

WALES ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FRAMEWORK GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held in Cathays Park, Cardiff on 3rd March 2016

Present:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Peredur Hughes | Chair |
| Christianne Glossop | Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales |
| Ifan Lloyd | |
| David Davies | |
| Moss Jones | |

Welsh Government

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Carol Harris | Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) |
| Chris Hale | Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) |
| Peter Wilson | Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) |
| Terri Thomas | Head of Rural Development Division |
| Dafydd Glyn | BVD Eradication Scheme (Agenda Item 6) |
| John Griffiths | BVD Eradication Scheme (Agenda Item 6) |
| Ian Jones | Presentation and discussion on poultry sector in Wales (Agenda Item 7) |
| Chris Poole | Presentation and discussion on poultry sector in Wales (Agenda Item 7) |

Apologies

Joanna Price

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the eighth meeting of the Group. The Chair explained that Dafydd Glyn and John Griffiths would be attending to provide an update on the BVD proposal and Terri Thomas, Head of Rural Development Division would be attending to answer questions on the process for bidding for RDP funding. Ian Jones and Chris Poole would also be joining to provide an overview of the poultry sector in Wales.
2. The Chair said that apologies were received from Joanna Price. On behalf of the Group he wished to congratulate Joanna on her appointment as Vice Chancellor of the Royal Agricultural University Cirencester.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes and Action Points from 2nd December

3. The Chair explained that 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.

Agenda Item 3: Update from Chair

5. The Chair provided an update as follows;

- **Mid Year Review of the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Implementation Plan** - The Mid Year Review was published in January. This is a key milestone within the year and demonstrates the progress made. Work is now progressing on planning for the 16/17 year.
- **Cattle and Sheep Health and Welfare Groups** – The Chair stated that he had attended the Cattle Health and Welfare Group AMR Workshop on the 14th January. He explained that the key message from the workshop was to work in partnership to ensure that antibiotics remain effective for humans. Christianne explained that everyone had a responsibility to work on this. She stated that it was crucial to get animal health planning right, a key issue being the establishment of an evidence base and agreeing what we can actually do in Wales to make a difference. Moss commented that Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions had submitted an expression of interest for RDP funding to develop a database to record antibiotic usage. He explained that he could arrange for Christianne to have a demonstration of the database. Christianne suggested that it could be possible to look at a specific vet practice and the farms who use that practice to consider the antibiotics prescribed compared to how they are actually used. Ifan stated that he had attended the Veterinary Medicines Directorate AMR Summit. A key issue discussed was farmers using antibiotics when they may not need to. He explained that he had also spoken with members from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) who have run a scheme looking at biosecurity. Christianne stated that consideration of equine biosecurity could enhance the work already underway on biosecurity and that this should be explored. Moss commented that there was a need to get farmers to understand the benefits of animal health planning. Christianne explained that there was potential to make a real difference in this area by demonstrating the cost/ benefit analysis. She explained that discussions were on-going with Farming Connect on the new service and that one option to consider was to have biosecurity as a pre-requisite to accessing the Farming Connect Service. There is also scope to develop specific training modules on AMR.

Action Point 1 > Ifan to provide any details on the BEVA equine biosecurity scheme.

Action Point 2 > Christianne to discuss with the Farming Connect Team making biosecurity training a pre-requisite to accessing Farming Connect Services and the potential for developing e-learning tools on AMR.

- The Chair asked Huw to provide an update on the recent Sheep Health and Welfare Group meeting on 4th February. Huw explained that the main discussions had focused on the governance structure around SHAWG. There had also been discussion on bluetongue risk, impact of budget cuts and the roll out of the Rural Development Plan for England. Huw explained that the RDPE focus was on sheep scab, BVD and animal health planning. He

explained that the SHAWG conference was scheduled for 16th November.

- **Four Chairs meeting** – The Chair explained that the Four Chairs meeting with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland had taken place on the 1st February. The Secretariat will circulate the minutes once agreed. The next meeting is scheduled for the 21st September in Edinburgh.

Action Point 3> Secretariat to circulate the minutes of the Four Chairs meeting.

- **Response to the Quarantine Unit consultation** – The Chair thanked members for their contributions to the Quarantine Unit consultation which was submitted in February and that the Group looked forward to seeing the Welsh Government response to the consultation in due course.
- **Sheep Scab update** - Moss and Ifan explained that the sheep scab survey on the prevalence of sheep scab in Wales, had been issued to approximately 7,500 sheep farmers in Wales. 650 responses had been received to date. The survey will run to the end of March. Hybu Cig Cymru, National Sheep Association and Farmers Union of Wales had agreed to put the survey on their web sites. Ifan explained that the survey results should be available at the end of the summer but he will check timescales.

Action Point 4 > Secretariat to arrange Tweet to promote the sheep scab survey.

Action Point 5 > Ifan to check the timescale for production of the survey results report.

- **Welfare Sector Priorities** – the Chair explained that discussions with the Animal Welfare Network Wales (AWNw) were progressing to agree priorities and ways of working. He explained that the paper provided by AWNW had been discussed in the Group's planning meeting last week. It was agreed that updating the welfare codes was a good place to start work. It was agreed that Ifan and Jo would forward their comments to the Secretariat who would draft a response to the AWNW. The Group also agreed that it would be useful to invite the Chair of the AWNW to their meeting in June.

Action Point 6 > Jo and Ifan to forward any additional thoughts on the AWNW paper to the Secretariat. Secretariat to draft response to the AWNW

Action Point 7 > Secretariat to invite the Chair of the AWNW to the next meeting of the Wales AHWF Group in June.

- **Biosecurity Campaign** - the Chair explained that the Biosecurity Survey Report was published on 2nd March. The Deputy Minister for Farming and Food also issued a Written Statement to publicise the report. The next step for the Group will be to consider the recommended next steps within the report.

- **Animal Health Surveillance Governance Board** - The Chair explained that Dirk Pfeiffer, Chairman of the Animal Health Surveillance Governance Board had been invited to attend the September meeting of the Wales AHWF Group to further discuss the role and relationship of the Wales AHWF Group and the Surveillance Governance Board. The Chair explained that in the interim, he had met with Dirk Pfeiffer and Michael Seals, Chair of Animal Health and Welfare Board England. It has been agreed that secretariats for each group will share agendas in advance. The Group also agreed that it would be useful to contact Nick Fenwick for an update on the work of the Surveillance Governance Board.

Action Point 8 > Secretariat to contact Nick Fenwick for an update on the Surveillance Governance Board

Agenda Item 4: Update from the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales

6. Christianne provided an update as follows;

- **Welsh Assembly Elections** - Christianne explained that the Welsh Assembly Elections were scheduled to take place on 5th May and that the last working day for the current administration would be 17th March. She also explained that there will be a further recess period in advance of the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. She explained that at the final Environment and Sustainable Development Committee meeting, the focus on animal health and welfare issues had been around animal by-products, badger vaccination and animal welfare. The Chair explained that he would be meeting with the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food on 16th March.
- **2016/17 Budgets** - Christianne explained that in terms of budgets for 2016/17, these were currently being worked through and that she would report back to the Group at their next meeting in June.

Action Point 9 > Christianne to provide an update on budgets for 2016/17 at the next meeting.

- **Senior Veterinary Officer Appointment** - Christianne confirmed that following external recruitment Gavin Watkins had been appointed as Senior Veterinary Officer within the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer. It was agreed that Gavin should be invited to attend the next meeting. Christianne explained that work was also on-going to explore access to other specific veterinary advice through the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), for example, bee health. Christianne agreed that she would provide the Group with the final distribution of the veterinary work once finalised.

Action Point 10 > Christianne to provide the Group with the final distribution of veterinary work, once finalised.

Action Point 11 – Secretariat to invite Gavin Watkins to attend the next meeting.

- **APHA Structure** - Christianne explained that APHA were taking forward a significant change programme to their senior structure. This required senior

staff (including vets) to go through an assessment process. She explained that she was continuing to work closely with APHA to ensure that the new structure met the needs of Wales.

- **Contingency Planning Exercise** - Christianne explained that she had attended a contingency planning exercise which took place on 16th February at the Royal Welsh Showground. This exercise was undertaken with the Royal Welsh Show Society with the scenario tested being confirmed Foot and Mouth Disease at the Royal Welsh Show. She explained that this had been a very useful exercise with the key message being that everyone must work together to minimize risks and prevent this happening.
- **Bluetongue** - Christianne explained that a revised veterinary risk assessment on bluetongue coming to the UK had recently been published. She explained that the risk of this happening was expected to increase between May and July 2016. She explained that there was a responsibility on the industry to think through the implications of this risk and actions that they could take to minimise this.
- **TB Dashboard** - Christianne tabled the latest version of the TB Dashboard. It was agreed that the Group would be notified when the TB Dashboard was published.

Action Point 12 > Secretariat to notify the Group when the TB Dashboard is published.

Agenda Item 5: Contribution to the Animal Health & Welfare Framework Implementation Plan for 2016/17 and next steps

- The Chair explained that the Mid Year Review of the Wales Animal Health & Welfare Framework Implementation Plan was published on the 28th January and that the Wales AHWF Group had held a meeting on the 25th February to discuss priorities for the 2016/17 implementation plan.
- Carol explained that the secretariat was now working to produce a draft outline plan for further consideration by the Group. She explained that the overarching aim was to still publish the Implementation Plan for 2016/17 in the summer but the timetable could well be influenced by the Welsh Assembly Elections.

Action Point 13 > Secretariat to prepare draft outline plan for further consideration by the Wales AHWF Group.

Agenda Item 6. BVD Proposals

- The Chair welcomed Dafydd and John to the meeting to provide an update on the BVD proposals. He also welcomed Terri Thomas, Head of Rural Development Division who was attending to answer any questions on the process/timeline for securing funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020.

- John explained that since the Expression of Interest had been approved, work had been progressing to develop the full application for funding within a six month window. He explained that there had also been opportunity to attend an event to present the proposal to other applicants to look at opportunities to join up (where appropriate) on projects. He explained that the preparation of the full application was nearing completion. This will be circulated to the Group prior to submission.

Action Point 14 > John and Dafydd to send BVD application to the Wales AHWF Group prior to final submission.

- Terri explained that the application process was complex but efforts had been made to make the process as simple as possible whilst still satisfying European Commission requirements.
- The Chair asked whether all applications needed to be submitted before approval was agreed. Terri explained that applications could be dealt with as soon as they were received. It is estimated that the average time to approve an application is 3 months and that the Welsh Assembly Elections would not impact on this timeframe.
- Terri also confirmed that any applications submitted which referenced animal health and welfare issues would be sent to the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer for comment.
- Terri explained that Mark Alexander was setting up a working group to consider strategic initiatives to be funded through the RDP. Representatives from OCVO would be included on this group.
- Moss asked about the implications of applying for funding as the BVD proposal is split into phases. Terri confirmed that the process for this is that a further application would need to be completed for Phase 2 which set out that the outcomes of Phase 1 had been met.
- Dafydd explained that it would be important when looking at the supporting database to ensure that databases have a common language so they can interlink and speak to each other. Terri agreed that interlinking databases was a key consideration.

Agenda Item 7: Presentation and discussion on poultry sector in Wales

- The Chair welcomed Ian Jones and Chris Poole to the meeting. He explained that the Group had discussed previously the need for them to have an overview of the poultry sector in Wales and to discuss where the Group could contribute or assist. He also explained that the Group were keen to get an understanding of the disease risks and their management and a better understanding of how the sector operates in Wales.

- Ian delivered a presentation on the poultry sector in Wales highlighting in particular that it was a fast growing area of business. He covered the different sectors within the poultry industry including broilers, layers, turkeys, game birds, backyard poultry and fowl and pigeon fanciers.
- The Group discussed disease risk and welfare. It was agreed that poultry welfare and biosecurity could be an area where the Wales AHWF Group could help raise awareness and link to the existing campaign on biosecurity. It was also agreed that the Group could help to encourage poultry keepers to register themselves on the GB poultry Register. The Group agreed that these actions could be included within the Wales AHWF Plan for 2016/17.

Action Point 15 > Secretariat to liaise with Ian Jones to include a section on poultry within the Wales AHWF Implementation Plan for 2016/17

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

- Dai explained that at the recent CHAWG meeting there had been a presentation on geo fencing and that there was a drive to encourage people to register for this as can have many benefits in terms of biosecurity.
- The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed that the next meeting is on 14th June and then the 13th September in Cathays Park.

CLOSE