

WALES ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FRAMEWORK GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held in Cathays Park, Cardiff on 22nd November 2017

Present:

Peredur Hughes (PH) Chair
Ifan Lloyd (IL)
David Davies (DD)
Moss Jones (MJ)
Abi Reader (AR)
Paula Boyden (PB)

Welsh Government

Christianne Glossop (Part Meeting)	Chief Veterinary Officer Wales
Gavin Watkins (GW)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Paul Critchley (PC)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Irene Allen (Part Meeting)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Candice Boyes (CB)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Nikki Fitzgerald (NF)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)

Graeme Cook (Item 3)	Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer for the UK
John Griffiths & Neil Paton (Item 7)	Gwaredu BVD

Apologies

Jo Price (JP)

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Group. Advised it was going to be a full and busy meeting.
2. Thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed Candice Boyes, who recently joined OCVO and will be leading on Communications for the group.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes and Action Points from 14th June

3. The Chair explained the final minutes and updated action points from the last meeting were emailed to Group Members as part of the papers for this meeting.
4. The minutes of the meeting were agreed.
5. Chair noted Jackie Price was going to be off work for quite some time due to a car accident. The group sends best wishes.

Action point 1 > Send a letter to Jackie expressing best wishes from the group (Secretariat) **Completed 06/12/17**

Action point 2 > Write to Michael Seal from the Group stating it was felt that only asking for English Representation on the group was not acceptable. (Secretariat)

Agenda Item 3: Review of AHSGB – Graeme Cooke

6. Chair welcomed Graeme Cooke (GC), Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer for the United Kingdom.
7. GC talked through the background and the reason behind the work going forward. It was noted that policy leads and partners throughout administrations do not meet as regularly as needed. This leads to a weakness in the opportunity to spot and address any urgent issues.
8. GC discussed the recommendations mainly in terms of how a new UK wide board would work. The Group outlined concerns that Wales would not be represented. GC provided reassurance this was not the case and he's hoping for some good feedback from Wales as we currently have strong links to industry and partnership working.
9. GC proposed that the Wales Board would finish and become a part of the new UK wide reporting set up from March 2018.

Action point 3 > Forward Pen Pics of members of the Group to Graeme (Secretariat) **Completed 19/12/17**

Action point 4 > Graeme to write to Wales Surveillance Board, Cc Framework Group, to outline the planned work going forward.

Agenda Item 4: Update from Chair

Four Chairs meeting

10. Chair attended the six monthly, Four Chairs Meeting in Belfast on the 12th October. The meetings were attended by four chairs (or equivalents) from the devolved administrations and this provided an opportunity to catch up and update on our respective areas and priorities

11. At the meeting we discussed Brexit and border implications, surveillance, antibiotic resistance (AMR), TB, Bovine EID and BVD. Wales will host the next Four Chairs Meeting in April.
12. Next meeting is due to take place in Wales in April.

Meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

13. Unfortunately, the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary on 16th November was postponed. Future dates are being looked at.

BVD Governance

14. The BVD programme, although seems to be running well in terms of formal governance for finance, targets etc. and how they report to the Welsh Government. However, there is a feeling that more on the ground feedback is needed. The Chair felt that it was important that the group agree on what process is needed to get real information on the programme from the vets/farmers who are part of the programme.
15. IL stated the BVD Task and Finish / sub group met on Monday 20th November. The feedback from the group in terms of the work was positive. Although understand that a T&F sub group is no longer required, those on the group would still like to be part of any future board/steering group.
16. Chair agreed that the T&F group have done a great job, but the feedback group should be smaller and focus more on understanding what is happening on the group from real farmers/vets involved in the programme. Want reassurance it's actually working as it should.
17. AR mentioned the comms of the BVD programme. Industry feedback is positive, but comms and engagement on what is happening needs to keep going and stay strong. This information does need to be from Gwaredu BVD, but agreed farmers need a route to feed up the chain.
18. All agreed an industry lead feedback group is essential and this will be raised during Item 7.

<p>Action point 5 > A letter to the Task & Finish sub group thanking them for their work. (Secretariat)</p>

Agenda Item 5: Animal Offender Register for Wales

19. PB reminded the group of the consultation currently being undertaken by RSPCA.
20. The Group raised concerns as to who would have access to this database and who would fund this and "own" it.

21. IA updated the Group on the process being undertaken for this consultation. The FM has been clear we will follow the same sentence as UK gov. This consultation will be realistic and would expect the group to respond on findings. Due early 2018.
22. The Group agreed to stay impartial and therefore would not be responding directly to the consultation, but would like to respond to the report. However, it was noted that if members of the group wanted to respond individually within their formal role that was fine.
23. PB asked that there is some consideration on how animals would be managed if this ended up in High Court. There are cases of seized animals being held for upwards of a year before a case is heard. IA noted this point.
24. The Group agreed to park the item for now, and await proposal from the Minister with more information on this.

Agenda Item 6: Update Sheep Scab and Animal Health

25. MJ updated the Group on the continued issues being faced through sheep scab and farmers not using correct treatment etc.
26. MJ discussed the letter option of utilising RDP funding to support the work to improve scab management in live stock in Wales.
27. NF and PC outlined the RDP process. The Expression of Interest (EOI) should cover Phase 1 and Phase 2 as that will make the process quicker when putting together a “final” bid.
28. PC mentioned it would be beneficial to make sure the EOI fits with the criteria set out within the guidance, specifically 16.2 - *support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies*
29. Some queries around who would take on the role of submitting and taking forward this work. There are groups that could be willing. MJ attending a meeting, 23rd November, and will feedback.
30. GW mentioned approaching Menter a Busnes as they may have someone who could champion this being familiar with the similar process undertaken by the BVD application.
31. The Group thanked MJ for all his work so far and agreed this work needs to start now and it has the support of the Group. Chair asked MJ to start the process and keep the Group updated.
32. GW mentioned the Animal Health planning update will be circulated shortly and thanked MJ for all his hard work and support on this.

Action point 6 > Send Guidance on RDP to Moss (Secretariat) Completed 24/11/17

Agenda Item 7: Gwaerdu BVD Update

33. The Chair welcomed John and Neil and thanked them for taking time out to update the Group.
34. John and Neil provided a PowerPoint presentation to update the group on the progress of the Gwaerdu BVD programme.
35. In addition to the very positive private veterinary engagement Neil also attended the APHA conference as they also complete approx. 10% of the annual TB tests in house.
36. IL outlined that generally the experience has been positive and has found farmers are keen to do a PI hunt when necessary. Neil stated PI hunt will start January 2018.
37. Chair asked what Gwaerdu BVD was doing on further feedback from farmers/vets on the ground. John outlined an idea which would look at setting up a farmer liaison group;
 - Mix of representatives from small and large farms
 - Across wales
 - Have between 8-10 members
 - Could use those as mentors/case studies etc.
 - They would formally feedback to the current T&F Sub Group who then formally feedback to Gwaerdu etc.
38. The Group thought this was a positive step and agreed this approach. However, who would they feed into if T&F group no longer existed? MJ felt some of those members needed to stay as they have the experience and knowledge.
39. IL asked for a lessons learnt session, this would be helpful to get from all groups linking into BVD programme. Possibly after 1yr. John agreed.
40. GW mentioned discussions took place at T&F Sub Group meeting on how will legislation for this work be looked at, can it be added to existing legislation/use what's there. Chair stated this should be bespoke legislation and possibilities of learning from other DA's.
41. DD asked if BVD update could be agenda item at next CHAWG meeting in January, the Welsh Government will host.

Action point 7 > Annual TB test figures to be circulated to Gwaerdu BVD (PC)

Action point 8 > John to Map out the phases of the programme, not just over the 3 years but how they will be looking at legislation. Share with Group (Gwaredu BVD)

Action point 9 > Write to Tim Britstock to request Gwaredu BVD update as an agenda item at next CHAWG meeting (Secretariat)

Agenda Item 8: Public Appointment Process

- 42. The Chair confirmed he will be standing down as Chair of the Group on 31st May 2018.
- 43. NF confirmed the Welsh Government will lead this process and due to a possible conflict of interest, as member of the Group may want to apply, there was limited detail that she could mention. However, the process is under way and hope to advertise in new year

Agenda Item 9: Communications

- 44. Chair mentioned how this was discussed at previous meeting 6th September, wanted to now start working on this more formally.
- 45. Chair asked if AR was happy to support this work especially inline with engaging younger farmers. AR agreed
- 46. NF discussed the Group having it's own communication plan, CB will be taking this forward however the Group needs to lead on it and decide what's important in terms of what is being communicated and when.
- 47. NF asked if the mid year review report was helpful, or would it be more beneficial to do some social media work around what Group has been doing etc. Members agreed it would be good to have a short report for the Group only and from that can do more media/social engagement on specific items and possibly case studies etc.
- 48. NF asked members to consider options/ideas on future engagement events, on audience and on what is a priority. CB will be circulating some further info and queries to begin to pull together a draft communications plan.

Action point 10 > Mid Year review to be submitted to Group to discuss priorities to be more formally communicated publically. (Secretariat)

Action point 11 > Draw together a Communications Plan (CB)

Agenda Item 10: Update CVO

Arising Issues

49. CG updated the Group about key areas arising internationally:

- Avian Influenza, Germany has recently reported an issue. It was around same time in 2016 where this was heightened in the UK. It was noted that although Domestic bird level is still at risk level of Low, Wild bird risk level has now increased from Low to Medium risk.
- Bluetongue, There was a case of type BTV4 in the south east recently. (Wales has previously experienced type BTV8). There were 7 animals being imported from France that didn't meet the requirements or have correct documentation. The infected animals were destroyed. There are investigations taking place as to how this happened.
- Chronic Wasting Disease, recently this has been found in a Deer in Norway, which is the first time detected in Europe. This is of interest as there is Red Deer in the UK.

TB

50. With the new TB measurements going live in October there are still lots of talks taking place on how this is affecting those that show cattle all year.. CG reaffirmed that it's essential that work continues towards e keep North Wales free from infection.
51. There is also ongoing discussion on moving cattle from low risk to high risk areas in Wales and between equivalent areas in Wales and England, particularly the issue of some cases requiring both pre-movement testing and post-movement-testing. This has in some cases resulted in groups keeping animals for longer in high-risk areas to avoid re-testing during key show dates.
52. CG mentioned that the Cabinet Secretary will be announcing TB eradication targets by end of calendar year. There is still work needed to engage vets around the subject of TB and how this will help towards supporting those targets. There are some issues with length of potential predictions in terms of target dates, and also discussion on if targets will be set at regional, or national level.
53. The Chair raised the idea of campaigning again about using risk based trading approach. This would help highlight issues of TB, BVD, Sheep Scab etc.

Staffing

54. CG confirmed the WG have had agreement to recruit to specific posts supporting Brexit work.
55. CG mentioned working with DEFRA to do some work on "Deep Dives" into Animal Health and Welfare. Dates tbc, but the WG will carefully control scope and there will be lots of preparation on this, the Group may be contacted.

Links to Domestic abuse and Animal cruelty

56. CG mentioned a recent seminar that she attended with Paula, and thanked Paula for such an interesting and engaging event. Highlighted the importance of the work in terms of undertaking the link between domestic abuse and animal welfare. GC recommended those able to, to attend such seminars.
57. MJ raised concerns relating to the EU Animal Health Regulations and their implementation after we leave the EU. PC provided the current update and thinking.

Action point 12 > Ensure the International Disease Monitoring Report is circulated to the group (Secretariat)

Action Point 13 > Agenda item for next meeting around Brexit and role of group

Agenda Item 11: AOB

58. DD wanted to mention meeting he attended on LIP (Livestock Information Programme) currently owned by DEFRA. Scotland are looking to put in place a similar system. DD wanted to know where Wales stands on this?
59. CG has not had any information on this recently. Secretariat to look into this and feedback to Group

CLOSE