

WALES ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FRAMEWORK GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held in Cathays Park, Cardiff on 8th March 2019

Present:

Stephen James (SJ) - *Chair*
Abi Reader (AR)
David Davies (DD)
Ifan Lloyd (IL)
Moss Jones (MJ)
Paula Boyden (PB)

Welsh Government:

Christianne Glossop (CG)	Chief Veterinary Officer Wales
Emily Lay (EL)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Sarah Nicol-Hughes (SNH)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Laura Hughes (LH)	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Gavin Watkins (GW) <i>Part Meeting</i>	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Sian Timms (ST) <i>Part Meeting</i>	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Estavao Simoes (ES) <i>Part Meeting</i>	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Phil Roberts (PR) <i>Part Meeting</i>	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Neil Roberts (NR) <i>Part Meeting</i>	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)

Apologies:

Jenny Gibbons (JG) – *Dialling in Item 4*

Agenda Item 1: Welcome (SJ)

1. SJ welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2019, and facilitated introductions from all present.
2. SJ confirmed that the meeting held on 12.12.18 was Jo Price's last and that she had now left the group. Interviews for her replacement had been held in early February and we are now in the process of obtaining Ministerial clearance for appointment of a new member. CG asked that we investigate why this has not yet been cleared and expedite this.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes and Action Points from 12th December (SJ)

3. SJ confirmed the minutes from the last meeting.
4. BVD testing figures have been distributed, however, the group would like to know how what proportion of the national herd has had the screening, and not just the percentage of cattle herds in Wales. There needs to be a single database which can provide this data, rather than trying to join-up a number of different spreadsheets. CG suggested that this could be an ideal project for a student- Swansea University have a

informatics department with considerable expertise, and Royal Vet College are working with Aberystwyth University, both of which could be utilised.

5. The group discussed whether there is a link between calves which are disposed of on the farm and TB restrictions. AR asked why we aren't making the connections with slaughter houses who want to buy the calves and grow them on. SJ, DD and AR will attend the 'Bull Calf forum' in Cirencester on 29.03.19 and meet with Jenny Gibbons (AHBD).
6. SJ confirmed that he is now on the steering group of the 'Dairy Improvement Programme'.

Agenda Item 3: Update from CVO (CG)

7. CG referred to the previously circulated monthly 'International Disease Monitoring' report (February 2019). African Swine Fever is currently active in Eastern Europe in domestic pigs and wild boar populations, and also in wild boar in Belgium. Bluetongue type 8 has also been reported in Europe this year and we are keeping a watching brief.
8. The outbreak of Equine Influenza has seen a model response from the horse racing industry. The flu strain is not covered by all the vaccines in general use and the pharmaceutical industry is therefore engaged. CG had met with Royal Welsh Show Society (RWAS) to ensure suitable precautions will be in place. Similar arrangements may be applied to that of recent Avian flu outbreaks - e.g. ensuring all animals are fit and healthy prior to travelling to the showground. Currently it is not a requirement of the Show to vaccinate horses against EI but the RWAS is liaising with other show societies and their veterinary advisers to agree a way forward.
9. The Minister will make a TB statement at the end of April, providing an update on her October 2017 statement, and in preparation for this we have been reviewing our TB programme communications. CG stated that we need to consider the practical implications of TB restrictions and the impact this has on the mental health of farmers and their families. A TB conference will be held later this year by the new Centre of Excellence for TB Research in Aberystwyth for vets and farmers
10. CG provided an update on Brexit planning, and stated that our focus is on ensuring readiness in the event of a no-deal scenario. For example, we will need additional vets trained in 'Export Health Certificates' and the anticipated increase in demand. The Minister has made additional funds available for this from the EU Transition Fund. IL stated that there has been a positive uptake in the field for training although some vets are struggling to find the time to do the required coursework to complete the training by the end-March deadline.
11. The UK is in discussion with the EU regarding application for 'Third Country' status; this will involve dynamic alignment of our legislation with that of the EU, for a period of 9 months (at least).
12. CG provided an overview of other work being undertaken by OCVO; 3rd party sales of companion animals is out to consultation, the Circus Bill is progressing well and should receive Royal assent on schedule in 2020; and work is continuing on Mobile Animal Exhibits.

Agenda Item 4: Culling of Dairy Bull Calves (JG)

13. JG unable to provide update and will reschedule to the June meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Strategic Dairy Farm Project (PR)

14. PR provided an update on the Strategic Dairy Farm project, which is a 5 year project and aims to utilise some of the best farms in Wales to disseminate key messages and share best practice. There are 9 levy funded farms, geographically located across Wales, and all selected farms are top performers operating either a tight block (spring or autumn) or all year round calving system.
15. SJ highlighted the need for this project to be aligned with work on AMR, and welcomed the project from an animal health and welfare view.
16. PR also provided a brief overview of the poultry work he is leading on. A key focus at the moment is undertaking an analysis of the environmental impact of free range units. Environmental issues need to be balanced against welfare. AR stated that the latest poultry update from NFU highlights the market saturation of free range producers in Wales and the fact that this has caused a welfare issue with a 2-3 month backlog for bird slaughter.

Agenda Item 6: AMR Update (GW)

17. A discussion was held around the governance of a new AMR delivery group and how it would interface with the Wales AHWF group. GW provided an overview of proposed membership and there were some concerns regarding the size of the group. The AHWFG confirmed they were content to approve in principle but that the structure and membership would need further discussion.

Agenda Item 7: Multispecies Database (LH)

18. LH outlined the rationale for developing a single identification system for Wales, to replace the current systems (across the UK, 4 for sheep and 2 for cattle and pigs), following a Ministerial decision in December 2018, building on EID Cymru. The new system will aid traceability and enable disease to be monitored, targeted and eradicated more quickly.
19. The timescales for development and implementation were shared; the Multispecies Database will be launched in June 2020 for Bovines and Sheep and Pigs will follow soon after. A formal consultation will be launched in May/June 2019 on updating Bovine Identification and Movement recording to include the requirements for Bovine EID.
20. The group emphasized the importance of incorporating animal health and medicines usage data into the database, and asked that LH provides an update on progress at the next meeting scheduled for June.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion on Priorities for 2019-20 (EL)

21. DD highlighted the need to consider 'Brexit and Our Land Consultation', ensuring that WG and public goods schemes place animal health and welfare as an integral part of every scheme they develop.
22. Agreement was reached regarding the structure of the implementation plan; with 4 suggested main sections; Animal health planning; Disease prevention; Disease eradication; and responsible use of medicines.

Agenda Item 9: AOB (SJ)

23. Discussion around responding to multiple consultations. It was agreed by the group to respond to Welsh Government's 3rd Party Sales consultation (WG officials would not be taking part in discussions nor in the preparation of this response).
24. Members were reminded of the need to submit any outstanding T&S claims as soon as possible, in order that these can be paid before financial year end.
25. CG stated that following the appointment of a new member, we would need to consider how work is prioritised among members and identify key leads for specific areas.
26. The next meeting is scheduled for 18th June 2019.

CLOSE