013	Environment > The meat industry
35.	French supermarkets withdraw products linked to horsemeat scandal	11 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
36.	Horsemeat scandal: bute drug 'presents very low risk to public health'	11 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
37.	Food industry needs more tests, says minister	11 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
38.	Tesco says some of its value spaghetti bolognese contains 60% horsemeat	11 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
39.	Horsemeat scandal blamed on European meat regulation changes	12 February 2013	Environment > The meat industry
40.	Horsemeat scandal: 'not enough labs in the world' for speedy tests	12 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
41.	FSA and police raid two British companies in horsemeat investigation	13 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
42.	Horsemeat scandal: FSA promises 'relentless' investigation	13 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
43.	Horsemeat scandal: David Cameron says offenders will feel full force of law	13 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
44.	Waitrose did not report possible meatball contamination for two weeks	13 February 2013	Business > Waitrose
45.	Horsemeat scandal: Owner of Yorkshire abattoir denies wrongdoing	13 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
46.	Horsemeat scandal: Dutch meat trader could be central figure	13 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
47.	Horsemeat scandal has left	14 February	News > UK News > Horsemeat

	ministers 'flat-footed', says committee of MPs	2013	scandal
48.	Fresh meat sales soar at Morrisons amid horsemeat scandal	14 February 2013	Business > Morrisons
49.	EU warns Tories that UK security opt-out 'doesn't make sense'	14 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
50.	Horsemeat and bute: Q&A	14 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
51.	Horsemeat scandal deepens as minister says bute may be in food chain	14 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
52.	Cheshire firm investigated in horsemeat scandal	14 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
53.	French firm accused of being first to label horse as beef	14 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
54.	Horsemeat scandal: 'fresh beef' discovery as tests overwhelm laboratories	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
55.	Horsemeat is 'delicious, like rich beef', says restaurant owner	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
56.	Hospital burgers withdrawn over horsemeat	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
57.	Horsemeat found in school and hospital meals	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
58.	Horsemeat: FSA findings – the key points	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
59.	Horsemeat tests: no new products involved, says FSA	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
60.	How the horsemeat scandal unfolded – timeline	15 February 2013	News > World news > Food safety
61.	Horsemeat scandal: French inspectors scour Spanghero processing firm	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
62.	Horsemeat scandal: traces found in school dinners and hospital meals	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
63.	Horsemeat scandal boosts sales for small-scale butchers	15 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
64.	Horsemeat scandal: 'we will never know how many have eaten horse'	16 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
65.	Horsemeat scandal linked to secret network of firms	16 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal

66.	Horsemeat scandal: 'government warned two years ago'	17 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
67.	Halve meat consumption, scientists urge rich world	18 February 2013	Environment > The meat industry
68.	Asda bolognese supplier back in production after horsemeat scandal	18 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
69.	Horsemeat scandal: French company Spanghero restarts operations	18 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
70.	Horsemeat tests 'will end this week'	18 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
71.	Nestlé yet to submit results of UK tests for horsemeat to FSA	19 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
72.	Nestlé UK products test negative for horsemeat	19 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
73.	Horsemeat scandal: Welsh firm recalls burgers after tests show illicit meat	21 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
74.	Horsemeat scandal triggers 15% rise in sales for France's equine butchers	21 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
75.	Asda warns of tough year ahead as boss speaks out on horsemeat scandal	21 February 2013	Business > Asda
76.	Birds Eye withdraws ready meals after horse DNA found in chilli	22 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
77.	Horsemeat scandal: Scotland bans frozen beefburgers in schools	22 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
78.	Horsemeat scandal: schools caterer suspends all frozen beef products	22 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
79.	Horsemeat scandal: François Hollande calls for European meat labelling	23 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
80.	Horsemeat scandal: EU ministers want faster action on meat labelling	24 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
81.	Ikea withdraws meatballs from UK stores after discovery of horsemeat	25 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
82.	Horsemeat scandal: Ikea withdraws all meatballs from UK stores	25 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
83.	Whitbread makes food	26 February	Business > Whitbread

	pledge after horsemeat scandal	2013	
84.	Frozen burger sales plunge 43% after horsemeat scandal	26 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
85.	Whitbread boss backs tighter food regulation after horsemeat scandal	26 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
86.	Frozen beefburger sales down 43% since start of horsemeat scandal	26 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
87.	Horsemeat scandal: Tesco promises to buy more meat from UK	27 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
88.	British farmers must capitalise in horsemeat aftermath, says minister	27 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
89.	Horsemeat scandal: farmers 'must not bear cost of tighter regulation'	27 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
90.	Angry farmers wonder: who'll end up paying for the new horsemeat testing?	27 February 2013	Environment > Farming
91.	McDonald's burgers 'free of horsemeat' due to close ties with farmers, firm says	28 February 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
92.	Horsemeat scandal: Taco Bell withdraws UK beef products	1 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
93.	Horsemeat scandal: chief of Irish beef company to face MPs	4 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
94.	Birds Eye accuses Irish firm of supplying meat with horse DNA	5 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
95.	FSA to ask consumers how much horsemeat they will accept in their food	5 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
96.	Horsemeat scandal sparks rise in sales of vegetarian alternatives	5 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
97.	Horsemeat scandal: head of Irish firm questioned by MPs	6 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
98.	Processed meat scare: a bacon sandwich won't kill you ... will it?	7 March 2013	News > Society > Health
99.	Tesco withdraws own-	12 March	News > UK News > Horsemeat

	brand value meatloaf after finding horse DNA	2013	scandal
100.	Six in 10 have changed shopping habits since horsemeat scandal, survey finds	13 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
101.	Queen's official supplied horsemeat to Sodexo	14 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
102.	Halal school sausages contained pork DNA, Westminster survey found	14 March 2013	News > World News > Islam
103.	Horsemeat scandal 'could make pupils switch to unhealthy packed lunches'	15 March 2013	News > Education > School meals
104.	Tesco is still UK's top retail brand despite horsemeat scandal, says report	19 March 2013	Business > Tesco
105.	Horsemeat found being sold as beef in Preston and Liverpool	22 March 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
106.	Tesco market share sticks below 30% after horsemeat revelations	26 March 2013	Business > Supermarkets
107.	Horsemeat scandal: consumer fears have eased, poll shows	9 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
108.	Veterinary drug bute found in Asda corned beef	9 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
109.	Bute found in 22 horses slaughtered for food at UK abattoirs in last two months	10 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
110.	Netherlands recalls 50,000 tonnes of meat	10 April 2013	News > World news > Netherlands
111.	Tesco to unveil revamp plan after first profit fall in 20 years	14 April 2013	Business > Tesco
112.	European commission may force U-turn on horse passports database	15 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
113.	Horsemeat tests show less than 5% of EU beef products has equine DNA	16 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
114.	Food Standards Agency to review its handling of the horsemeat scandal	17 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal

115. UK abattoir linked to Dutch distributor investigated over horsemeat scandal	22 April 2013	News > UK News > Horsemeat scandal
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