

# **Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Implementation Plan for England**

A Work in Progress

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## Foreword

This Implementation Plan is issued for public consultation as a work in progress to provide interested parties with an opportunity to consider whether this Plan, its content and format, gives them what they need and want to know about how the Strategy is being taken forward.

In developing this Implementation Plan with interested parties we will be looking to include initiatives which are taking place outside Government, or in partnership with us. This should then show a more complete picture of the work being carried out to improve animal health and welfare. We are therefore interested in stakeholders' views on how their contribution to the strategy should be presented in this plan.

When considering this plan, it would be helpful if you could think about the following questions

- Have you found the way that we have broken down the work areas helpful?
- Is the implementation plan about the right length?
- Have we provided the right amount of information?
- Is there information related to the implementation of the strategy that you think should be included in the plan?
- Are there examples of stakeholder contribution to the implementation of the strategy which could be included?

If you wish to make comments please send them to the following address by **5 March 2004**.

Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Unit  
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs  
1a Page Street  
London  
SW1P 4PQ

Email submission may be sent to [ah.ws@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ah.ws@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

Although the aim of this consultation is to develop a framework and approach for the Implementation Plan, you may have questions or comments on the individual work areas covered by the strategy. Contacts have been added at the end of each section in case you require further information on any of the issues raised.

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive will be made publicly available through the Defra Information Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses.

If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT

system in email responses will not be treated as such a request. The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or email requests (tel: 020 7238 6575, email: [defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk)). Wherever possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Defra and the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland have been working together to produce an Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain. Animal Health and the way in which animals are treated is of increasing concern to the owners of animals, veterinarians, consumers, members of the public and the Government. In recent years we have seen only too clearly how animal diseases can be a threat to people's health with BSE, and the serious impact that they can have on the rural economy and people's everyday lives such as in the recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak.

After extensive consultation at the beginning of the year, the Outline Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was issued for consultation on 15 July 2003. In this we said that Government would work with stakeholders to develop Strategy Implementation Plans for England, Scotland, and Wales for publication in November 2003. Plans would then be updated when the final strategy was published in Spring 2004.

Although this is an Implementation Plan for England, many animal health and welfare related policies are implemented on a UK or GB basis. In many cases this plan reflects the broader position and will overlap with plans issued for Scotland and Wales.

This Implementation Plan complements and should be read in conjunction with the outline strategy.

## 1.2 Content of the implementation plan

The Implementation Plans of all three countries have been based on a common framework. This Implementation Plan is for England and is published as a work in progress. We will work with stakeholders to ensure that it provides an informative and user friendly insight into the scope, aims and achievements of the strategy. Our original intention had been for the Implementation Plan to focus on the New Initiatives in the outline strategy. However, it is important that we also provide a clearer view of the work Government currently undertakes, across the breadth of animal health and welfare matters. This draft provides an overview of the entire strategy, expressed as either one of the strategy's new initiatives, a specific work area (such as Illegal imports) or larger programmes of related work (such as Endemic Disease and Zoonoses). In each case we have identified which of the strategic outcomes (as described in the outline strategy) the respective workareas support.

We have separated the different activities covered by the strategy into four groups:

- Managing the strategy

- Prevention and Control of Animal Diseases
- Animal Welfare
- Promotion of Animal Health

Each activity is presented in terms of:

**‘Context’** to explain how the work area fits into the strategy and links to the rationale for Government involvement in animal health and welfare.

**‘Activity’** to describe what main activities Defra is carrying out to achieve the aims of the work area.

**‘Milestones’** to describe what we are aiming to achieve over the next few years.

**‘Delivery’** to identify who is primarily responsible for the work area and briefly describes what they do.

As the strategy develops and the governance arrangements become established, the implementation plan will need to reflect the fact that this is a ten year strategy. Many of the programmes of work are indeed areas where deliverables can only be measured over a long period. Other areas are near to completion, or well advanced. Some of the new initiatives put in place by the outline strategy are just beginning, and others will be needed to deliver outcomes for the final strategy next spring.

### **1.3 Issues affecting Delivery**

The majority of work is delivered on behalf of Government by delivery agents: the State Veterinary Service, Local Authorities, Meat Hygiene Service, Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Veterinary Medicine Directorate private veterinarians working on behalf of the State Veterinary Service and many others.

Defra announced on 28 October 2003 a review of the delivery of veterinary services with the creation in principle of an executive agency, subject to a review currently underway on the scope of the agency. On 11 November Lord Haskin’s review of rural delivery was published and work will now be put in place to develop his proposals into a practical implementation plan. Both these initiatives, as well as developments in the Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy, may have implications for the delivery landscape of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy next spring and will need to be reflected in the Strategy and updated Implementation Plans at that time.

### **1.4 Stakeholder engagement and contributions to the Strategy**

We hope this Implementation Plan will be of interest to all those involved in animal health and welfare. We are issuing this document for formal consultation but in addition we intend to hold a series of discussions with interested parties to develop and update the Implementation Plan alongside the strategy next spring. The Plan will become an integral feature of the strategy, updated annually to report on progress and reflect changes as the strategy evolves.

## 2. Managing the Strategy and Decision Making

### 2.1 New Initiative 4&5: Management of the Strategy

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, promoting a partnership approach and ensuring effective delivery and enforcement.*

#### Context

The outline animal health and welfare strategy set out proposals designed to ensure that the strategy is managed and developed through a new partnership approach. At the heart of this process will be a Strategy Steering Board which will provide stakeholders with an opportunity to shape the future direction of the strategy. There were also proposals to ensure that stakeholders' views on the direction and delivery of the strategy are heard at national, regional and sectoral level.

Responses to the proposals in the outline strategy are now being considered and we will need to reflect comments received in taking forward our initial ideas. We are mindful of the demands on stakeholders time and it is essential that any groups or structures put in place to manage the strategy are able to make a real contribution, and do not duplicate existing forums but are complementary.

#### Activities

Setting up a permanent Strategy Steering Board will take some time. In the interim we urgently need a small GB based group to work with us to develop the final strategy. We are currently inviting around five stakeholder representatives (representing livestock keepers, animal welfare interests and veterinarians) to form an interim strategy steering board to ensure the final strategy and implementation plan are fit for purpose. A broader group of England based stakeholders will be established in the new year.

We are working with the pig industry to help them develop a strategy for pig health and welfare. We are currently in touch with other livestock sectors that are considering similar initiatives for their industries.

#### Milestones

- We aim for hold the first meeting of a interim Strategy Steering Board in **early 2004**.

#### Delivery

- **Defra, Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly Government** will develop the management arrangements for the strategy in partnership with stakeholders.

- We will also facilitate the development of sector based sub strategies but look to the individual **livestock sectors** to follow the example of the pig industry in taking the initiative.

For further information please contact:

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## **2.2 New Initiative 1: Disease Profiles**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, promoting a partnership approach and providing a clearer understanding of costs and benefits.*

### **Context**

This new initiative aims to produce summary disease profiles for each of the main animal diseases, syndromes and conditions. A comprehensive, validated and well maintained system of disease profiles should provide the foundation for Strategy related discussion and decision making by Government and stakeholders. Drawing together key facts and knowledge of specific diseases and conditions, including an assessment of their respective impact or threat, will provide the basis for discussion and decisions on the strategy and where responsibility lies for action. The profiles should ensure that animal health and welfare related threats are assessed in a consistent way and prioritised effectively.

### **Activity**

Work to develop an initial set of profiles is progressing on two levels. The concept of disease profiles was originally identified, and is already being developed, as a key part of the UK Veterinary Surveillance Strategy. To supplement this work and ensure that an initial set of summary profiles is available when the Strategy is launched in Spring 2004, Defra has commissioned help to identify the profiles that should be developed as part of an initial phase, and then help populate them. Work is currently underway to refine instructions for the completion of the profiles and arrangements for their validation.

### **Milestones**

- An initial set of Summary Disease Profiles will be published as an accompanying document to the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in **Spring 2004**.

### **Delivery**

- Defra has primary responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Disease Profiles.
- A **Business Assurance Group** which includes representation from key stakeholder groups such as farmers, vets, the livestock industry, and from the public health and animal welfare arenas has been set up to develop the format and content of the profiles.

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## **2.3 New Initiative 2: Review of Government intervention**

*Supporting the strategic outcome of developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities*

### **Context**

This review examines the reason behind public intervention for existing notifiable diseases on the basis of information contained in the disease profiles which are being completed as a separate strategy new initiative (see 2.2).

The extent and the way in which Government intervenes in areas covered by the animal health and welfare strategy has evolved over many years. The strategy provides an opportunity to review this situation and develop a guiding rationale for government intervention and the principles for government decision making. Our aim is to ensure that the approach to government intervention is consistent with the principles contained in the strategy. This will help ensure that intervention is transparent, understood and that limited public resources are invested in the areas where they are most needed.

### **Activity**

Before we can carry out the review we need to complete the first set of disease profiles to ensure that decisions are based on a common and agreed basis of understanding. We will be working with stakeholders to agree a process through which we can interpret and prioritise the profiles and feed the conclusions into the development and management of the strategy.

### **Milestones**

- Work on the review can not begin until some of the disease profiles have been completed. Discussion with stakeholders on how the review should be conducted should be possible once the strategy has been launched in the **Spring 2004**.

### **Delivery**

- The review of Government intervention in animal health and welfare will be conducted by **Defra, Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government**, in partnership with stakeholders.

For further information please contact:

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## **2.4 New Initiative 14: Cost-sharing**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities and understanding of the costs and benefits of animal health and welfare.*

### **Context**

The inquiries into the recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak all commented on the cost to the country of exotic disease outbreaks. One of the key components of the vision of the animal health and welfare strategy is for activities and priorities to be agreed in partnership between government and industry with the costs of livestock health appropriately balanced between industry, suppliers, taxpayers and the consumer. There are, of course, good reasons to intervene in animal disease and its prevention but if that intervention is only or primarily in the interests of the farming community it is right in the future to expect that some or all of the costs should be borne by that community. It is important to balance the Government's responsibility for the protection of public health, including ensuring disease free animals in the public interest, with the economic benefits to industry of high standards of animal health and welfare

This new initiative aims to ensure that industry has greater ownership of, and financial responsibility for, animal disease risks and aims to introduce specific policies to strike a fair balance between the taxpayers and industry.

### **Activity**

The first step under this new initiative is to identify the areas of government intervention in animal health and welfare where both industry and the wider public stand to benefit from the existence of animal disease controls. An evaluation of the key services identified will then be conducted to establish a clear understanding of where the costs and benefits correctly lie. These same principles should be extended into the development of any new policies when the allocation of costs for service provision should be considered carefully.

Defra is reviewing the basis for charging for services across all its activities. This review is developing guiding principles to govern the decision on whether a service should, in principle, be paid for by the recipients or by government, and will establish a policy framework for developing cost sharing.

### **Milestones**

- We are preparing for consultation **in the first half of 2004** on the guiding principles which should determine where the costs of different activities should be borne. We shall also consult on specific proposals consistent with these principles, including a possible levy to share the cost of disease outbreaks and a charge to recover the costs of the Cattle Tracing System.

## **Delivery**

- A working group with wide stakeholder representation has met several times to discuss the proposals for a possible disease levy. There will be full stakeholder consultation as the cost-sharing programme develops.

For further information please contact:

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## 3. Prevention and Control of Animal Diseases

### 3.1 Disease Prevention

*Supporting the strategic outcome that disease prevention is better than cure.*

#### Context

The disease prevention programme aims to deliver proportionate, practical and effective regulatory based controls together with non-statutory incentives that prevent or reduce the risk of the introduction or spread of notifiable and other diseases in animals, which represent a danger to human health or an economic threat to the livestock industries. This includes implementing and maintaining systems to control animal movements thereby reducing the risk of an uncontained disease outbreak in the future.

The programme identifies, puts in place and maintains controls and measures adopted by the Government, local authorities and the industry which fall into two groups:

- those at the border to prevent or reduce disease transmitted by animals or their products from crossing into Great Britain, and
- those applied inland to prevent or reduce the spread of diseases.

This programme covers a wide range of policy areas, delivering outcomes mainly to English and Welsh farmers. Some of these control measures are explained separately, elsewhere in this implementation plan; namely illegal imports controls, quarantine and the pet travel scheme and the positive animal health action plan new initiative.

#### Activity

**Legal Imports:** A wide range of animals and animal products is imported into the UK from other countries. We need to ensure that such trade represents a negligible risk of introducing animal diseases. This is done through the implementation, communication and enforcement of EU and domestic regulations with checks on imports to verify that the import requirements are complied with and are properly carried out. Disease outbreaks worldwide are monitored to identify threats to UK animal health and take action, where necessary, to control imports and inform all interested parties including contingency planners

**Artificial Breeding Controls:** There is a danger that animal diseases can be introduced or spread as a result of artificial breeding techniques namely artificial insemination and embryo transfer. This risk is managed through the development and implementation of domestic, EU and international legislation. Intra-Community trade in semen and embryos is governed by EU legislation and implemented in the UK by various pieces of domestic legislation. Under this legislation those involved in intra-Community trade must abide by strict biosecurity rules, including pre and post-entry health testing of animals, approval of premises and regular inspections.

**Pathogens:** Controls also exist to prevent animal disease outbreaks resulting from the release or escape into the wider environment of animal pathogens that can cause exotic diseases in livestock and poultry. Imports of animal pathogens from countries outside the EC and certain “specified” animal pathogens that can cause serious exotic diseases in livestock and poultry are controlled under national legislation, through licensing regimes administered in England by Defra. Domestic movements of licensed material are restricted. Laboratories licensed to work with specified animal pathogens are strictly regulated.

**Disinfectants:** The use of disinfectants for statutory animal disease prevention and control purposes must be approved by government on the basis of their effectiveness against particular pathogens and therefore their ability to prevent disease outbreaks. Samples of products are tested by accredited laboratories on behalf of Defra. Products which pass the test are listed as approved for use in England in an amended Schedule to the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) Order 1978. Scotland and Wales make mirror amendments in their legislation.

**Animal Movements:** The standing movements regime for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs has been in place since 1 August 2003. Most movements of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs now take place under a general licence. Movements are monitored by the Animal Movements Licensing System (AMLS) which imposes the appropriate standstill following the arrival of livestock on the holding. The regime is enforced by Local Authority officials in England and Wales under the terms of a Framework Agreement on the delivery of services.

**Controls in Transport, Markets and Shows:** If exotic notifiable disease enters the country, the cleansing and disinfection of livestock transport is essential to help reduce the risk of spread. Legislation is in place, which requires such vehicles to undertake cleansing and disinfection every time they are used. Biosecurity at places where animals are brought together such as markets and shows is also essential to help reduce the risk of spread if exotic notifiable disease enters the country. Controls exist which require premises such as livestock markets and shows to be licensed and meet biosecurity standards, including cleansing and disinfection.

## **Milestones**

- New EU legislation on disease control for cattle artificial insemination affecting semen collection, storage and supply and reflecting changes in industry practice have been adopted and are due to be in place by **1 July 2004**. We are taking this opportunity to overhaul the domestic legislation not only to implement the new EU rules but also to bring controls on bovine semen production, storage etc for domestic use more into line with industry practice. A full consultation exercise is to be launched in the near future. Consideration is also to be given to updating the domestic legislation governing intra-community trade and domestic business in pig semen. A timetable has not yet been set for this latter exercise.

- Work is also being carried out to review and update the Specified Animal Pathogens Order (1998) and the Importation of Animal Pathogens Order (1980) by **31 December 2004**.
- Responsibility for the regime for carrying out veterinary checks on imported products at Border Inspection Posts (except those that deal only with products not for human consumption) is to transfer from Defra to the Food Standards Agency by **1 July 2004**, subject to final agreement with the FSA and to the outcome of a review of controls on imported food due in **April 2004**. This will bring all checks on imported food under one responsible body.
- The approval process for disinfectants is currently under review to reduce the amount of time taken to process an application. This is due to be implemented by **September 2004** when at the same time a database should be fully operational which will enable a greater part of the administrative process to be carried out electronically.

### **Delivery**

- **The State Veterinary Service** has a wide range of responsibilities including licensing markets and shows and ensuring that the licence conditions are met and audit the import process of animals and animal products.
- Under the Animal Health Act 1981 and a wide range of other related legislation **Local Authorities** are responsible for, amongst other things the enforcement of the animal movements legislation and cleansing and disinfectant rules and checks on imports of animals and animal products.
- **The Meat Hygiene Service**, whose responsibilities include monitoring the disease control and cleansing and disinfecting rules in slaughterhouses.
- **The Veterinary Medicines Directorate**, which administers controls on animal pathogens or products;
- **The Health and Safety Executive**, which is responsible for administering controls on animal pathogens;
- **HM Customs and Excise**, which operates controls at ports for the various animals and products that are imported.

For further information please contact:

Programme Support Office,  
Area 703,  
1a Page Street,  
London, SW1P 4PQ.

Telephone: 020 7904 6569  
Fax: 020 7904 6122

## 3.2 Illegal Imports

*Supports the strategic outcomes of ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

### Context

We still do not know with certainty the exact cause of the 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) – and probably never will – but it is possible that it was linked to illegal imports of contaminated meat or meat products. As a consequence, there were many calls for more government action to reduce the risks of disease entering in this way. While the risk of introducing a disease via an illegal import will fall with increased enforcement effort, it will never disappear entirely, so action against illegal imports must always be seen in the context of other work to prevent the spread of disease.

In 2002 an initial risk assessment was undertaken to estimate the risk of an FMD outbreak in Great Britain as a consequence of illegally imported infected meat and animal products. The risk assessment was published as a work in progress with a high degree of uncertainty but its initial findings indicated a low but continuous risk of FMD entering the country by this means.

### Activity

The Risk Assessment for the import of meat and meat products contaminated with Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) virus into Great Britain and the subsequent exposure of GB livestock has been published as work in progress. Work is underway on further risk assessments for three pig diseases, and the model developed for FMD will be re-run with additional data. This complements work being carried out by HM Customs who are carrying out their own assessment of risks using their own intelligence information.

Significant effort is being put into increasing the public awareness of the import rules. For example, adverts have been placed on ticket wallets, leaflets giving details of import rules have been produced, airlines are being persuaded to show videos or make in-flight announcements, TV fillers are being shown (when broadcasters have gaps in their schedules), and posters have been displayed at airports.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is leading a project to secure a step change in the co-ordination and delivery of local authority enforcement of imported food controls. Defra are supporting this work and working closely with the FSA and Customs to ensure better joined up working between all the different enforcement agencies.

### Milestones

- HM Customs and Excise take responsibility for anti-smuggling controls, **April 2003**
- Increase number of dog teams to 6 and introduce 4 new mobile anti-smuggling detection teams by **March 2004**

- Publication of the Risk Assessments for African Swine Fever, Classical Swine Fever, and Swine Vesicular Disease, **Spring 2004**
- Publicity strategy aimed at selected communities **March 2004**
- Study into methods for the surrender of illegal imports **March 2004**

## Delivery

- **Defra** is responsible for: imports policy for products of animal origin – both for legal and illegal imports; managing the risk assessment and for maintenance of the Illegal Animal Products Seizures Database (ILAPS); delivering an “inland” publicity campaign. This includes working with countryside partners to raise awareness of the importance of biosecurity, or with groups and communities where there are particular issues of relevance to them.
- **The State Veterinary Service** working with port and airport operators provides advice and auditing of controls on disposal of waste food landed in Great Britain.
- **HM Customs** is responsible for enforcement at UK borders and publicity at ports and airports in the UK and overseas as well as risk assessment work on demand drivers.
- **Local Authorities** are responsible for enforcement inland.
- **The Veterinary Laboratories Agency** delivers the assessment of disease risk via illegal imports
- **The Food Standards Agency’s** delivery of the “Step Change” project includes: providing training to Local Authorities; improving coordination between enforcement agencies – particularly with those responsible for legal trade; carrying out audits of imported food enforcement in local and port health authorities; initiating a UK-wide co-ordinated sampling and surveillance programme on imported food; and developing IT-based information on imported food controls to both enforcement officers and the trade.

Stakeholders are engaged through a number of fora including:

- Forum for stakeholders which includes farming unions, port operators, airlines and airport operators, the meat trade and other trade interests, bushmeat/wildlife/welfare organisations, and enforcement agencies.
- Meeting with stakeholders (pig industry) on the risk assessment.
- Working with **International Fund for Animal Welfare, Greater London Authority, Bushmeat Campaign, Islamic Cultural Centre, Chartered Institute for Environmental Health and Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services** on a publicity campaign.
- On the Step Change project, liaising with the **Association of Port Health Authorities** and **SITPRO** – the UK’s trade facilitation body. This project is also being overseen by a Stakeholder Group which includes representatives from sea ports, airports and enforcement officers.

For further information please contact:

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1a Page Street,  
London, SW1P 4PQ.

Telephone: 020 7904 8219.  
Fax: 020 7904 8230.

### **3.3 Quarantine and Pet Travel Scheme**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of promoting a partnership approach, ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

There is a need to facilitate and regulate the import of rabies susceptible animals in a way that gives protection against the importation and spread of disease. Until February 2000, all rabies susceptible animals entering the UK were required to spend six months in quarantine. In February 2000 the Pet Travel Scheme was introduced. This allows cats and dogs which comply with certain conditions to enter the UK without going into quarantine. The scheme was introduced following the Report by the Advisory Group on Quarantine which, based on risk analysis and other scientific evidence, concluded that there would be no significant increase in the very small risk of importing rabies into Great Britain if a Pet Travel Scheme was introduced for some countries with quarantine continuing for others.

#### **Activity**

The UK's defences against rabies need to be maintained as far as possible within the parameters set by the EU Regulation on Pet Travel. Legislation with similar Orders in the Scotland and Wales, govern the import of rabies susceptible animals into the UK. All cats and dogs entering the UK must either have a quarantine import licence and be collected by an authorised carrying agent or qualify for the Pet Travel Scheme. On average, 4,000 dogs and cats enter the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme every month. Any other mammals must have a quarantine import licence and be collected by an authorised carrying agent. If they do not have this documentation, they will be seized by the Local Authority and detained in quarantine, re-exported or destroyed.

Information on Quarantine and the Pet Travel Scheme is available in a variety of different media such as the PETS helpline, Quarantine/PETS website. The PETS helpline handles on average 2800 enquiries a month (2000 phone calls and 800 emails). The British Embassies also disseminate, and translate when necessary, Quarantine/PETS factsheets.

#### **Milestones**

- Implementation of the EC Regulation on Pet Travel by **July 2004**
- Review of the conditions applying to construction and management of quarantine premises by **July 2004**
- Review of quarantine requirements for rodents and lagomorphs used in research by **July 2004**

#### **Delivery**

- **The State Veterinary Service** are responsible for quarterly checks of quarantine premises, re-authorisations of quarantine premises and carrying agents, issue out-of-hours quarantine licences, PETS quality

assurance checks at port of entry, and operational aspects of PETS. **Local authorities** are responsible for the enforcement of the Rabies Order/Pet Travel Scheme Order.

- Independently owned **quarantine premises** and **carrying agents** provide facilities/vehicles to hold/transport quarantine animals.
- Approved companies carry PETS-compliant animals into the UK on approved routes and check all such animals meet requirements, as specified in their agreement with Defra. Quarantine animals are also transported by commercial **transport companies** who should ensure that they have an import licence/boarding document before they board for travel to the UK.
- **Private veterinary surgeons** carry out the preparation process for the Pet Travel Scheme and are Veterinary Superintendents for quarantine premises.

Stakeholders are engaged through a variety of fora:

- **British Isles Rabies Liaison Group** (officials from all the British Isles including Channel Islands, Isle of Man and The Republic of Ireland) – meets twice a year to discuss quarantine and PETS issues
- **Quarantine Premises and Carrying Agents** – Ad hoc contact to inform on developments
- **Research Stakeholders** – Engage with them over update of procedures for animals/germplasm imported under Rabies Order for research purposes
- **PETS Advisory Group** (includes external stakeholders) – meets twice a year
- Additional ad hoc meetings to inform/consult with stakeholders as necessary.

Further information can be found on the Defra website or please contact:

Pet Travel Scheme Helpline  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Area 201  
1a Page Street,  
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SW1P 4PQ  
Telephone: +44 (0)870 241 1710  
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### 3.4 New Initiative 6: Veterinary Surveillance Strategy

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of developing an understanding of roles and responsibilities, promoting a partnership approach, providing a clearer understanding costs and benefits, ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention*

#### Context

The Veterinary Surveillance Strategy aims to inform animal health policy by delivering:

- earlier warning and more rapid detection of animal-related threats;
- open and transparent and defensible prioritisation of surveillance activities, and
- clear, well defined evidence base for surveillance activities and reports

The Veterinary Surveillance Strategy was launched on 22 October 2003, it is an integral, cross cutting element of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. It involves a package of activities which provide the early warning and prompt detection of animal health and welfare problems, together with tracking and analysis of the way they spread. The same process applies to infectious diseases and chemical contamination as well as foreign and inherently new diseases. It can also be used to inform the control of animal conditions which may pose a threat to human health but are not apparent in the animal itself.

The information that is generated provides crucial scientific evidence for government to support decisions on prevention and control measures as well as assessing the effectiveness of existing approaches. Surveillance also provides the wider public, farmers and pet owners with information which they and their veterinary surgeons can use to decide how best to protect their own health and the health of their animals.

#### Activity

The Veterinary Surveillance Strategy has five strategic goals which aim to:

**strengthen collaboration:** successful surveillance depends on the effective collection and dissemination of a wide spectrum of information from disparate sources. We will develop a comprehensive network of surveillance partners and work with them to standardise information collection procedures. This will help increase the speed of detection and accuracy of prediction through a better co-ordinated, integrated approach. Business assurance groups with representatives from both the public and private sector have been established to review and contribute to the design and delivery of the projects needed to deliver each strategic goal.

**develop a prioritisation system:** this will involve creating 'profiles' for diseases or other conditions considered for surveillance which will provide information on the various criteria by which priority is assessed so that different diseases can be compared within a framework that provides a level playing field. Ultimately, profiles will be considered by specialist groups that include representatives of all those with a particular interest in specific

diseases or species of animal. Drawing from these profiles these groups will prioritise different possible surveillance activities in a transparent and risk based way. This prioritisation system will help ensure that changes in animal health status with the greatest potential impact are detected earlier, enabling the earlier implementation of control measures. It will also help ensure public money is used more efficiently.

**derive better value from surveillance information and activities:** we need to develop a flexible and functioning range of approaches to data collation, integration and analysis to ensure that a wide variety of potential data sources can contribute. The surveillance strategy will promote standardisation of surveillance mechanisms amongst stakeholders so that data can be collated, and so increase the likelihood of detecting patterns of disease. This will be enabled by the development of a new integrated electronic surveillance system, RADAR (Rapid Analysis and Detection of Animal related Risk), which is currently being trialed through a small-scale prototype.

**share information more widely:** to help make best use of veterinary surveillance data we need to work with surveillance partners to share that data more widely. RADAR will help address this need. It will be a user friendly, integrated and easily accessible system that will allow expert users to produce and distribute meaningful reports in a much more efficient and effective way than is possible at present. This will provide a more robust evidence base on which to develop policy, and enable rapid dissemination of surveillance information to target audiences.

**enhance the quality assurance of outputs:** Quality statements on surveillance reports and improved accuracy of analysis will increase user confidence in the reliability of the information. Quality standards will be improved in stages over time through feedback on quality to information providers, and the standardisation and validation of data fields. Independent accreditation of defined procedures and audits to verify these procedures are followed will be adopted where appropriate.

## **Milestones**

A detailed delivery plan for the Surveillance Strategy has been prepared and is available from Defra. This is a 10 year programme. However, a number of benefits will become apparent early in the programme. For example:

- we have completed RADAR prototyping. We will continue to demonstrate it and use comments to inform development of the full system. Development work on 'Phase 1' of the full system is underway and due for completion by **August 2004**. This will enable the first new surveillance reports to be produced. The development of veterinary surveillance pages on the Defra website will make these reports widely available. An increasing range of reports will be available as the strategy is implemented;
- a communication and engagement strategy for involving stakeholders is close to completion. As communication networks develop, interested

parties will find it progressively easier to locate the information they need or pass on information they have, and

- by **March 2004** prioritisation criteria will have been designed, including confirmation of the information to be captured in profiles.

## **Delivery**

- There are numerous agents involved in veterinary surveillance in the UK development of the strategy and provide surveillance information such as; **farmers, private veterinarians, State Veterinary Service, Food Standards Agency, Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), Scottish Agricultural Colleges (SAC), academic interests**, and a host of other surveillance partners.
- The **Veterinary Surveillance Division** in Defra is responsible for co-ordinating strategy activity and driving forward development and delivery.
- Governance Structures and the Programme Board enable key stakeholders to shape the direction of strategy implementation.
- **Business Assurance Groups** provide direct input for surveillance partners into specific surveillance strategy projects.

Further information (including copies of the Strategy) can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/veterinary/index.htm>

Or please contact:

Veterinary Surveillance Division  
Area 601,  
1A Page Street,  
London, SW1P 4PQ,

Telephone: 0207 904 8333

### **3.5 Livestock Identification and Tracing**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of disease prevention being better than cure and effective delivery and enforcement.*

#### **Context**

The Livestock Identification and Tracing programme aims to deliver the efficient, economical and timely provision of accurate livestock identification and tracing information as required by government and customers. Government currently uses livestock data for subsidy payments and animal welfare and disease monitoring and control. Increasing the accuracy and timeliness of this data will result in improved information for veterinary surveillance, better ways of dealing with disease outbreaks and more accurate subsidy cross checks, all of which will be beneficial to customers and government.

#### **Activity**

Defra's IT Strategy includes the development of three corporate registers covering land, customers and livestock. The latter is being developed within the Livestock Identification and Tracing Programme. The Livestock Register will initially cover the main farmed livestock (including cattle, sheep and pigs) and other species may be included later on. The register will improve the quality of livestock data while efficiencies will reduce costs both in industry and in Government, and reduce duplication of data held by Defra.

In addition to developing the new livestock register, the programme includes projects to address weaknesses in and enhance the existing Cattle Tracing System (CTS) and the Animal Movements Licensing System (AMLS).

Work is being carried out to implement the EU horse passport requirements and develop a database for horses. The database will, in the medium term, provide benefits including the proper controls on veterinary medicines used in horses, allowing veterinary surveillance of horses, and the control of horse disease. The database will also support the equine industry in improving the performance and breeding of UK horses.

There is also to be a large scale pilot which will try out use of electronic identification and reporting in English sheep production conditions. This will allow government and industry to gain a better understanding of the practicalities of using electronic identification and reporting for sheep, including its costs and benefits.

#### **Milestones**

- Work is being carried out to influence EU sheep ID Proposals and establish UK policy to meet changing demands by **December 2003**
- Implementation of EU legislation on passports for all equines by **June 2004**
- A report on the practicalities of using electronic ID and reporting on sheep in England will be prepared by **February 2005**

- A single corporate database containing livestock information by **March 2006**

### **Delivery**

- The management of the programme and most of the projects / work streams are the responsibility of Defra. However, the **British Cattle Movement Service** which is part of the Rural Payments Agency is responsible for the operation of the Cattle Tracing System
- **Local Authorities** are responsible for entering animal movement data on to AMLS and enforcing compliance with the cattle, sheep and pig identification regulations.
- Stakeholders are engaged through **Industry/Government Working Groups** which meet (quarterly) to discuss strategic, policy and legislative issues concerning the identification of animals (in particular, cattle, sheep and pigs).

For further information please contact:

Livestock Identification Division  
Defra  
Area 111  
1A Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

Telephone: 0207 238 8047  
Email: [litp.pco@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:litp.pco@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

or:

BCMS Helpline all CTS enquiries: **0845 050 1234** (all calls charged at local rate)  
Email: [bcms-enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bcms-enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

### **3.6 Exports of livestock, genetic material and animal products.**

*Supporting the animal health and welfare strategic outcomes of ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

The export of animals, genetic material and animal products from the UK has been hit hard in recent years by disease problems such as BSE, Classical Swine Fever and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). FMD had a significant affect on exports with some third countries still not accepting imports despite the UK having been declared FMD free since January 2002. This is frustrating for government and industry and makes effective international relationships and successful negotiations even more crucial. This is especially important during a time when preparations are being made for the UK Presidency of the EU in 2005 against the background of EU enlargement. Government aims to attain a thriving export trade in live animals, products of animal origin and genetic material through:

- the implementation of domestic, EU and international legislation;
- agreement and efficient provision of high quality export certification;
- maximising the effectiveness in international negotiations and relationships in respect of all animal health and welfare issues.

#### **Activity**

The Government has an important role in ensuring that businesses and individuals are able to export animals, genetic material and animal products by providing health guarantees to importing countries, normally by way of export health certification. Health certification forms the backbone of import and export controls.

It is essential to ensure that export health certification keeps pace with EU legislation. This involves putting in place regular amendment to the domestic legislation covering intra-Community trade in animals, genetic material and animal products. The adoption of new EU rules means that the Department's export certification database needs to be updated to ensure intra-Community trade is not disrupted. For example, Defra participates in EU negotiations on rules affecting trade with other Member States and played a major role in the negotiation of revisions to the Sheep and Goats Trade Directive.

The European Commission is introducing a new web based application and certification system (TRACES) to facilitate intra-Community trade in live animals, genetics and some animal products. TRACES will also replace the current system (ANIMO) for tracking intra-Community movements of animals, genetic materials and animal products. The UK is actively participating in the development of TRACES during working groups in Brussels.

With the help of British posts overseas, government remains active in persuading 3<sup>rd</sup> country authorities to accept UK exports of animals, genetic material and animal products. Many key markets are now open to UK exporters including the USA, Australia and more recently China for animal

products, with progress continually being made in other key markets, notably Japan. In partnership with industry colleagues, an Export Certification Users Group (ECUG) was set up in 2002 dealing with targeting resources at priority export markets of livestock, pig meat and genetic material.

## Milestones

- Revision of the Animal and Animal Products (Import and Export) Regulations 2000 will take place by **November/December 2003**. These include the new rules for Balai (Directive 92/65/EEC, as amended) and the rules applying to intra-community trade in sheep and goats (Directive 91/68/EEC, as amended).
- The implementation of a new Directive (2003/50/EC) further amending Directive 91/68/EEC on intra Community trade in sheep and goats will occur by **July 2004**. This will involve the revision of export certification and the updating of the Animal and Animal Products (Import and Export) Regulations 2000.
- The revised EU web based IT system for issuing export health certification (TRACES) will be delivered by **April 2004**. This will replace the current system (ANIMO) and is intended to eventually provide a paperless system for export certification.

## Delivery

- **State Veterinary Service** field staff issue health certificate applications received from exporters and generate export health certificates ready for signature by a Defra appointed Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI).
- The **LVI**s signing and issuing the export health certificates provide assurances regarding the current disease status in Great Britain and the health of the animal(s). For this reason it is usually necessary for the consignment to be subject to veterinary examination.
- **The Export Certification Users Group** is the main stakeholder engagement in identifying priority markets on which to target Defra resources.

Further information can be found on the Defra website at:  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/int-trde/default.htm>

Or please contact:

International Animal Health Division  
Defra  
Area 410  
1A Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

Telephone: 0207 904 6431

### **3.7 Animal By-Products**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of promoting a partnership approach, ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

The aim of the programme is to protect public and animal health by ensuring that proportionate controls are in place and are understood, applied and enforced so that animal by-products (animal carcasses, parts of animal carcasses and products of animal origin which are not fit or not intended for human consumption) are safely used or disposed of. Controls on the disposal or use of animal by-products are important to minimise the likelihood of diseases being introduced or spread and to prevent condemned material being diverted into animal feed or human food. For example, the feeding of waste food that contained infected meat has been implicated in a number of outbreaks of serious animal disease, most recently in the outbreak of Classical Swine Fever in 2000 and Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001. These outbreaks had a damaging impact on the livestock industry but the effects were far reaching and other sectors such as tourism were also adversely affected.

Controls on the use of other animal by-products have only been in place since 1990, when EU legislation was first adopted. Although originally designed to prevent pathogens such as Salmonella being introduced into animal feed, the controls were progressively tightened in the light of the BSE epidemic. New EU legislation has now been adopted to reflect the new situation, to consolidate and update the previous controls and to provide a secure framework for the disposal and use of animal by-products.

#### **Activity**

English legislation providing the powers to administer and enforce the new EU legislation on the use and disposal of animal by-products came into force in July 2003. This involves the issuing of new guidance to enforcement bodies such as the State Veterinary Service. The new legislation affects numerous businesses many of which were controlled under the previous legislation but some operations will require approval for the first time. For example, low capacity animal carcass incinerators (of which there are thought to be around 2500) and a small number of intermediate plants will now require approval. For the first time, the Regulations allow the treatment of certain types of animal by-products and catering waste in composting and biogas plants and these plants will also require inspection and validation.

In carrying out their role, the State Veterinary Service liaises where necessary with local authorities (Trading Standards and Environmental Health), the Environment Agency and the Meat Hygiene Service. Training on the Regulations is being provided to as many people as possible within those organisations, with a view to improving cooperation between them, as well as raising awareness of the requirements of the legislation. Guidance for those organisations and for others with an interest in specific issues has also been made widely available.

Some further measures are still being negotiated in Brussels. For example, the European Commission has proposed some alternative treatment methods for animal by-products following scientific opinions. They have also come forward with a proposal to address some outstanding issues, such as the controls on the feeding of milk to livestock and whether the legislation applies to biscuit and bakery waste which does not contain meat. Defra officials are seeking to ensure that the final text introduces proportionate rules which are suitable for the UK industry.

The Animal By-Products Regulation also introduced from 1 May 2003 a ban on farm burial and burning of animal carcasses and other animal materials. The new regulation does not require government to set up any national arrangements but in recognition of the increase in the cost of disposal for farmers a National Fallen Stock Scheme has been announced following discussions with livestock and disposal industry stakeholders. The scheme will be voluntary and financed by subscription with an initial subsidy from government. The economies of scale of such a scheme mean there should be considerable savings for farmers who would otherwise have to pay more to make their own arrangements for the collection of fallen stock when each animal dies. This has been recognised by farming unions and the main livestock trade associations who have given the scheme their full support.

The Regulations prohibit the disposal to landfill of animal by-products, including former foodstuffs of animal origin. Derogation to the Regulations has been obtained to allow the use of landfill, should it be required, for disposal of carcasses in the event of an emergency such as an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The UK secured a transition period to allow time for alternative disposal routes for most of this material to be put in place. But the transitional measures do not permit raw meat and raw fish to be disposed of in this way. Although butchers have long used specialist collectors to take this material to rendering, other retail outlets have not done so. A task force, comprising industry representatives, was established to assess the problems that such outlets would face and to suggest practical solutions.

## **Milestones**

- Inspection and approval of high priority animal by-products premises by **31 December 2003**; lower priority premises by **30 April 2004**.
- National collection service for fallen stock in operation by **early 2004**
- Necessary adaptation achieved during transition periods for landfill disposal e.g.
  - used cooking oil; **31 October 2004**
  - former foodstuffs; **31 December 2005**
  - low capacity incinerators; **31 December 2004**
- The task force is to oversee the phase out of the use of landfill for the disposal of former foodstuffs by the **end of 2005**.

## Delivery

- **The State Veterinary Service** are responsible for inspecting animal by-product premises to assess their compliance with the legislation and to issue approvals where appropriate. This will entail visits to a large number of premises such as rendering plants, pet food plants, composting and biogas plants, intermediate and storage plants, knackery yards, hunt kennels, maggot farms, technical plants and incinerators. They will also undertake on-going monitoring, to check continuing compliance at regular intervals. Where non-compliance is found, the State Veterinary Service may remove the operator's approval and the local authority will take appropriate enforcement action, such as prosecution.
- **Local Authorities** are also responsible for the enforcement of the legislation other than in licensed slaughterhouses and cutting plants.
- **The Meat Hygiene Service** are responsible for enforcement of the legislation in licensed slaughterhouses and cutting plants and other licensed meat plants.
- Although the **Environment Agency** does not have a role in enforcement of the animal by-products legislation, there are strong cross linkages to the waste management legislation, which the Environment Agency enforces.
- There is continuing dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, through a variety of channels, including the landfill task force.

Further information can be found on the Defra website at:

[www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/default.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/default.htm)

or please contact:

BSE Division  
Defra  
Area 305  
1a Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

Telephone: 0207 904 6802

### **3.8 New Initiative 13: Veterinary Medicines**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of promoting a partnership approach, ensuring effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

This new initiative aims to ensure responsible, safe and effective use of veterinary medicines. The strategy seeks to strengthen and possibly redefine the working relationship between the animal keeper and their veterinary surgeon. The new initiative to improve farm health planning aims to encourage a change in emphasis away from reacting to problems after they occur. The responsible use of veterinary medicines will be a key component in farm health planning.

The withdrawal of antibiotic growth promoters in other countries has led to the increased use of therapeutic antibiotics to treat increased disease outbreaks. Working with the farming industry to identify and disseminate advice on how to prevent increased disease incidence will minimise the need to use more therapeutic antibiotics.

#### **Activity**

Best practice for the responsible use of veterinary medicines will be identified from a combination of current best practices and the outcome of research projects. A key element will be to show how the different practices affect farm profits. Research projects are already underway and the key findings of one have been announced to industry.

Revisions to EU medicines legislation are likely to be agreed by May 2004 for implementation within 18 months (November 2005). The changes are likely to permit the continued authorisation of the majority of UK horse medicines and provide more opportunity for vets to use medicines authorised in other member states. This will help to control disease including disease new to the UK.

EU medicines legislation requires pre-marketing assessment of safety, quality and efficiency for the protection of animals, consumers, operators and the environment. Unauthorised products compete directly with authorised products and their use undermines these arrangements increasing safety risks especially to the treated animal and consumers.

#### **Milestones**

- This initiative links very closely with the Farm Health planning new initiative and best practice will be fed into the health plans framework by **Summer 2004**.
- Changes to medicines legislation from Review 2001 to be implemented by **November 2005**.
- Agree a strategy for eliminating the illegal use of veterinary medicines by **December 2004**.

- Agree by **June 2004** an action plan with Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) to enable producers to prepare for the withdrawal of antibiotic growth promoters in 2006.

### **Delivery**

- There are a number of agents involved in the delivering the aim of this initiative including the **State Veterinary Service**, the **Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain**, the **veterinary profession**, **Local Authorities** and **animal keepers**
- Stakeholder engagement will take place through **RUMA** using its existing mechanisms.

For further information please contact:

Veterinary Medicines Directorate  
Woodham Lane  
New haw  
Addlestone  
Surrey  
KT15 3 LS

Telephone: 01932 338420

### 3.9 Emergency Preparedness

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of promoting a partnership approach, developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, and ensuring effective delivery and enforcement.*

#### Context

Following the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in 2001 there is a need to develop policies, capacity and the capability to mount an effective response to an outbreak of exotic animal disease in order to manage down risk, impact and cost. The emergency preparedness programme aims to provide the capability to deliver an effective disease response immediately, by establishing plans and arrangements which are responsive to changes in policies, legislation, structures and systems. It also seeks to gain stakeholder buy-in to future disease control strategies.

#### Activity

Contingency plans to deal with an outbreak of exotic animal diseases are being developed and maintained. Separate, but complementary, plans exist for England, Scotland and Wales. The FMD Contingency Plan establishes structures and systems that can also be used in controlling outbreaks of other diseases such as Classical Swine Fever and Avian Influenza. In addition, specific requirements for other diseases including rabies are being developed and captured in individual disease control plans and instructions.

A programme of food and mouth contingency exercises is being planned in local offices and at headquarters culminating in a national live exercise planned for summer 2004 to validate contingency plans and disease control instructions. All local offices and headquarters will hold an exercise in one of the exotic diseases at least once a year.

For contingency plans to be successful those involved must understand their role in a disease outbreak. Training programmes are being developed for named individuals who will take up specific roles in an outbreak, as managers, veterinary team leaders and finance managers so that they are equipped to fulfil their responsibilities. This supplements training and exercises for the State Veterinary Service.

The last FMD outbreak demonstrated the importance of working in partnership with stakeholders to control the spread of animal diseases. A stakeholder group has been established to discuss future options for the control of FMD in the context of the new EU Directive.

#### Milestones

- By **Summer 2004** policy and operational plans for emergency vaccination for FMD will be in place to meet the legislative requirement that vaccination be considered as a disease control option in the event of an outbreak of FMD, if measures additional to the slaughter of animals on infected premises and dangerous contacts are required.

- Contingency Plans for Foot and Mouth Disease and for Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease will be consulted upon from **November 2003** and laid before Parliament in **March 2004**.

## **Delivery**

- **The State Veterinary Service** is responsible for controlling and eradicating disease, supported by staff from the rest of Defra and other departments in administrative, financial and communications roles. **Local Veterinary Inspectors** (LVIs) work with State Veterinary Service in disease control operation
- **Local Authorities** enforce animal health legislation and engage local knowledge, organisational structures and systems to deliver effective disease control.
- Stakeholders are formally engaged in several ways to provide input to policy and operational planning and development and engagement in exercises: **Programme Steering Group, Operational Partners Group, FMD Stakeholders Group, Regional Resilience Forums**.

Further information (including the latest version of the FMD Contingency Plan) can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://defraweb/footandmouth/contingency/index.htm>

Or please contact:

State Veterinary Service Contingency Planning Division,  
Defra  
Area 804  
1A Page Street,  
London SW1P 4PQ

### **3.10 Endemic Diseases and Zoonoses (including bovine TB)**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of, developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, promoting a partnership approach, effective delivery and enforcement and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

This programme aims to reduce the incidence and/or effects of endemic disease and other zoonotic organisms by taking appropriate risk-based action on the basis of scientific evidence where this is justified. Zoonoses are diseases that are transmissible between vertebrate animals and man. These diseases may be exotic or endemic to the UK. Disease threats to public health can come from direct contact with an animal or from animal products, for example foodborne pathogens such as *Salmonellas*, *campylobacter*, Verotoxin producing *E. coli* (VTEC), waterborne zoonoses such as *Cryptosporidium*, and other environmental contamination such as anthrax.

Tuberculosis (TB) in cattle is one of the most difficult animal health problems the UK faces. The risk to people is believed to be low but initially for human health, trade and animal health reasons, Government has intervened in the control of bovine TB. We are determined to find a science based long term solution to this serious disease. Action against bovine TB is currently based on the recommendations of a review of the scientific knowledge on bovine TB carried out by Professor Sir John Krebs published in December 1997. However, the incidence of bovine TB continues to increase.

Other non-zoonotic diseases can have serious economic and welfare implications.

#### **Activity**

In February 2003 Ministers announced a review of the TB strategy. Discussions with key stakeholders took place over the summer and proposals will be subject to full public consultation around the end of this year.

We are drawing up a range of short term policy options which will be directed to constraining the geographic spread of the disease out of the current high risk areas (the South West of England and South Wales), pending the development of a longer term strategy with wider objectives.

The current framework for TB testing is set out in EU legislation. Controls include tuberculin testing of cattle, slaughter of reactors and dangerous contacts, compensation for slaughter, slaughterhouse post mortem, liaison with public authorities about pasteurisation of milk, and management of human risk.

An Independent Steering Group on Bovine TB (ISG) is in place which oversees the design and analysis of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT). This will help to determine whether badger culling is a suitable control measure for Bovine TB. Recently published interim findings from the trial indicate that levels of bovine TB in reactive culling areas are significantly

higher than in control (survey only) areas. A trial of proactive culling continues.

We implement EU legislation on salmonella, other zoonoses and non-zoonotic endemic diseases designed to protect public health and control disease.

Specific surveillance mechanisms to detect outbreaks of animal diseases and zoonoses, in particular Brucellosis, EBL and *Salmonellas*, are in place. For example, statutory testing of milk samples is carried out for the presence of Enzootic Bovine Leukosis (EBL) and Brucellosis in order to demonstrate continued freedom from these diseases.

Codes of Practice and Guidance for industry and veterinary staff are updated regularly to reflect new developments and changes in legislation.

The development of contingency plans is required to respond to the introduction of new and emerging diseases, and ensure effective communications between responsible and affected parties. Work on a contingency plan for control measures in the event of an outbreak of specified horse diseases not currently found in the UK is in progress.

A public consultation on a proposal to rationalise compensation paid in respect of animals slaughtered for disease control reasons was launched on 27 October 2003. The central aim of the proposals is to produce a simple and transparent system that will deliver predictable levels of compensation.

### **Milestones**

- Public Consultation on the Review of the GB TB Strategy is due to take place around the end of this year. The aim is for the short-term measures to be in place by **late 2004**. The Government will consult again on a long-term strategy in **late 2004** and publish a new long-term strategy in **2005**.
- Implementation of a Statutory Instrument for the EU Zoonoses Regulation (due to be published November 2003) and production of Industry Codes of Practice on *Salmonella* **during 2004**.
- Award of contracts to laboratories to milk test for brucella and EBL **early 2004**
- Public Consultation exercise on draft contingency plan in the event of an outbreak of specified horse diseases not currently found in the UK **early 2004**
- Guidance to Dairy Industry on Johne's Disease **early 2004**
- The deadline for responses for the public consultation on the Rationalisation of Compensation is **January 7, 2004**. We aim to introduce the new measure in respect of some cattle diseases **during 2004**.

### **Delivery**

- The **State Veterinary Service** and **Local Veterinary Inspectors (LVIs)** are responsible for the control programme in cattle including undertaking the necessary routine tuberculin testing and responding to incidents detected in cattle. The State Veterinary Service also work with public

health authorities to assist in a co-ordinated approach to dealing with the risks to animal health.

- **Local Authorities** enforce the movement restrictions on TB reactor cattle in liaison with the State Veterinary Service.
- There is formal communication on bovine TB with key stakeholders through **the TB Forum**, which includes representatives from the industry, the veterinary profession, wildlife and animal welfare interests.
- There will be formal consultation on the implementation of the Zoonoses Directive and Regulation and the equine contingency plan.

For further information please contact:

Endemic Diseases and Zoonoses Programme Support Office  
Area 106,  
1a Page Street  
London  
SW1P 4PQ

Phone: 020 7904 6086

Fax: 020 7904 6128

### **3.11 BSE**

*Supporting the strategic outcome of disease prevention being better than cure.*

#### **Context**

BSE has had far reaching implications in terms of public health, public confidence, animal health, and, with the ban on the sale of beef from cattle aged over thirty months and the ban on exports, BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) has had major economic consequences for the beef industry.

The BSE epidemic is now in decline from a peak of 36,682 clinical cases in GB in 1992 to 445 clinical cases (and 594 cases found as a result of testing) in GB in 2002. The challenge for the BSE programme is not to lose sight of the lessons so clearly identified in the BSE Inquiry Report and to eliminate the disease in the UK.

The aims of the BSE programme are to eradicate BSE in cattle in the UK in order to protect public and animal health, establish a level playing field for exports of beef and products derived from cattle born after August 1996, and prevent re-introduction of the disease by maintaining controls proportionate to the risk.

#### **Activity**

All suspect cases of BSE continue to be investigated. If BSE is confirmed, investigation of cases born after August 1996, when our feed ban was reinforced, is particularly thorough to try to establish the cause. Records of all cases are maintained and published on the internet. The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) testing programme is expected to include over 650,000 cattle in 2003. Brain stem samples are tested by either the Veterinary Laboratories Agency at Newcastle or by a private laboratory, LGC.

Incidence of BSE in cattle born after August 1996 is at a low level, comparable with incidence in some other EU Member States. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has recommended that the over thirty months (OTM) rule (which, with a few exceptions, prohibits the sale for human consumption of meat from cattle aged over 30 months) could be replaced by testing. Ministers are considering FSA advice. Any change to the OTM rule, if agreed, is unlikely to come into effect before July 2004.

The UK is pressing to be able to export on the same basis as other member states any cattle eligible for UK domestic consumption. We are also maintaining and developing our system of monitoring feed controls to ensure that it is both effective and proportionate to the risk.

## Milestones

- LGC opened new laboratories at Runcorn in **October 2003** and Edinburgh in **November 2003**.
- Updated data indicating that incidence in UK is below 200 cases per million adult cattle (international OIE threshold for moving from high to moderate risk) were sent to Commission in **November 2003**.
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Opinion on export controls expected in **March 2004**
- Defra, working with Food Standards Agency and the Meat Hygiene Service, to put in place transparent and robust testing arrangements by **March 2004**
- Relaxation of beef exports controls unlikely before **Autumn 2004**.
- Less than 30 clinical cases of BSE in a year by **end 2006**
- A stakeholder group involving consumers, retailers, processors and producers meets at regular intervals.

## Delivery

- **Health Ministers**, responsible for public health, are considering FSA advice on the OTM rule. **The Food Standards Agency** is responsible for food safety.
- **The European Food Safety Authority** (EFSA), responsible for EU scientific advice, is considering the UK case for relaxing export controls.
- **The State Veterinary Service** are responsible for investigating suspect cases of disease and arranging for restrictions to be served on the cohorts of confirmed cases.
- Defra, working with the Food Standards Agency and the **Meat Hygiene Service** (MHS), is responsible for the TSE testing programme and for negotiation and implementation of EU BSE export controls
- **Defra** are responsible for ensuring effective monitoring of feed controls.
- **Local Authorities** are responsible for enforcing legislation on cattle over thirty months entering the food chain, cattle identification and feed controls.

Further information can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://defraweb/animalh/bse/index.html>

Or please contact:

BSE Division  
Defra  
Area 307  
1A Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

Telephone: 0207 904 6293

### **3.12 National Scrapie Plan**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of ensuring effective delivery and enforcement, promoting a partnership approach and disease prevention.*

#### **Context**

The National Scrapie Plan (NSP) for Great Britain (GB) aims to increase the level of resistance to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies in the sheep flock in GB to the extent necessary to eradicate all TSE and therefore remove any (at present theoretical) risk to human health arising from the possible presence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in sheep.

The NSP is a long-term Government initiative to eradicate Scrapie (and BSE if its there) from the national flock through a programme of selective breeding under which sheep which are genetically susceptible to Scrapie and other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) are removed over time. Scrapie is a fatal spongiform encephalopathy (brain) sheep disease that has been present in the national flock for well over 250 years. There are approximately 600 reported cases of Scrapie per annum in Britain (pre-FMD) but it is believed that there is a high level of under reporting. While Scrapie does not affect humans as far as it is known, it could mask BSE were it to have passed to sheep. Based on the precautionary principle, the NSP-GB was introduced to protect against that risk through its breeding programme for Scrapie resistance.

As well as the benefit from the protection of human health from the theoretical risk of infection by BSE in sheep there are commercial and animal welfare benefits arising from the NSP Programme. Tackling the disease would benefit sheep farmers and increase public confidence in home bred sheep. A question over the safety of lamb produce in GB would have a serious damaging effect on the industry as a whole. In terms of animal welfare Scrapie can cause considerable suffering to an animal since its signs include irritation, behaviour changes, weight loss and eventual death.

#### **Activity**

Under the NSP's Ram Genotyping Scheme (RGS), all adult (stock) rams in the flock plus any male progeny that are to be used for further breeding are blood sampled for genotype testing. During blood sampling visits, an Electronic Identification (EID) device is also administered to each sheep entering the Scheme. The EID device is given in the form of ruminal bolus, which is given orally and lodges in the rumen of the animal. The device uniquely identifies the sheep and the EID number appears on the Genotype Certificate which is generated with the results of the genotype tests. In return for this assistance flock owners agree to slaughter or castrate rams with the more susceptible genotypes to prevent the spread of their susceptible genes in favour of the spread of more resistant genes. Approximately 700,000 sheep have been tested under the RGS since the Plan was launched in 2001.

Veterinary advice on selection and breeding strategies based on genotype results aims to improve overall resistance levels within individual flocks and is agreed in partnership with individual NSP members.

### **Milestones**

- A strategy review of the NSP is underway which aims to review the current policy and strategic aims and, if necessary, devise a new strategy for the NSP, taking into account EU driven developments and resource issues, including financial constraints. A public consultation exercise is planned for the first half of 2004, with the aim to prepare a revised strategy for publication in the **summer of 2004**
- The European Commission Decision 2003/100/EC lays down minimum requirements for breeding programmes for TSE resistance in sheep. Member States must introduce voluntary genotype based breeding programmes by **1st January 2004**, with participation becoming compulsory from **1st April 2005**.
- Member States are also required to establish a framework for recognising the TSE resistant status of individual flocks by **January 2004**.

### **Delivery**

- The National Scrapie Plan is administered by the National Scrapie Plan Administration Centre (NSPAC) at Worcester which itself is part of the **State Veterinary Service**. NSPAC's primary responsibility and function is to manage, administer and implement all NSP schemes and initiatives
- State Veterinary Service Animal Health Officers (AHO's) and **Local Veterinary Inspectors** (LVI's) undertake the necessary blood sampling and administer the Electronic Identification Device (EID) in the form of a bolus.
- A Departmental bi-annual **TSE stakeholders forum** helps to ensure that all key stakeholders are kept informed about the National Scrapie Plan.
- In addition, the Department frequently uses **ad-hoc industry focus groups** to discuss and assist in the development of proposals and initiatives to further improve and enhance the National Scrapie Plan.

Further information can be found on the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/nsp>

Or please contact:

NSPAC  
Defra  
Whittington Road  
Worcester WR5 2SU

Telephone: 0845 601 4858 (Local rate call charges apply)

E-mail: [nspac@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nspac@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

### **3.13 Veterinary Research**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of disease prevention and partnership working.*

#### **Context**

The outline animal health and welfare strategy states that all Government decisions on animal health welfare should be based on sound science and risk and cost benefit assessment. The aim of this programme is to provide high quality research activities and science information (the 'scientific evidence-base') in support of this strategy. The programme also assists in providing sound scientific evidence for influencing where appropriate, EU decision making during negotiations and active participation in EU and international research.

Assessing and providing the science capability is, however, quite complex because of the breadth, depth and sometimes the speed in which information is required. Therefore the strategy requires a science base that is sound, but which is flexible and responsive to the varying demands.

#### **Activity**

The key aim of the programme is to deliver the scientific advice that forms part of the evidence base for Animal Health and Welfare policies. That advice is formed by analysing the output from both Defra funded research and also research funded by others both here and abroad. Research on animal diseases that affect health and welfare are carried out by a range of institutions including the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, universities, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) institutes and private companies with funding from a variety of sources. The advice is also shaped by input from independent experts and advisory groups. The scientific evidence can then be combined with surveillance data, veterinary advice and economic indicators to form a sound evidence base.

Defra spends approximately £40 million per year on Animal Health and Welfare related research. It is complemented by research funded by other organisations and seeks, where appropriate, to influence their research programmes, providing a more co-ordinated approach, resulting in a better targeted and prioritised research base, at best cost.

There are increasing demands being made on the Animal Health and Welfare research budget, from both existing and new and emerging diseases. This means that prioritising funding based on disease risk is important in allowing the establishment of a clear and transparent method to allow funds to be allocated according to the principles for Government intervention in the outline animal health and welfare strategy. This will build on the Disease Profiles work in the new initiative (I).

To further reinforce public confidence in the scientific basis of Defra's decision making, we are working to improve the way we undertake research and communicate with stakeholders on scientific issues. This activity partly contributes to the animal health and welfare strategy new initiative to improve

dissemination of research, described in more detail in section 5.2. The Veterinary Research Division will organise research reviews where wider scientific and other stakeholders can discuss research findings. VRD are also working to introduce common standards for peer review and quality assurance systems to ensure that funds are spent wisely on best value high quality research.

### **Milestones**

- Research prioritisation process agreed by **March 2004**
- Establish research review meetings with stakeholders by **October 2004**
- Establish new standards for the dissemination of research by **May 2006**
- Establish the validity of a new system for cost benefit analysis of the effects of disease

### **Delivery**

- The **Veterinary Research Division** of Defra are responsible for the administration of this programme and for managing the procurement, monitoring and reporting of the £40M of Defra funds spent on AHW research. They also work closely with other funders on joint funding initiatives (such as **BBSRC, Food Standards Agency, Scottish Executive, Wellcome Trust, Department of Health, Health and Safety Executive, Higher Education Funding Council England Scottish Higher Education Funding Council** and monitor the outcomes of research funded by other European and International funders.
- In the UK the main research providers are **Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Central Science Laboratory, Institute for Animal Health, Silsoe Research Institute** and academia.
- Advice is also provided by a range of independent groups such as **SEAC, Independent Science Group, Farm Animal Welfare Council, Scottish Agricultural Colleges, Research Priority Group, independent Archive Advisory Group, Inter-Departmental Network for OP Research**, and Defra's **Anti-Microbial Resistance Co-ordination Group**.

For further information please contact:

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Dean Stanley Street  
London  
SW1P 3JH

Telephone: 0207 238 1578

## **4. Animal Welfare**

*Supporting the strategic outcome of developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities and disease prevention.*

### **Context**

Government aims to bring about a sustainable improvement in the welfare of animals kept for farming purposes, companionship, sport and entertainment. Public concern about the welfare of animals in his care is relatively recent. The animal welfare movement as we now understand it began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and several significant pieces of legislation were produced which were consolidated in the Protection of Animals Act 1911. The Act has been frequently amended and other legislation has been introduced such as that concerning the regulation of pet shops and performing animals. Concern about the way in which animals are treated on farms led to the creation of the Brambell Committee and its successor the Farm Animal Welfare Council. Competence (FAWC) for setting minimum standards for farmed animals now rests with the European Union with national measures for animals kept for companionship, sport and recreation.

Demand for improved animal welfare continues to grow. Legislation and codes of practice are constantly adapted to modern needs; animal keepers seek to improve their standards and welfare groups maintain their pressure. As an example, over the last 12 months we have responded to 4,700 letters from members of the public, 1,700 from Members of Parliament and provided answers on animal welfare matters to 130 parliamentary questions.

### **Activity**

The responsibility for the welfare of their animals rests with those who keep them. The Government's job is to provide a framework of law and knowledge within which animal keepers can work. There is an annual budget of £3.5m for animal welfare research, mostly concerned with farm animals. For example, there is a current project concerned with poultry meat production aimed at the problems of chicken leg health and another, recently completed one, on the effect of stocking density on bird welfare.

EU regulatory regimes are used to ensure standards in farm animal welfare. The European Commission has recently produced a proposal to revise the welfare of animals during transport directive and it is now being discussed in the Agriculture Council. Once agreed, it will be put into effect by way of implementing regulations. Next on the list will be a new directive on chicken welfare. Most other aspects of farm animal production are now covered by EU provisions, of which the most recent, are ones concerned with pig production and with the keeping of laying hens. All have been implemented through regulations in the United Kingdom and backed up by statutory codes of practice.

The statutory codes of practice that exist need to be disseminated to industry. Through ADAS, Defra has funded a series of producer meetings to introduce the new statutory codes of practice on pig production. Similar meetings are

being held now to promote the programme of reducing and then eliminating, in 2011, the practice of beak trimming of laying hens.

In addition to the science basis for policy formation, reports from the Farm Animal Welfare Council are also relied upon. Where appropriate, their advice is reflected in new legislation and, more often, in codes of practice.

Government intervention in animal welfare also affects companion, sport and recreational animals. This work was taken on by Defra when the new Department was created in 2001. A large body of legislation has grown up over the years and is currently being brought up to date through the proposed new Animal Welfare Bill. This will form the statutory basis for implementing the legislative side of the animal health and welfare strategy as regards non-farm animals. The Veterinary Surgeons' Act of 1966 is also in need of modernisation to respond to the needs of consumers (and their animals) and improve the governance arrangements of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, including its arrangements for maintaining the discipline of the profession.

The main mechanisms for enforcement of welfare regulations is through inspections. In 2002 the State Veterinary Service conducted 4,519 inspections on farms and 6,815 at markets. Slaughterhouses and transported consignments of animals are also inspected to ensure suitable welfare provisions take place. Further surveillance is also carried out by Defra staff when visiting units in addition to the number of actual inspection visits. Local Authorities are the primary statutory enforcement agency for animal health and welfare, carrying out inspections and enforcement from farm to fork, including on farm, in transit, at market, at abattoirs and at points of entry and exit (ports and airports). In addition the RSPCA plays a significant role in the enforcement of animal welfare law, particularly in respect of non-farm animals.

### **Milestones**

- The draft Animal Welfare Bill is to be published **Spring 2004** with Parliamentary approval when time allows.
- Welfare codes for goats, ducks and turkeys are being developed for **Summer 2004**
- New EU rules affecting the transportation of animals are to be implemented by **Autumn 2004**
- A response to the FAWC report on welfare at slaughter is being prepared for **late Spring 2004**
- The public consultation on a new Veterinary Surgeons Act is due to close in **Spring 2004**

### **Delivery**

- In addition to carrying out a programme of welfare visits prescribed by EU legislation, the **State Veterinary Service** carries out welfare inspections on farms in response to complaints, as a consequence of risk analysis and also on a random basis.

- **Local Authorities** play a significant role in the enforcement of animal health and welfare standards and are responsible for the prosecution of welfare cases on farms, at markets and in transportation usually in conjunction with the State Veterinary Service.
- The **RSPCA** brings private prosecutions under animal welfare law, both in respect of farm animals and, much more significantly, in respect of companion animals.

For further information please contact:

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London SW1P 4PQ

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## 5. Promotion of Animal Health and Welfare

### 5.1 New Initiative 3: Veterinary Practice

*Supporting the animal health and welfare strategic outcomes of promoting a partnership approach and ensuring effective delivery and enforcement.*

#### Context

The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee report on Vets and Veterinary Services on 15 October 2003 commented that:

*The Government has promised to establish a working group with the veterinary profession to consider this report. We recommend that this working group considers the advice that vets need to provide statutory animal health planning services; the standardisation of data for a veterinary surveillance system, and the subsequent sharing of information among vets; the training requirements of large animal vets on graduation and throughout their careers; information systems to highlight changing international disease patterns to practising vets; and the research needs of practitioners who are having to deliver the strategies across the country. At its conclusion the working group should also weigh the cost implications of the proposed new animal health and welfare strategies against the cost to the nation if disease control fails.*

The role of veterinary practice is discussed by the animal health and welfare strategy which proposed a new initiative to establish, in partnership with stakeholders, a working group to consider the reports conclusions and recommendations of the EFRA Committee report. The objectives of the working group will need to be determined in light of the report but it will need to:

- Consider the conclusions and recommendations of the EFRA Committee report.
- Develop an understanding of the current structure of the veterinary industry, identifying examples of best practice, as appropriate.
- Develop a clear understanding of large scale policy developments which will impact on the veterinary industry's ability to deliver and
- Ensure that the outcomes of the animal health and welfare strategy are delivered in partnership with the veterinary industry, identifying both responsibilities and the approach for doing so.

#### Activity

The working group is now being formed. Defra has arranged for a consultant to help the working group carry out further research, where appropriate. We have also asked the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the British Veterinary Society to put forward nominations to join the working group and are currently talking to other interested parties.

## **Milestones**

- We aim to hold the first meeting of the Veterinary Services working group early in the new year at which it will consider its terms of reference. The working group should aim to provide some initial conclusions that can be included in the final strategy when it is published next **spring**.

## **Delivery**

- This work will be taken forward by the **Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Unit of Defra**, in conjunction with Scotland and Wales.

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## 5.2 New Initiatives 7, 8, 9a, 11, 12: An integrated approach to disease prevention through farm health planning

*Supporting the animal health and welfare strategic outcomes of providing a clearer understanding of costs and benefits, promoting a partnership approach and disease prevention.*

The following new initiatives form an integrated package of activities which support the animal health and welfare strategic outcomes by promoting disease prevention using a partnership approach:

New initiative 7:	Dissemination of Research
New initiative 8:	Identification of Costs and Benefits
New initiative 9a:	Best Practice at Home
New initiative 11:	Positive Health Action Plans
New initiative 12:	Training and Advice Needs

A number of other new initiatives, described separately in this document, will also actively contribute to the broader objectives of these workstreams.

### Context

While most Government intervention in the animal health arena has been centred on its role as regulator, particularly for notifiable disease, these integrated initiatives represent a new way forward by Defra. In combining these interlinking workstreams the aim is to build an effective partnership approach to increasing the health levels of livestock by promoting farm health planning and strengthening the infrastructure supporting livestock keepers and the veterinary profession in their identification and management of health risks to their farm animals. The outline strategy sets some of the background to these new initiatives:

The **Positive Animal Health Action Plan** aims to promote high standards of disease prevention and control and foster a culture of good practice by those involved with the care, health and welfare of farm-reared animals. Herd and flock health planning has been cited as one way in which economic benefits and improved disease prevention and control can be achieved. The working definition of a farm health plan used here is a proactive approach to improved animal disease prevention and control. It involves: early recognition of diseases present at a holding, the identification of risks of introduction and spread of diseases and infections, and putting measures in place to control any existing problems and improve overall disease prevention and control.

By taking a partnership approach and establishing a Working Group we will be seeking to develop a common understanding of farm and herd health plans and what they involve, together with an approach to farm health planning that is based on the practical and active management of disease.

The initiative to identify **best practice at home** will underpin the Positive Health Action Plan. Examples of best and good practice need to be identified, collated and disseminated throughout the livestock sectors in order to help livestock keepers achieve high standards of animal health by the most

effective means and using consistent messages. This is closely linked to the identification of costs and benefits initiative since good and best practice must also take these factors into account.

**Identifying the costs and benefits** of implementing good and best animal health practice in relation to the costs of animal disease will provide a clearer understanding of the value of farm health planning, both for the individual livestock keeper and the different industry sectors. The initiative will involve a review and analysis of the evidence available to support the current view that a more proactive approach to animal health will result in financial benefits for the farmer. The development of cases studies using real experience about the effectiveness and benefits of adopting specific practices will be useful to the industry and is one way in which Defra, Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government can help farmers share experience and ideas.

The **improved dissemination of research** aims to ensure that private veterinarians and livestock keepers have up to date information on the key developments for good and best practice arising from current research. It is important that sufficient and well directed effort is put into the appropriate transfer of knowledge so that research outputs can be put to best use in developing good and best practice for on farm disease risk assessment and management. Mechanisms are required to ensure that research outputs are disseminated efficiently in a useable form to all those with an interest.

The **training and advice** new initiative aims to ensure access to these two key sets of information for those that need it such as farmers, vets and those who advise livestock keepers. This initiative interlocks with all the above initiatives as part of the effective flow of the most up to date, appropriate and useful information to underpin good and best practice and high standards in disease prevention and animal health.

## **Activity**

Under the **Positive Animal Health Action Plan** a working group will be established to take forward all five initiatives. The Working Group and its subgroups will be responsible for setting priorities and developing mechanisms and incentives to encourage farm health planning. Importantly, the groups will identify key partners who will take responsibility for promoting farm health planning in different sectors and will also be the forum by which all the information gathered across the five initiatives will be assessed in a partnership approach, integrated and used to inform a communication strategy for promotion of farm health planning.

A study will be commissioned to collate the information on existing **good/best practice** already employed in GB as well as investigating the costs of animal disease to the farmer and livestock sectors and costs and benefits of farm health planning. This information will be supplemented by a study gathering together information on existing **training and advice** in disease prevention and farm health planning as well as the identification of existing research underpinning developments in best practice on farm to prevent and control disease.

In partnership with Defra, Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government, the Working Group will review and analyse the information gathered in the studies with a view to refining our understanding and identify gaps in knowledge in different livestock sectors. The Working Group will also work to establish the needs of those who will deliver training and advice such as veterinary practices and agricultural colleges with regard to up to date research to ensure that training courses and advice are maintained at the highest standard. Where necessary, the research to address gaps will be identified and recommended.

In dovetailing the outputs of each of these initiatives, the Working Group will develop a communications strategy, which will include defined roles for each partner. In developing this strategy the Working Group will consider methods and media by which to best get messages across to promote and encourage use of good/best practice by all those who are responsible for the care, health and welfare of farm-reared animals. This will include facilitating the development of case studies for use in different livestock sectors, showing the **cost/benefit** of farm health planning in addition to ensuring access to advice for use in different livestock sectors to support the implementation of Farm Health Plans.

With stakeholders, knowledge transfer networks for **dissemination of research** will be developed as necessary. Work will also begin on fostering better links between Government and training establishments to identify, assess and address existing and future training and advice requirements for the farming industry. This will include Working Group engagement in identifying how training establishments will play an active role in farm health planning support for farmers and vets, including best practice for disease prevention. The needs of farmers and vets with regard to training will emerge as messages and consensus on best practice is developed in partnership with stakeholders.

### **Milestones**

- The working group will be established and it will have it's first meeting in **Spring 2004**
- The sectoral subgroups will have established their priority areas by **Winter 2004**
- In **early 2005** the process of engaging with stakeholders to develop the mechanisms for promoting health planning on farms will begin.
- The report into existing research for the development of on farm best practice produced by **September 2004**
- This report will be reviewed by Working Group and subgroups and gaps identified for further research by **October 2005**
- Effective knowledge transfer mechanisms will be identified and communications strategy established **May 2006** for the dissemination of research.
- The study of the costs and benefits of animal disease prevention measures will be commissioned by **April 2004**

- The review information and identify gaps will be completed by **October 2005**
- The needs of partners will be identified and case studies developed by **Dec 2005**
- The study into existing good/best practice will be completed by **Winter 2004** allowing the working group to begin their review and analysis
- Development of the communication strategy of good/best practice to industry by sector will begin in **Summer 2005** using the links developed via the working group and subgroups, while the full communications strategy is agreed and then communication starts in earnest in **Summer 2006**.
- The study gathering information on current training courses will be commissioned by **April 2004**
- Work to forge links with colleges and foster good communication between colleges and those wishing to receive training will commence in earnest in **Spring 2004**.
- The working group will review the output of the study and, in concert with development of messages for good/best practice in disease prevention and farm health planning, will aim to identify further need from training and advice.

## Delivery

- Delivery of farm health planning will be carried out by a number of possible interested parties. Clearly, **veterinary surgeons** will have a crucial role to play in providing on-farm expertise and advice. However, the different **livestock sectors** themselves have a key role to play in promoting the benefits of farm health planning amongst their colleagues. **Agricultural colleges, medicines distributors** and **farm assurance schemes** also have important roles to play in supporting the role out of active farm health planning.
- A wide range of interested parties has already been consulted for their views in developing the draft Action Plan. The partnership approach and stakeholder engagement will be developed via the Working group. The sectoral sub-groups will allow wider engagement taking in the views at ground level and it is intended that officials will be participating in local farmer group meetings and providing a web-based forum to canvass views and ideas.

For further information please contact:

Animal Movements and Exotic Diseases Division  
 Defra  
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 London  
 SW1P 4PQ

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 E-mail: [Animalhealthactionplan@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Animalhealthactionplan@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

### **5.3 New Initiative 9b: Best Practice Abroad**

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of developing a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities and ensuring effective delivery and enforcement.*

#### **Context**

This new initiative helps provide aims to identify, in partnership with stakeholders, valuable elements of systems used by our trading partners to improve and maintain high standards of animal health and welfare and which may be transferable to GB practices.

The outline strategy recognises that the new initiative to identify best practice at home should be supplemented by a similar exercise that identifies best practice in other countries. The strategy must therefore maintain close links with the systems employed outside of GB, both by governments, livestock keepers and their representative organisations

The review will seek to identify examples of:

- partnership working between the government and the livestock industry to help the latter apply general farm health planning.
- the way in which Government uses the veterinary profession to help prevent health related problems occurring.
- how best practice is disseminated to livestock keepers and how they are encouraged to accept responsibility for the identification and management of animal health related risks.

#### **Activity**

Defra has commissioned a study to evaluate those systems of relevance to husbandry systems in GB. A report will be produced which Defra will consider with Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and stakeholders to identify which examples of best practice should be incorporated in the strategy or disseminated to livestock keepers.

We have already identified a range of countries which should be the subject of an initial trawl. During this initial phase, we are collecting information in France, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Argentina, Japan and Israel. The review will give an overview of the information generated and recommend those countries whose systems merit further investigation.

#### **Milestones**

- Initial analysis of the information collected from the above countries will be completed by the end of **April 2004**.
- An interim report on the detailed analysis will be produced by end of **June 2004** and discussed at a stakeholders meeting as quickly as possible, to decide how the recommendations in the report should be progressed.

## **Delivery**

- When the research and analysis has been conducted the report will be discussed with stakeholders its recommendations considered and decisions taken on adopting changes.

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## 5.4 New Initiative 10: EU Food Hygiene Regulations

*Supporting the strategic outcomes of developing clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities and promoting a partnership approach.*

### Context

The “Farm to Fork” approach promoted by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is being given a legal base in proposals for new EU food hygiene regulations which will extend food hygiene legislation to primary producers. The legislation has not yet been passed but it is likely to have wide reaching implications and is expected to be applied from 1 January 2006. Livestock producers will have to register as food businesses and control hazards that can enter the food chain, operate hygienically and keep records relevant to food safety. Slaughterhouse animals will have to be traceable back to their farm of origin and be accompanied by information from the producer’s records.

It is important that the industry is aware of and prepared for the impact of these regulations. This new initiative aims to establish a working group in partnership with industry to prepare producers for compliance with food hygiene regulations.

### Activity

A working group will be established in partnership with stakeholders in order to help prepare industry for the new regulations. Initially a clear view of the scope of the legislation needs to be established. Once this has been done the working group will help facilitate a strong understanding of the implications of the regulations across industry.

Undoubtedly good practice in the safe production of food and the communication of standards already takes place in the industry such as through the work carried out by the FSA and farm assurance schemes. These existing structures and practices need to be identified and reviewed by the working group.

Once good practice that exists within the industry has been identified these tools can be communicated more widely to the rest of industry to enable it to prepare for the forthcoming regulations.

### Milestones

- The working group will be established in **early 2004** when it will begin to identify what is already being achieved by the industry in relation to food safety.
- In order to establish the impact of the legislation a regulatory impact assessment will be conducted and consulted upon. This will take place in **late 2004**.
- The impact of the regulation and the best practice for meeting it’s requirements will be established by the working group in **late 2004** when engagement and communication with the industry will begin.

## **Delivery**

- The working group will be jointly run by the **FSA** and **Defra** whilst maintaining GB links.

For further information please contact:

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## **5.5 New Initiative 15: Delivery Agents**

*Supporting the strategic aim of effective delivery and enforcement.*

### **Context**

During the consultation period for the strategy a number of stakeholders and customers commented on the delivery of government services in relation to animal health and welfare. It was felt that delivery needed to be carried out more consistently and conducted in a more joined up way. Government must ensure that the delivery carried out by its agents is efficient and effective with consistent enforcement throughout GB. This means that as well as exploring with delivery agents how they can improve their effectiveness through better communication and co-ordination with other enforcement agencies government also needs to review its relationship with its delivery agents and the way in which it uses them. A number of projects are underway within government which work to achieving these aims.

### **Activity**

Defra, in partnership with Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authorities (LAs) through LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinating Office on Regulatory Services), has begun an extensive pilot of a Framework Agreement on the delivery of services in animal health and welfare. This agreement is based upon local liaison and communication through the State Veterinary Service, agreeing activities and resources based upon a national risk assessment scheme. The benefits achieved so far include a greater understanding of all the roles and responsibilities of the Departments and delivery agents, as well as a greater degree of consistency of enforcement delivery across the board, whilst still being locally accountable.

As part of the pilot, Defra has developed a web based secure enforcement database, accessible by all involved in the Framework Agreement, including Defra HQ, the State Veterinary Service, LACORS and individual LAs. The system allows delivery agents to record enforcement activities in a transparent manner – allowing all parties with secure access to view what has been done in terms of enforcement, as well as the results and actions of any activities. For the first time all the partners can see who, how and why enforcement activities have occurred, allowing benchmarking of service delivery as well as a more consistent and joined up approach to enforcement. Activities can now be planned to avoid multiple visits by different agencies to the same premises, reducing the burdens on industry.

A review is being carried out of the State Veterinary Service to ensure that it gives the best possible support for the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. Ministers have agreed in principle that the State Veterinary Service should leave core Defra and become a Next Steps executive agency. The review will establish the scope of this possible new agency and will look in particular at whether the agency should include functions currently carried out by other bodies within Defra, where they play a significant role in implementing the strategy.

This review sits alongside the reorganisation and restructuring processes taking place within the whole Defra family, in order to meet the needs of its customers and improve the relationship between policy and delivery such as the major review of rural delivery undertaken by Lord Haskins.

A pilot exercise is to be held in January 2004 run by the State Veterinary Service which will involve a range of enforcement agents from the wider rural community. It will involve bringing together representatives who have a shared interest – but different perspective – with the aim of generating a better common understanding of enforcement issues and generating consensus about enforcement activities.

A workshop(s) will be held with customers of animal health and welfare enforcement and services to establish their views and opinions on delivery. The State Veterinary Service is establishing a strong regional lead in co-ordinating this, both as a direct delivery agent and as a facilitator of the activities of other delivery agents.

Although it is not expected that there will be a direct effect on customers, the initiative to enter into a firmer contractual relationship with Local Veterinary Inspectors (LVIs) will provide coincidental support in maintaining a critical mass of large animal vets in rural areas.

### **Milestones**

- The Framework Agreement on delivery of services in animal health & welfare will include all 203 local authorities in England & Wales included by **March 31 2004**.
- The Review of the State Veterinary Service is due to report in **Spring 2004**
- The results of the LVI review will be known by **Spring 2004**
- The customer workshops will take place **early in 2004** before the launch of the final strategy.

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## **5.6 New Initiative 16: Measuring Indicators and Targets**

*Supporting the animal health and welfare strategic outcome of effective delivery and enforcement.*

### **Context**

The Outline Strategy set out a new initiative to develop a series of indicators and targets against which we can measure change, over time, to ensure the strategy is on track.

It is essential that we have a baseline for measuring progress towards our vision. We need to develop indicators which capture the strategic outcomes of the outline strategy document, and link clearly with Defra's wider Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy. A full set of indicators will be developed under the direction of the Strategy Steering Board.

### **Activity**

Work on the development of an indicator framework is underway. This will concentrate on the economic, and social aspects of the strategy and develop appropriate environmental indicators. In developing the indicators we want we will build on those contained in the Outline Strategy, focusing on the strategic outcomes. The framework will be built around:

- (a) reductions in the costs associated with endemic disease in animals;
- (b) reduced incidence of the zoonotic diseases leading to a lower occurrence of directly attributable ill health in humans;
- (c) improved animal welfare;
- (d) increased security against future outbreaks of costly exotic diseases in animals

This work will help us to identify strengths/weaknesses within the strategy which we can share with stakeholders asking them to comment and contribute their ideas. This consultation may need to include a discussion on the costs and benefits involved in obtaining new data where necessary.

A sub-set of this new initiative is a statistical analysis which will build on the current picture of the animal health and welfare world and inform decisions on indicators. This analysis will be made available to stakeholders.

### **Milestones**

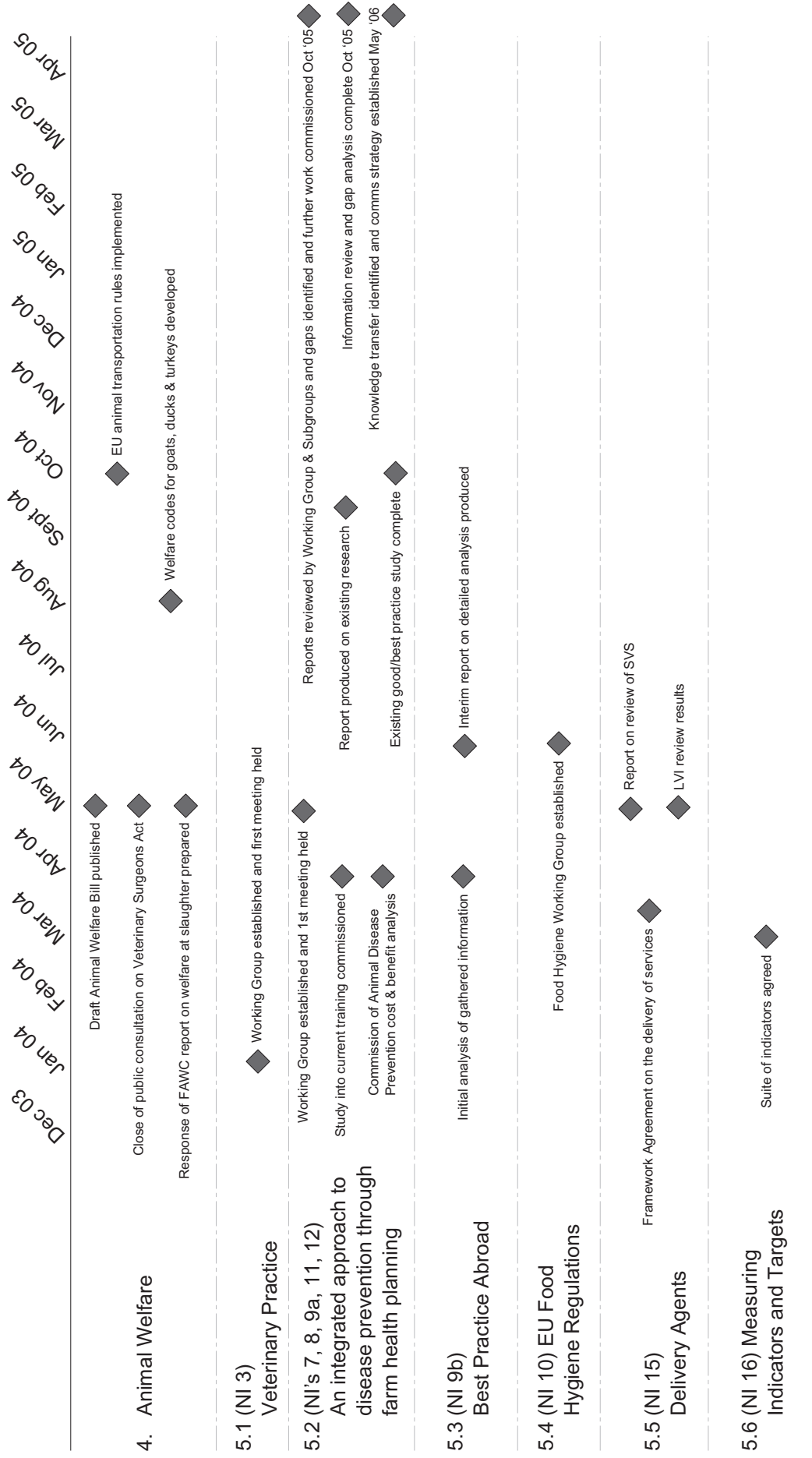
- As we develop the framework we will describe progress to key stakeholders and ask for feedback with the aim of reaching agreement in time for the launch of the final strategy in Spring 2004.

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## Promotion of Animal Health and Welfare



## Prevention & Control of Animal Disease Summary Map

