

WALES ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FRAMEWORK GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held in Cathays Park, Cardiff on 14th March 2018

Present:

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

Welsh Government

Christianne Glossop	Chief Veterinary Officer Wales
Emma Biggs (EB)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Tom Henderson (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)

PC David Allen	NWP, Rural Crime Team
Rob Taylor	NWP, Rural Crime Team

Apologies

Paul Critchley (PC)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
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Agenda Item 1: Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Group.
2. Thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed Emma Biggs, who recently joined OCVO on inward loan from APHA into a Brexit funded post.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes and Action Points from 22nd November

3. The Chair talked through 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 invited DD to update group due to DD needing to leave the meeting early.
6. DD noted the previous CHAWG meeting he attended. Various issues highlighted, one being Johnes Disease. They discussed how they'd like producers to issue statements on how they intend to combat this. DD noted that milk consumption is on the decline, and felt public concern around Johnes implications could be a factor in this. DD also asked if there were any thoughts on what the Framework Group could do to support this.
7. DD outlined the fact there are a lot of representatives from industry involved in the CHAWG meeting but lack of those at the face of this work, lack of those from grass roots perspective. Also only representatives from England and Wales and it should be wider DA involvement
8. Following a European Development Fund meeting DD outlined some concern around future RDP funding. There is discussion that Wales will now be split between people and business rather than previous split of convergence and competitiveness. The Cabinet Secretary does feel they will be able to ring fence a proportion of funding for farmers.
9. DD reminded Group that the Cabinet Secretary has a wide portfolio so there is a continued need to keep issues within the farming industry at forefront of her thinking.
10. DD mentioned there are lessons to be learnt from Scotland in terms of legislating the eradication of BVD and what specifically needs to be done with PI's. IL was aware that currently the BVD programme in Wales has already reached 3,100 farms, with around 27% of those tested having at least one positive result in the screening. Plus generally the engagement around this programme is very good in Wales.
11. The chair raised a concern around BVD testing where he had spoken to farmers who although were having their TB test were not offered BVD test at same time.
12. MJ felt going forward with Brexit Defra were focussing on Environmental issues rather than Animal Health. There is a lack of drive around this subject. JP mentioned there is a currently a consultation that everyone should be aware of and contribute where necessary.
13. CG raised the fact that the group needs to be aware of any consultations coming out of UK Government that effect Wales. The group needs to raise any issues and be part of those consultations to have any effect in making changes.
14. CG outlined that OCVO have identified additional posts that will support the work of Brexit and EB has also been brought in to lead on this work. There will also be discussions internally on further legal support that is required to make sure we have a strong position in Wales on our requirements of Brexit.

Update from Chair

15. The chair provided an update the group on the meeting he had with the Cabinet Secretary in January. The meeting was positive. The chair attended the NFU where the Cabinet Secretary delivered a speech however was disappointed Animal Welfare was not mentioned.
16. The chair attended the round table event in Llandudno recently. Outlined the discussion of a £50m transitional fund which is being made available.
17. The chair is disappointed that Animal Health Planning is also being looked at by HCC board. Would like further understanding of what their role is and to make sure there is no duplication of effort.

Action point 1> Secretariat will feed back to project team around issues with farmers still not getting BVD tested same time as TB

Action point 2> EB and PC to update the group on Brexit work at next framework group meeting

Action point 3> Secretariat to invite Kathryn Smith to next framework group meeting to outline their involvement in AHP and how both groups could be joined up.

Agenda Item 4: Culling of Dairy Calves

18. The chair handed over to AR who requested the agenda item.
19. AR is aware shooting of bull calves is still happening in Wales. This is likely due to cost and the restriction on when you can move the animal. However AR feels there is a market for these animals. Reminded the group of the scheme that was run by YFC that was set up to help young farmers however it was not as successful as people would have hoped possibly due to cost effectiveness and farmer awareness
20. JP outlined work she had recently been involved in which provided demonstrations to farmers, providing different solutions depending on the farm/farmers.
21. TH outlined the legislation around calf movement requiring minimum age of 10 days (or 14 if journey is over 8 hours), and deemed fit to move. TH questioned whether this is a welfare issue, or if more a financial issue.
22. MJ mentioned that due to the perception by the public we would have to keep an eye on this situation as it could escalate.

23. DD outlined that there could also be welfare implications on how the calves are being treated before they are culled and when they are moved (i.e., colostrum deficiency when moving calves too early). IL asked if this was a common practice? IL has recently contacted BVA on this matter and they were not aware it was happening to a scale to be concerned.
24. AR stated she believes there is a market for unwanted calves, (whether Dairy/Beef or cross Dairy/Beef breeds) and mentioned previous schemes involving distribution of these. She felt we should consider looking into options for alternatives to on-farm culling if a problem were perceived.
25. JP advised there is a possibility of data already being available but without knowing size of problem it would be difficult to look for opportunities to resolve it.

Action point 4 > Secretariat to make some enquiries to procure a particular quick desk top exercise which will review whether there is a problem in Wales and if there are possible solutions.

Agenda Item 5: Animal Health Planning

26. MJ mentioned the AHP report that is now been agreed by the group and can be used/circulated. We should now be looking at opportunities to take this forward via farming connect/HCC etc.
27. MJ advised that there is a lot of working being done within the industry to support the work on AHP, such as Red Tractor. However there is a lot more work being done within dairy industry and poultry sector, rather than beef and lamb. He noted from 01 April this year, there will be further requirements through Red Tractor scheme in order to be involved, such as need to produce a health plan.
28. MJ was still concerned there is not an holistic approach to AHP and there were opportunities being missed to cover more than just one disease when we are delivering funded programmes in Wales.
29. JP stated this will only be effective if communication is being done directly with farmers to understand their needs and only then will you be able to understand what would drive them to put in place an effective AHP.
30. IL has experienced a positive approach where Vets speak to farmers and come up with an agreed action plan which gets reviewed on visits. However those actions need to be realistic to the farmer.
31. CG outlined that this cannot be a WG lead scheme and there is a responsibility here for farmers to take this forward as it directly affects them.

32. JP mentioned a possible solution is around a communications campaign. CG queried the Behaviour Change Segmentation model that's been produced and whether this could be an effective tool.

Action point 5 > All, including WG, to look at recommendations of the report and provide details of how best to circulate the report and what is the best way to communicate findings.

Agenda Item 6: AWW - Animals Land and You Seminar

33. The Chair welcomed PC Allen and Rob Taylor from the North Wales Police Rural Crime team.
34. PC Dave Allen talked through the presentation and outlined the number of livestock worrying incidents they have recently started recording. There are 435 just in North Wales between 2013 and 2017 and also noted the true figure is likely much higher, as this type of incident is largely unreported.
35. 75% of offences are with dogs escaping from homes/gardens that are not adequately looked after and less cases with owners letting dogs off leash when out walking.
36. Rob Taylor talked through issues they have around legislation and the work they are doing to try and change this so they have stronger powers when trying to convict.
37. PB asked whether powers from the Animal Welfare act could be utilised to prosecute owners due to the way animal is treated at home. Rob Taylor said yes but it's very difficult to prove after the fact.
38. The Rural Crime team tries to encourage better reporting systems and encourage people to report incidents. They use numerous communication methods and the presentation can be delivered to anyone who has an interest in this area. IL suggested the BVA may appreciate this.
39. The Chair thanked the Rural Crime Team for attending and talking through such a powerful subject and asked that the Framework Group stays up to date on outcome of the change in legislation.

Action point 6 > A letter from the Framework Group sent to Cabinet Secretary to support the work the Rural Crime team is doing and ask whether there's any consideration for Welsh Law to be changed to reflect this work

Agenda Item 7: Sheep Scab

40. MJ is concerned the work running alongside the RDP funding with BVD is now not going to take place due to lack of funds.
41. MJ said there was frustration in the industry that a paper had been done and now it has stalled again. The Chair mentioned putting this paper to the Cabinet Secretary to outline the need for funding?
42. MJ was also aware of a group who are in Aberystwyth who are putting forward a EU project to deal with sheep scab within their area. CG mentioned we were not aware of this project.
43. CG noted that we will need to clarify what legislation, initiatives /priorities are at a UK level, and which are at a Wales-only level, and to clarify the same with regards to any funding.
44. IL noted he has been made aware of some herds with resistant strains, despite receiving treatment from two different antibiotics, which is a concern as they are building up a resistance.
45. AR felt the work on this needs to be taken forward quickly and decisions and discussions need to happen on the margins of this group and not wait until next meeting.

Action point 7 > CG will speak to PC to understand current situation with the Sheep Scab work and RDP funding. Secretariat will feed back ASAP.

Agenda Item 8: CVO Update

46. The CG outlined risks to be aware of at present;
 - Avian Flu wild bird finding in Wales. Prevention zone already in place. Advised everyone to be vigilant and increase biosecurity measures.
 - Swine Fever – no change to level of risk
 - Bluetongue risk still at same level.
 - African swine flu, borders of Poland but no impact here currently.
 - Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea in America but no cases here (but monitoring).
47. CG updated on Exercise Blackthorne which will take place 25th and 26th April. Offered invitation to Group to observe, but to get in touch first to make arrangements. Note handed to group outlining what would be happening.
48. In terms of Brexit CG mentioned the work being done for day 1 readiness with other administrations. There are issues we have to consider around, for example, what happens with Vaccine Banks and Reference Laboratories

49. CG outlined the fact following exit from EU we will not have the same access to animal health and food audits so will need to consider what will replace this role, who will validate health status for us to trade.
50. The Cabinet Secretary is going to New Zealand in a few weeks, she will be looking at TB eradication programme and also how they made a transition from no compensation schemes.
51. CG stated there are still issues around TB and lack of understanding from farmers. There is a focus on communication however would welcome any comments from the Group on this.
52. There will be a wild animals in circuses debate. This has to be considered carefully. MAEs also discussed, as similar issues to those of circuses. It was noted we do not want to fall behind England/Scotland on a ban, as this could result in issues with circuses coming to Wales if only place they are still legally able to exhibit. EB is working with Animal Welfare team not just on this but on wider issues and our stance post Brexit. Date TBC
53. CG mentioned Tony Joss who has worked in OCVO for 17 years will be retiring in May and Jason Pollard will be his replacement

Action point 8 > Framework Group to write a letter to Tony Joss to wish good luck for future and thank him for the many years work within OCVO/Animal Disease

Agenda Item 9: Free Range Eggs

54. The chair mentioned this is following a request for an update from the Cabinet Secretary. The framework group discussed in December 2016 however there was no action arising from it then
55. CG stated the Cabinet Secretary would like to look at possibly banning enriched cages in Wales. It was noted there are currently only two producers in Wales using this system, however one is a very large producer (housing over 350,000 hens). An element raised by Group was that this larger unit is relatively new, and will have already had a high investment cost when setting up to current compliance level.
56. AR mentioned there's a possibility industry will be looking at not using eggs through this method from 2020

Action point 9 > Group to provide comments back to Secretariat who will provide response to Cabinet Secretary

Agenda Item 10: AWW meeting updated

57. The chair handed over to PB.
58. PB attended the last AWWN meeting and discussed the sanctuaries code of practice. Feedback has been given to WG and will circulate update/outcome when received.
59. PB suggested the group may find a presentation on Animal Offenders register useful and would be happy to invite Paul Smith from RSPCA to next meeting.
60. PB also discussed issues surrounding brachycephalic companion animals (in particular Dogs). She noted that EFRA have provided a Bill regarding sentience and welfare, and that a provision could be included here to protect unborn offspring (i.e. breeders of brachycephalic breeds).
61. PB also mentioned there will be a Disney film featuring a brachycephalic breed (a pug) coming out later this year, so could see a rise in deliberate breeding of this type of dog as a result.
62. PB mentioned that a case of Alabama rot has been diagnosed and communication around this via Dogs Trust is happening. CB will check to see if anything is happening in WG.
63. Dogs Trust is doing a large survey on buyer behaviour. CG mentioned we could retweet this.

Agenda Item 11: Comms

64. CB raised feedback received by Group members about potential avenues for changes to Communications element going forward, and asked for any other suggestions or comments on this following dissemination of a draft Communications Plan to Group.
65. The Group discussed options and summarised preferences for Communications. These included: changing method of sharing mid-year review information externally, to target each priorities to its audience through blog posts or newsletters rather than one formal update, being more active on social media (using CVO account, rather than a AHWFG profile), and attendance/participation in more events with stakeholders (including at Royal Welsh or similar).

Action point 10> CB will pull together 10 bullet points of the meeting and agree how to communicate this and to which audience. This will be a test for how the Framework Group engages externally going forward.

Agenda Item 12: AOB

66. IL – Noted that Brexit Roundtable have been looking into Agri aspect, and will share the Evidence and Scenario Group report about this to the Group, for info.

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