



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

One Health | One Welfare | One Wales

Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Implementation Plan 2022-24



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Optimising health and well-being for animals, communities and our environment



Ministerial Foreword

Lesley Griffiths

Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd.

Ministerial Foreword

We currently face the combined challenges of responding to leaving the European Union (EU) and the coronavirus pandemic against a backdrop of a climate crisis. Reviving and relaunching our Implementation Plan now provides an opportunity to put animal health and welfare at the forefront in addressing these issues in a sustainable, collaborative and coherent way. Working together to achieve the 'One Health, One Welfare, One Wales' principle will benefit animal and community health and welfare and the environment.

The landscape has changed dramatically since leaving the EU. The development of Border Control Posts (BCPs) in Wales, with increasing checks and certification of products of animal origin and live animals, is challenging, especially when finite veterinary resources are already stretched. Nevertheless, I see this new Plan as an opportunity to enhance standards, in a way that safeguards trade and builds a more sustainable farming sector.

The coronavirus pandemic certainly has tested our resilience. Livestock keepers, other animal owners, vets and wider

stakeholders have continued to ensure high standards of care for our animals in Wales, despite the restrictions and resource challenges.

We are keen to integrate clear animal health and welfare components into the new Sustainable Farming Scheme being developed in Wales, as noted in the Sustainable Farming and Our Land consultation. Some of this work has been developed already through Hybu Cig Cymru's (HCC) Stoc+ and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's (AHDB) HerdAdvance projects, both delivering the Animal Health Improvement Cycle to farms across Wales. Alongside this important work, the Farming Connect Animal Health and Welfare training programme is supporting knowledge exchange.

Right now, we have the opportunity to completely change the method of support to agriculture and ensure outcome-focused achievement is duly rewarded. I would like to see Wales' reputation for high health and welfare standards continue and be sustained in a way that addresses the needs of future generations.

I want briefly to reflect on our achievements since the last implementation plan was published, specifically those supported by the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group (“Framework Group”). We have continued to promote responsible ownership for all kept animals and made tangible progress in improving animal welfare standards in Wales. This progress is set to continue with the inclusion of key animal welfare commitments in the Programme for Government, which are now embedded in “Our Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-2026”. The Framework Group has a key advisory role as we deliver the welfare commitments within that plan.

I am also pleased with the progress of our antimicrobial resistance (AMR) five-year plan, particularly the work done by the Arwain Vet Cymru project. This is another illustration of the ‘One Health, One Welfare, One Wales’ approach to animal health and welfare I wish to embed.

The Framework Group has been proactive in contributing expert opinion to support the development of new policy to control bovine TB. Equally, it has been instrumental in shaping our plans to introduce legislation to eradicate BVD in Wales to reinforce the voluntary progress achieved so far.

This Implementation Plan, together with our Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26 and a refreshed TB programme, will set out how we protect and improve the health and welfare of our kept animals in Wales. The ‘One Health, One Welfare, One Wales’ concept will enable us to make a tangible difference, recognising

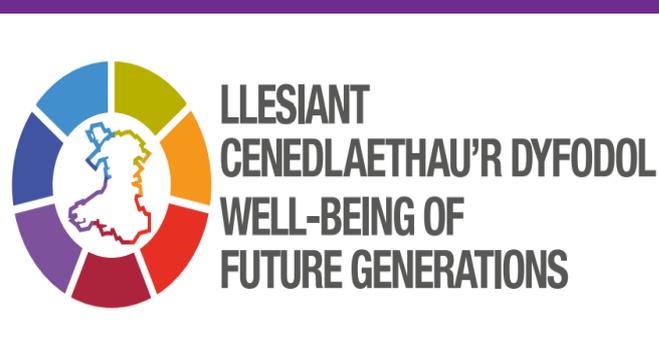
animals, communities and our shared environment are all inextricably linked. Continuing to impact positively in these important areas will contribute to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which crucially include our climate change targets. And this Plan sets us on course to develop a new ten-year Animal Health and Welfare Framework which we will launch in 2024.

In addition to the pressures mentioned, this has been a period of change for the Framework Group with five existing members reaching the end of their membership term and the subsequent appointment of five new members. I would like to thank the outgoing members for their valuable contributions and also welcome the new members. The Framework Group has remained focused on their role throughout, and I am confident they will continue to be a valuable asset in helping us deliver our shared priorities.

Programme for Government
www.gov.wales/programme-government

Sustainable Farming and Our Land
www.gov.wales/sustainable-farming-and-our-land-simplifying-agricultural-support

Well-being of Future Generations
www.gov.wales/well-being-of-future-generations-wales





Background

The Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (“the Framework”) was launched in July 2014. It sets out a ten-year overarching plan for improving standards of animal health and welfare in Wales. The Framework also seeks to protect public health and make a contribution to the economy and the environment.

The Framework considers the health and welfare of all kept animals including farmed animals (including aquaculture and apiculture), companion animals, zoo animals and animals involved in sport. Wildlife is also covered where our actions affect the health and welfare of animals in the wild, or where there is a risk of wildlife transmitting disease to other animals or humans.

The Framework seeks to achieve five strategic outcomes through the adoption of five key principles, which continue to be the drivers for this Implementation Plan.

Strategic outcomes:

- > Wales has healthy productive animals;
- > Animals in Wales have a good quality of life;
- > People trust and have confidence in the way food is produced and the way public health is protected;
- > Wales has a thriving rural economy;
- > Wales has a high quality environment.

Key principles:

- > Promoting the benefits of animal health and welfare, according to the mantra – prevention is better than cure;
- > Understanding and accepting roles and responsibilities;
- > Working in partnership;
- > Ensuring a clearer understanding of costs and benefits;
- > Delivering and enforcing standards effectively.

The implementation of the plan is supported and monitored by the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group. The eight publically appointed members bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and are drawn from a broad range of sectors and areas of expertise.

The Framework Group works closely with many organisations and industry groups including Farming Connect, farming unions, the Ruminant Health and Welfare Group, Animal Welfare Network Wales, British Veterinary Association, and the Companion Animal Welfare Group Wales.

Through its networks, the Group strengthens the links between the Welsh Government, livestock keepers, other animal owners, the veterinarian profession and industry representatives.

The remit of the Framework Group covers the whole spectrum of animal health and welfare challenges, and its members play a key role in raising and considering emerging issues which could impact on achieving the outcomes of the Framework. The Framework Group challenges new and evolving policy, reviews progress, facilitates and streamlines communication of key messages, and provides links to the wider agricultural and rural community across Wales and beyond.

This Implementation Plan spans the remaining two years of the current ten-year Framework. Its priority areas were selected from proposals made by stakeholder representatives and agreed by the Group as areas where either most improvement could be achieved within a two-year period, or essential work was required in pursuit of significant longer-term goals. Areas of work not included as actions now will be reconsidered as part of our ongoing plans.

During these last two years of the current Framework there will be opportunity to consider how we can further facilitate, encourage and promote animal health and welfare within the 'One Health, One Welfare, One Wales' approach as foundations are laid for the future. A new ten-year Framework will be launched in 2024, building on past achievements and continuing the momentum of improvement in animal health and welfare in Wales.

Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group – www.gov.wales/wales-animal-health-and-welfare-framework-group

Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework – www.gov.wales/animal-health-and-welfare-framework





Introduction

Stephen James

Chair of the Framework Group

Christianne Glossop

Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales

The last two years have been dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, which emerged as we embarked upon the UK's transition away from the European Union. The repercussions and challenges brought by both events have been widespread and profound, and will clearly impact on our work in animal health and welfare for many years to come.

To offer just two examples - supply chains have been strained by staff shortages, as have farming and processing industries across all sectors. As a result, health and welfare concerns have been heightened due to animals having to remain on farms. The pressure faced by veterinary professionals is also unprecedented: a vastly reduced workforce finds itself dealing with new demands, in addition to their long-standing role in delivering, ensuring and enhancing animal health and welfare standards.

A holistic approach to ensure the very best animal health and welfare standards in Wales underpins this Implementation Plan. This is captured in our headline aspirations of One Health, One Welfare and Biosecurity, which not only embrace all aspects of animal health and welfare but also the

complex interactions with human health and welfare, and our shared environment.

Working with your own vet to help deliver continual improvements (the Animal Health Improvement Cycle) is essential, and 'prevention is better than cure' continues to be our core principle. Healthier animals are less likely to require medical intervention, which in turn helps fight antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by reducing the use of antibiotics. Wales is firmly leading the charge in the arena of AMR and the benefits will not only be realised in animal health and welfare, but also in human health and in the environment.

Looking forward, we recognise a new multispecies traceability system will be a critical tool to deliver up to date information, including health status, treatments, genetics and movements. Again, this is vital information as we look for new export markets and to help purchasers make informed choices.

Partnership working has never been more important to us in achieving, protecting and promoting the very best animal health and welfare standards in Wales. For example, we have worked

closely in recent years to support developments at Aberystwyth University, which notably welcomed its first cohort of veterinary students in September 2021. This development complements the Sêr Cymru Centre of Excellence for Bovine TB at Aberystwyth University and its research into a disease affecting so many cattle businesses in Wales. The new state of the art laboratory VetHub¹, in collaboration with the Wales Veterinary Science Centre, provides the facilities for this essential work.

We are also fortunate in Wales to collaborate with Iechyd Da (Gwledig) Ltd and Menter a Busnes, our Veterinary Delivery Partners, enabling efficient and close liaison with the farming industry to ensure veterinary advice is relevant to emerging policies.

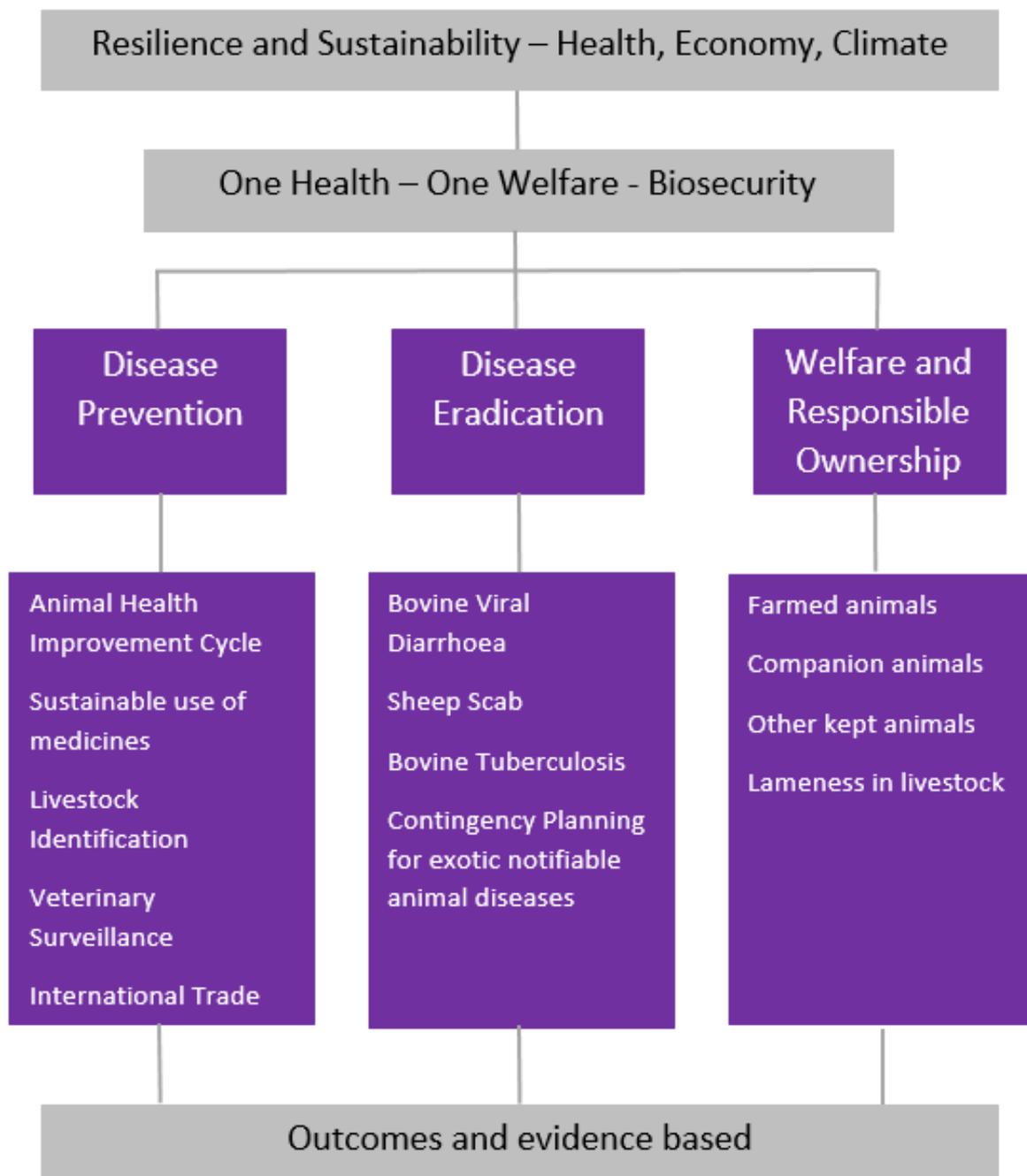
Environmental impacts are crucially important to us all. The Welsh Government has a target to achieve net zero by 2050 and aspiring to One Health, One Welfare and improving

biosecurity will contribute significantly to this.

The production, processing and transportation of all types of food are clearly essential activities, which also make significant contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. Improving farming practices to optimise carbon sequestration, in addition to reducing emissions can make a contribution to lessening the impact on climate change. Wales, with its extensive, grass-based farming systems enabling the storage of large amounts of carbon in its soils, is positioned to lead the way in environmentally sustainable agriculture.

We also realise that the future Sustainable Farming Scheme in Wales will play a pivotal role in supporting Welsh farm businesses in the production of environmentally sustainable food, in improving animal health and welfare and in raising the importance of biosecurity on Welsh farms.



2022-24 Implementation Plan Structure**Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Priorities 2022-2024**

2019-2020 Implementation Plan Review

The 2019-2020 Implementation Plan carried forward some of the aims and objectives of the previous plan, against the uncertain backdrop of the UK exit from the European Union. However, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on all sections of society and the pressures on Welsh Government in dealing with it resulted in the plan being extended to 2021. Throughout this period, the Framework Group has continued in its role and significant achievements have been made in improving animal health and welfare in Wales.

Through the course of the pandemic, the Framework Group has helped raise awareness of support available to veterinary practices and liaised with Welsh Government over issues arising as a result of the necessary restrictions.

Wales has a shortage of vets, especially serving rural areas, so the creation of a new School of Veterinary Science at Aberystwyth University has been welcomed by the Framework Group. Continued liaison and collaboration with the new school is being planned.

Key achievements:

Responsible ownership:

- Continued to support responsible ownership for all kept animals, and contributed to a wide variety of activities to encourage this over the past two years.
- Welcomed the continued revision of the animal welfare Codes of Practice for each species, including

the publication of revised Codes for Cats, and for Laying Hens and Meat Chickens. The Framework Group is represented at the Animal Welfare Network Wales, which has recently published two voluntary Codes: the Animal Welfare Establishments: Code of Best Practice, and the Voluntary Greyhound Code.

- A Task and Finish Group made 53 recommendations for the welfare of breeding dogs and their offspring in Wales. This led to a Welsh Government funded three year Local Authority project which is taking forward many of the recommendations around the delivery and enforcement of dog breeding licensing. The project aims to ensure that all breeding dogs and puppies bred in Wales experience high health and welfare standards.



- Revised Guidance for Local Authorities inspecting dog breeding establishments has recently been

- published, which includes the requirement for annual health planning and veterinary health checks for all breeding animals and puppies.
- The recommendation that third party sales of puppies and kittens should be banned has been adopted within The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021.
 - Attended stakeholder workshops and responded to the consultation on licensing of animal exhibits, which led to the creation of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020, and corresponding guidance for Local Authorities.
 - Supported The Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Act 2020 which makes it an offence for a wild animal to perform or be exhibited in a travelling circus, where their welfare needs can never be met, another example of Wales' strengthened approach to safeguarding animal welfare.
 - Continued to support efforts by agricultural and animal welfare stakeholders to increase public awareness of irresponsible dog ownership around livestock, a problem which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic lockdowns.
- Disease Prevention:*
- The Animal Health Improvement Cycle, along with biosecurity and animal welfare standards, are being embedded in the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme.
 - Continued to support and encourage the Animal Health Improvement Cycle projects in Wales such as HCC's Stoc+ and AHDB's HerdAdvance.
 - Liaised with farm assurance schemes on making animal health planning more focused through inclusion of an annual veterinary medicine usage review.
 - Supported the work of the AMR Delivery Group for Wales, which aims to reduce the need for antibiotic use in animals through responsible prescribing, targeted use and disease prevention.
 - Supported the work done by the Arwain Vet Cymru in establishing a network of veterinary Prescribing Champions in farm practices across Wales. This initiative, funded by Welsh Government via the Rural Development Programme, was the first in the UK and has since been adopted in other areas. Dr Gwen Rees has since been recognised for her work with Arwain Vet Cymru, receiving the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Impact Award for her achievements. This is a good example of delivery groups in Wales working in partnership.
 - Continued liaison with the Welsh Veterinary Science Centre in Aberystwyth and the Veterinary Investigation Centre (laboratory) in Carmarthen in promoting veterinary surveillance to intercept disease.
 - Supported the development of the multispecies traceability system, which is based on the EIDCymru platform, providing greater accuracy and speediness to livestock movement recording.

- Continues to liaise with stakeholders and advise Welsh Government on the impact of EU Exit on the industry and trade.
 - The Welsh Government works with other administrations on a unified approach to controls on animals entering the UK. The Framework Group supports the promotion of correct and safe sourcing of animals and products into the UK.
 - Welcomed the introduction of Quarantine Units to provide an exemption to the statutory standstill period, allowing easier movement of individual animals whilst not compromising biosecurity.
- Contributed to the Gwaredu BVD Steering Group, liaising with Welsh Government on plans to introduce necessary legislation to reinforce the voluntary work done so far, and also in promoting the continued take up of free testing of young stock.
 - Promoted the need for an integrated approach to tackling sheep scab supporting a sheep scab sub-group.
 - Continued to promote good biosecurity, disease awareness and surveillance as important first lines of defence against exotic animal disease incursions.
 - Acted as an interface between Welsh Government and industry to improve contingency planning and ensure a swift and effective response to animal disease outbreaks.

Disease Eradication:

- Engagement with Welsh Government on the bovine TB eradication programme, liaising with industry on the impact of the disease especially concerning herds under long term restrictions with stocking problems and the issue

www.gov.wales/animal-health-and-welfare-framework-implementation-plan-2019-2020



Headline Aspirations 2022-2024

One Health

The One Health concept acknowledges human health and animal health are interdependent and reliant on the health of the environment within which they exist. This approach is focused on achieving better public outcomes through more effective collaboration and communication across multiple sectors, with experts working together to learn about disease spread among people, animals, plants, and the environment. This is especially relevant when considering food safety, zoonotic disease and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the devastating impact of a zoonotic disease on a global scale and efforts by one sector alone cannot prevent or eliminate such problems. The pandemic has highlighted One Health in action, with the need for collaboration across multiple sectors, including epidemiology, public health, veterinary medicine, food safety and disease ecology. The need for a co-ordinated approach to testing, vaccination and biosecurity has been highlighted with the inclusion of all those involved in food production as key workers, emphasising the importance of our agricultural industry and food supply chain.

It is not just zoonotic disease that poses a risk to One Health, but any disease affecting animal health due to the impacts on production. As the global population grows and greater

demands are placed on food production, the One Health concept becomes increasingly important. Therefore, it is important to focus on reducing the impact of animal diseases to secure food supply and reduce the potential for serious public health problems caused by food shortages and protein deficiencies.

However, it is not just animal disease that can affect food supply, as we have seen more recently from the disruption caused by a shortage of haulage drivers. Food security must be achieved whilst also supporting the environment in which we live and produce our food, through taking measures to reduce (and start reversing) the impact of current human activity on our climate and biodiversity.

Why One Health is important to the Framework Group

Promoting One Health meets the five strategic outcomes of the Framework Group through its goals of enhancing human health, animal health and the environment in which we all co-exist. These meet the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

What can be done?

- Continue to promote the concept of One Health - the need to consider human health, animal health and the environment together rather than as separate entities.

- Ensure the One Health concept becomes embedded within knowledge exchange programmes focused on animal health in Wales, and broaden understanding in the public domain.
- Embed the One Health approach into the Sustainable Farming Scheme.
- Continue to champion key aspects of One Health including biosecurity, the Animal Health Improvement Cycle and the responsible use of antibiotics and other veterinary medicines.
- Lobby to ensure all aspects of One Health are considered in international trading agreements, seeking to avoid risks to animal health or compromise to environmental measures.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Improved public health through improvements in animal health and the environment in which we live. Recognition of the measures in place within Wales to protect One Health as being a model for sustainable farming which enhances our environment and our communities.

By promoting working in partnership and collaboration across all sectors, a One Health approach will achieve the best health outcomes for people, animals, and plants in a shared environment.

One Welfare

One Welfare is a concept emphasising the interdependency between animal welfare, human welfare and environmental sustainability, and is an extension of the One Health principle. One Welfare considers not only the physical welfare and health of animals and people, but also their well-being. It applies to all kept animals: farmed, companion, recreational, and also to wildlife.

In order to flourish, a One Welfare approach requires a collaborative ethos from all involved in the welfare of animals, including farmers, companion animal keepers, veterinarians, the food industry, environmental scientists and governments. The rewards for success are rich. For example, improving animal welfare standards and the resultant quality of their products makes a significant contribution in meeting expectations from the public for safer and better food. In turn, this improves opportunities for the promotion and marketing of high quality outputs in support of farmers and rural communities.

The negative impact of climate change on animal and human health and welfare and our environment is becoming ever more apparent. Extreme weather conditions can cause damage to land and property, interfere with water and food/feed supplies and seriously harm wildlife and natural habitats. Within this context, it is important for animal owners to make adaptations to protect the welfare of animals as temperatures and weather patterns change. The Welsh Government has published a climate

change adaptation plan for Wales “Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales” and Wales’ commitment to tackling climate change is described in “Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales”.

There is clear evidence of the well-being benefits of contact with animals. There are also links between some cases of domestic violence and animal abuse and neglect. Making all agencies aware of the interaction and reporting concerns can improve the situation for both animals and owners.

Why One Welfare is important to the Framework Group

Promoting One Welfare meets the aims of the Framework in having healthy animals with a good quality of life in a high-quality environment and meets the challenges of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



What can be done?

- Support the recognition and reward of high animal welfare standards in the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme.
- Ensure the One Welfare concept is embedded in knowledge transfer projects, such as Farming Connect.
- Contribute to the development of measurements to demonstrate animal welfare improvements and their wider impact.
- Lobby for maintaining high animal welfare standards in international trade agreements.
- Publicise the benefits of One Welfare to all animal keepers and the public.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We would like to achieve recognition for Wales as a country that champions the interconnection between animal welfare, animal health, the environment, prosperity and human well-being. Alongside this, our continuing promotion of the fundamental importance of animal welfare, to enhance resilience amongst those keeping animals and their communities, and a reduction in incidence of animal abuse and neglect.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare

www.gov.wales/prosperity-all-climate-conscious-wales

www.gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is vital to the health and well-being of all kept animals whether farmed animals (including aquaculture and apiculture), companion animals, zoo animals or animals involved in sport.

Any animal or group of animals is at risk of disease introduction and further spread. Biosecurity defines the collective actions taken to reduce that risk, taking account of:

- movement of animals onto a premises, assessing the health status, quarantine or isolation arrangements, health testing, and any treatments or vaccination necessary before mixing with the resident population;
- security of boundaries with contiguous livestock premises, to minimise the risk of disease introduction;
- movement of vehicles and equipment on and off the premises, having designated routes, parking places and ensuring proper cleansing and disinfection;
- controlling access by people onto and off the premises, minimising visitor numbers, keeping records, ensuring clothing and footwear are clean and disinfected;
- safe management of waste including fallen stock, manure and slurry, and secure sourcing and storage of animal feedstuffs.

Each livestock holding must assess its own risks, and establish actions to counter them through a biosecurity plan, as an integral component of the

Animal Health Improvement Cycle for that population.

An effective biosecurity plan, subject to continual review and improvement, helps prevent the introduction and spread of disease between and within farms. Good biosecurity also protects public health for those directly involved in looking after animals and the wider public in the safety and quality of the food products. Individuals must protect themselves and the environment by taking preventive steps for themselves and the animals they care for. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.

Why Biosecurity is important to the Framework Group

Some diseases have serious national impact such as Foot and Mouth Disease, Swine Fevers, Avian Influenza and Bovine TB. Effective biosecurity is the first line of defence and is in line with the principle "prevention is better than cure".

Biosecurity remains a priority for the Framework Group as it:

- aligns with One Health and One Welfare approaches through the protection of human and animal health, animal welfare and protection of the environment;
- helps industry to prevent, control and eradicate costly diseases, therefore protecting the industry and reducing cost to them and the wider society;
- helps reduce the use of antibiotics and other veterinary medicines;

- promotes sustainable farming contributing to resilient and productive farms, protecting wildlife and habitats, thereby having less impact on the environment.

What can be done?

- Commission a new survey to re-assess the level of understanding of biosecurity; compare the results with the 2015 survey to identify areas for improvement, advise on an action plan and oversee its delivery.
- Commission, in collaboration with veterinary organisations, a survey of biosecurity effectiveness in animal health planning.
- Promote key messages and good practice.
- Ensure good biosecurity remains a core element of the animal health and welfare theme within Farming Connect and any other relevant strategies.

- Work with farm assurance organisations, to embed biosecurity in scheme standards and develop mechanisms for measuring effectiveness.
- Consider equine biosecurity as part of the overarching biosecurity campaign.
- Incorporate biosecurity as a fundamental part of any Sustainable Farming Scheme.
- Ensure biosecurity (including in relation to companion animals) is considered in any proposals developed by the Framework Group during 2022-2024.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

A reduction in disease incidence, improving the health and the welfare of animals at a premises level and nationally, and supporting a productive and thriving rural economy.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/biosecurity-guidance



Disease Prevention

A key principle underpinning the Framework is that prevention is better than cure to minimise the risk and impact of disease. No matter what disease we are concerned about, the basic approach remains the same:

- Keep infection out.
- Identify infections early.
- Stop infection spreading.
- Stamp infection out and/or develop programmes to manage the problem

Through this Implementation Plan, we will continue to promote protection against the incursion and spread of infectious animal diseases, ensure resilience and safeguard our agricultural economy. We believe this can be achieved through deploying biosecurity plans, utilising the Animal Health Improvement Cycle, more sustainable use of medicines, improving animal welfare, and improving animal ID and traceability across Wales.

It is also important to ensure appropriate surveillance is in place to identify diseases affecting kept and wild animals including farmed animals (and aquaculture and apiculture), companion animals, zoo animals and animals involved in sport, as well as wildlife populations. Domestic initiatives such as a BVD voluntary screening programme and salmonella control programmes contribute to our understanding of where disease may occur and spread.



By monitoring the international disease picture, we are also able to understand better what emerging threats and disease incursions may occur in Wales and more broadly across GB, for example by monitoring migratory patterns of wild bird populations, seasonality of midges that may be carried across to GB by wind, and spread of disease among wild boar in Europe.

We are committed to supporting the prevention and mitigation of the negative impact animal disease could have on the ability to market Welsh produce in future trade opportunities and the development and promotion of Welsh provenance.

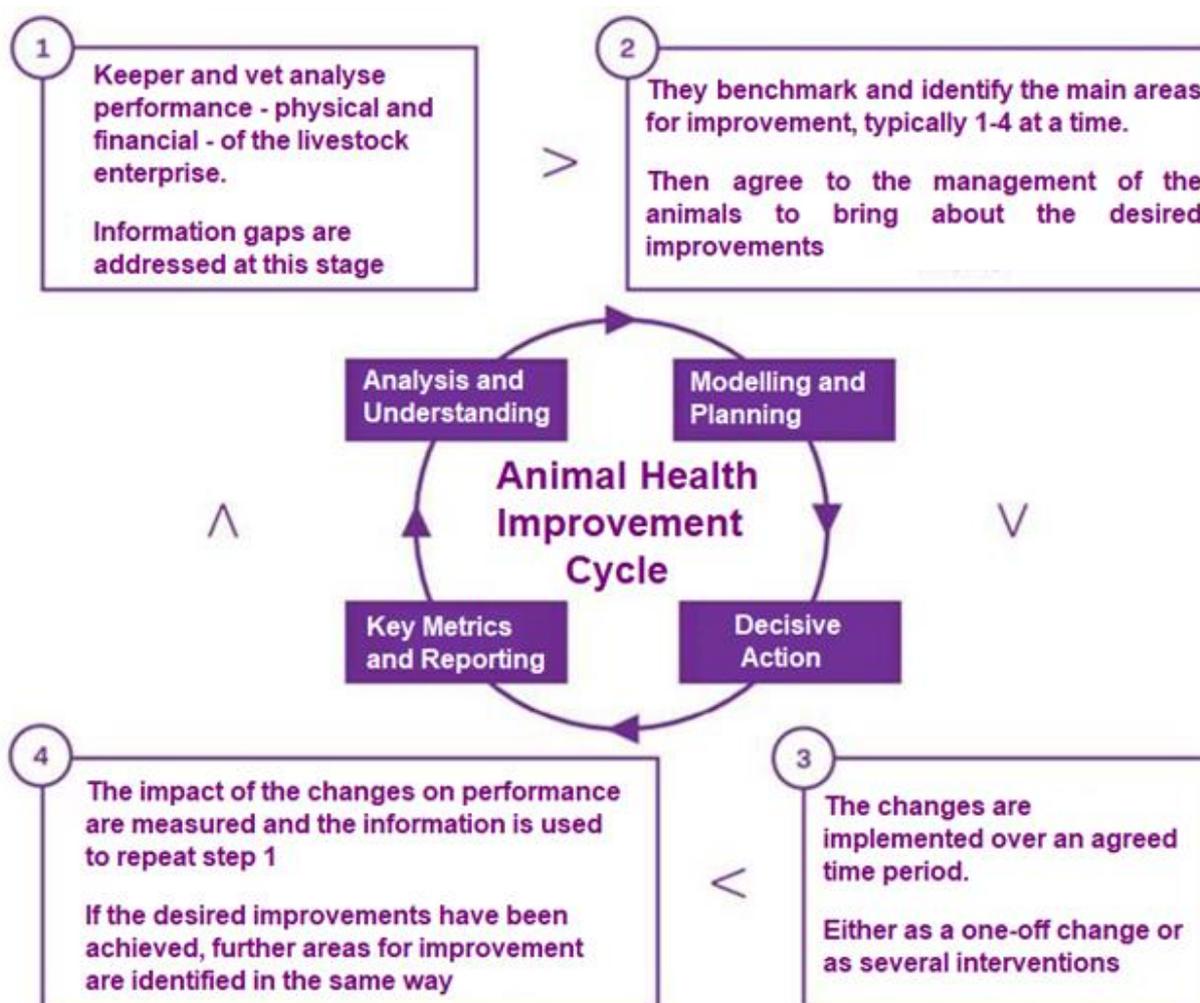
We will continue to engage with delivery agencies, agricultural industry, third sector agencies and rural community stakeholders to provide evidence and advice to support the development of Welsh Government policy that continues to reduce the risk of animal disease outbreaks and the economic and operational disruption they entail.

Animal Health Improvement Cycle (AHIC)

Welsh Government in collaboration with the Framework Group developed a new animal health-planning concept for Wales in 2017, which has now been renamed the Animal Health Improvement Cycle (AHIC).

AHIC is a process and its goal is to drive the productivity, profitability and sustainability of a livestock business, by optimising animal health and welfare.

The AHIC process starts and finishes with an analysis of performance to seek continual improvements to animal health and welfare on farms. Primarily the prevention of livestock disease threats. The analysis of performance data, looking at physical and ideally financial data as well, should be done by close collaboration between the keeper, their vet and other advisers where beneficial.



There are two key initiatives currently delivering our AHIC process across Wales, funded through the Rural Development Programme. The AHDB HerdAdvance project, part of the Dairy Improvement Programme, is working with around 500 Welsh dairy farmers and the HCC Stoc+ project, part of the Red Meat Development Programme, is aimed at 500 sheep and beef producers. Both pilot projects have been introducing action-driven AHIC to farming businesses since 2018 and will continue to do so until 2023.

The next step is to encourage all livestock keepers and vets in Wales to consistently apply AHIC, and understand the benefits to farming businesses, health and welfare and the environment, aligning to our national One Health and One Welfare approach.

What can be done?

The Framework Group have identified key criteria for successful AHIC:

- AHIC is based on an analysis of the performance of the herd or flock, so this information (data) must be made readily available
- There must be a positive relationship of trust between the livestock keeper and their veterinarian
- Other professionals, such as nutritionists and genetics experts need to be consulted where appropriate
- The analysis should identify areas for improvement and prioritise those where the need for change is greatest.

- Action based interventions should be agreed, measured and implemented, with regular reviews until the desired improvements have been achieved and maintained.

We will apply all approaches available to communicate the benefits of AHIC to farmers and vets, including the Farming Connect programme. This includes the support of AHDB and HCC to continue to deliver their key AHIC projects, providing timely animal health and welfare advice, sharing best practice and putting in steps to ensure the legacy of their work.

Project leads have worked closely with participating farmers and vets to improve the quality of data collection and benchmarking, and will be providing cost benefit analyses to prove the success of interventions along with feedback and case studies, which will be important to promote AHIC after the projects end.

AHIC will also be included as an integral part of the Sustainable Farming Scheme to be introduced in 2025. Livestock keepers will be incentivised and assisted to implement AHIC, achieve good biosecurity standards and protect animal health and welfare to benefit from the scheme and thus ensure their animals are healthy, have a good quality of life and that food is safe for consumers.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Our aim is for all livestock units in Wales to utilise AHIC as an essential part of their business based on a key

principle that “prevention is better than cure”.

AHIC can deliver huge benefits to individual farm businesses and the wider industry, including improved animal health and welfare standards, increased productivity and profits plus the assurance of greater business resilience.

The advantages of continually improving AHIC practice are therefore clear and if applied consistently, will support the aims of our Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework. This includes an important role in our One Health and One Welfare ambitions for a healthier environment. AHIC can contribute to the fight against climate change and our Low Carbon Delivery Plans efforts to build a stronger, greener economy, via the control of many endemic diseases, which would very probably bring about greater greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

AHIC focuses our efforts to make health improvements on Welsh livestock farms, rolling out tried, tested and cost-benefit assessed approaches to all livestock farms in Wales will improve on farm efficiencies along with good welfare and biosecurity practice. It is hoped the data provided from the HerdAdvance and Stoc+ projects on completion in 2023, will provide a gauge of efforts to increase livestock efficiency and therefore cut emissions.

What will the Framework Group do to support these objectives?

The Framework Group will support Welsh Government in an increased

communications campaign to champion the benefits of AHIC, share the success stories of the HerdAdvance and Stoc+ projects and prepare industry for the AHIC element of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Where can you find out more?

AHDB: www.ahdb.org.uk/herdadvance
Hybu Cig Cymru: www.hccmpw.org.uk



Sustainable Use of Medicines

Antimicrobial Resistance

Antibiotics are vital medicines for both human and animal health. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) arises when the organisms that cause infection evolve or acquire ways to survive treatment.

The rise and spread of AMR poses a threat to the ability to control infections in people and also in animals. The impacts of leaving AMR unchecked are wide-ranging and extremely costly, not only in financial terms but also in terms of global health, food security, environmental well-being and socioeconomic development.

AMR is a serious concern and the responsible use of antibiotics in all sectors, including livestock production, is needed to help tackle the problem.

What can be done?

In response to the threat of AMR, the Animal and Environment AMR Delivery Group for Wales, was established on the 13 May 2019. The AMR Delivery Group recommended an Animal and Environment AMR Implementation Plan to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, which was published in July 2019.

The five major objectives outlined within the Implementation Plan are to:

- Reduce the need for unintended exposure to antimicrobials
- Optimising use of antimicrobials in animals
- Minimise spread of AMR through the environment
- Stronger laboratory capacity and surveillance of AMR in animals
- Invest in innovation, supply and access to tackle AMR

The Welsh Government is applying the One Health approach by addressing human, animal and environmental aspects of the AMR threat together. The Delivery Group works closely with veterinary, medical and scientific experts, to achieve the goals within the Wales Implementation Plan.

Good animal health planning, biosecurity, appropriate vaccination strategies and hygiene practices are vital to minimise the occurrence of disease and therefore reduce the need for antibiotic use.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We are working closely with farmers and vets and funding has been made available to help support the control of AMR in animals and the environment. Arwain DGC (Defnydd Gwrthfoteg Cyfrifol) Cymru will deliver a number of

bespoke projects in Wales. The projects will focus on -

- Developing the Veterinary Prescribing Champions Network, established as part of Arwain Vet Cymru.
- Development of national prescribing guidelines for cattle and sheep.
- Delivering a voluntary code of conduct for antimicrobial prescribing across farm practices.
- Use of novel technology to explore antimicrobial use data collection, biosecurity and precision agriculture solutions.
- Understanding associations between AMU and AMR and designing an active surveillance programme for Wales.
- Understanding patterns of AMU in the equine industry
- Minimising spread of AMR through the environment
- Delivering knowledge exchange programmes on antimicrobial stewardship to vets, farmers and equine owners
- Effective stakeholder engagement

A key and major part of our Five Year Animal and Environment AMR Implementation Plan is “Infection prevention and control”. This aligns closely with our Framework principle of “prevention is better than cure”. We will embed that approach in the new Sustainable Farming Scheme, through rewarding animal keepers for implementing an Animal Health Improvement Cycle and maintaining good standards of biosecurity.

We would also like to consider approaches that will support small animal veterinary practice and will be looking at options to gather data on current prescribing patterns, as a baseline, and to establish awareness of AMR. This will help us develop an understanding of why, when and how antimicrobials are used in this sector.

Key to all approaches will be the close working relationships with stakeholders. It is hoped that a co-ordinated approach between government, animal keepers and veterinarians will prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases and reduce the need for antibiotics used to treat them.

What will the Wales Framework Group do to support these objectives?

The Animal and Environment AMR Delivery Group reports both to the Framework Group and to the Wales Healthcare and Associated Infections / AMR Steering Group, which is led by the office of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

The AMR Delivery Group also includes a representative from the Framework Group, to ensure joined-up working and consistency of approaches.

We will work with farm assurance schemes to gather information, for the first time, in the use of antibiotics on Welsh sheep, beef and dairy farms. The Framework Group will encourage farmers to engage in this process.

The continued effectiveness of antibiotics is an essential legacy to pass on to future generations, consistent with the goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/animal-and-environment-antimicrobial-resistance-delivery-group

www.wlbp.co.uk

www.menterabusnes.cymru/arwaindgc/2021/10/05/press-release/



Anthelmintics

Grazing animals are at risk of parasitic disease unless active steps are taken to protect them. The routine use of highly effective anthelmintics (wormers), combined with grazing management has controlled parasitic worms successfully in the majority of UK sheep flocks for many years. However, the reliance on these treatments has led to the development of resistance to the anthelmintics used. Increasing numbers of farmers are finding several of the treatments are no longer effective in controlling some worm species. Solely relying on a limited number of anthelmintic medicines to control parasites is very probably unsustainable.

Along with this, there is evidence of negative impacts on biodiversity, such as on dung beetles from some classes of anthelmintics and anti-parasiticides. Many species are now rare with some endangered, vulnerable or near threatened. More livestock being housed over winter has played some part in this as there is less dung for overwintering species to feed on, however the main cause is avermectin wormers which stop dung beetles breeding and thriving. The loss of dung beetle species leads to a greater need

for wormers as well as a loss of other species that rely on dung beetles as an important food source, such as bats and birds.

For these reasons parasite control needs to be achieved in a way that does not threaten biodiversity, a holistic One Health approach is required to address impacts at an animal and environmental level, whilst also protecting public health.

Resistance to the oldest three classes of anthelmintics was detected in sheep flocks in Wales during a study completed in 2015. Two newer classes of anthelmintics are licensed for sheep in the UK and are advised to be used for quarantine and as a mid-season treatment to prolong the efficacies of the other anthelmintic classes.

The Framework Group recognise anthelmintic resistance is an increasing threat to all sheep farms.

What can be done?

The Framework principle “prevention is better than cure” applies:

Wherever possible worm burdens should be minimised through grazing management that reduces exposure of livestock to parasites. Control of parasites in sheep & goats and in cattle should be done by the principles enshrined in the Sustainable Control of Parasites (SCOPS) and Control of Worms Sustainably (COWS) initiatives, which we support.

We need to promote collaborative farmer-vet parasite control programmes, fully integrated into livestock unit management plans. The parasite burdens of animals needs to be monitored and anthelmintics used strategically and according to need, ensuring use only when necessary and the right wormer in the right animal at the right time.



Breeding of livestock with greater resistance, or tolerance of parasites should be encouraged.

Scanning and active surveillance of parasitic disease, with as much prospective risk communication as possible to warn keepers and vets of periods of threats is required.

The Centre of Expertise for Extensively Managed Livestock has been established at the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) Carmarthen Veterinary Investigation Centre. The Centre provides laboratory capability to diagnose parasitic disease and to determine resistance to anthelmintics. It significantly strengthens our resilience to address the challenges of anthelmintic resistance.

Farmers can help improve dung beetle populations, which also has a cost-saving benefit, through sustainable worming control. This involves faecal egg counting and using worm treatment only when it is necessary, which also helps stop anthelmintic resistance in animals. This does not mean farmers have to stop worming livestock altogether.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Welsh Government would like to achieve the following outcomes;

- For parasitic diseases to be effectively prevented, or at least controlled, in Wales
- For anthelmintics to be used only when necessary, and to be used in conjunction with other management practices to reduce the risk of disease affecting the health and welfare of the animals.
- To ensure that the right anthelmintic is given at the time to the right animals

These will benefit the animals at risk of disease, their owners (who will benefit financially through increased production and reduced spending on ineffective treatments) and the environment through minimising harmful impact of anthelmintics excreted by treated animals.

All of this should be done by good, action-led animal health planning, as a joint endeavour between the livestock keeper and their veterinarian. The Animal health Improvement Cycle is an important part of our plans for the Sustainable Farming Scheme. We will also explore what other support the scheme can give to farmers to help them minimise their anthelmintic use.

We intend to work with farm assurance schemes to gather information, for the first time, on the use of anthelmintics on Welsh sheep and beef farms.

We will also make use of opportunities from existing engagement activities with livestock-keepers (such as Farming Connect knowledge exchange meetings), to gather information and seek feedback and ideas.

Where can you find out more?

SCOPS: Sustainable Control of Parasites www.scops.org.uk

COWS: Control of Worms Sustainably www.cattleparasites.org.uk



Livestock Identification

EIDCymru

The development of EID Cymru into the first multispecies traceability system for Wales represents a significant investment by the Welsh Government on behalf of the livestock sector in Wales. The benefits of the new system will enable us to get on top of disease quickly, safeguarding our export markets and reducing the costs of a disease outbreak.

Bringing together the separate systems for cattle, sheep and pigs will fulfil European requirements thus supporting the continuation of trade post-Brexit. It will improve traceability in the event of a disease outbreak and deliver significant opportunity for the Welsh red meat industry to use the improved data to benefit farmers and the wider supply chain. For example if the data is robust, patterns emerge that can allow predictive interventions based on high confidence of where animals are likely to be, likely to be going, and where hotspots are most likely to be in a given outbreak scenario. This data analysis can also

be useful to industry in supply chain planning and forecasting. Linking animal movement data to health status and medicines usage will, in time, provide invaluable information supporting informed purchasing and judicious use of pharmaceutical products.

Livestock Identification, Registration and Movement Reporting

Electronic movement reporting for livestock has the potential to aid the farming industry in Wales by improving farm management and facilitating electronic record keeping through the use of improved technology. A series of amendments are currently being proposed to the current registration and movement reporting processes for sheep, goats, cattle and pigs, together with the proposed implementation of Bovine Electronic Identification. This could potentially see significant advances in real time movement reporting, providing us with meaningful data of where animals are at any given time.

Officials are working closely with UK administrations and stakeholders to ensure consistency in approach and implementation where possible, aiming for measures which are robust,

achievable and enforceable. This extends to other animal ID work such as equine identification, where all horses in Wales are required to be identified with a microchip and hold a valid passport, under The Equine Identification (Wales) Regulations 2019.

County Parish Holding Number (CPH)

An integral part of improving traceability is the ability to record where animals are at all times. All land used for livestock must have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number assigned by Rural Payments Wales (RPW). The Manage My CPH project was launched in 2017 following a public consultation and introduced new simplified rules for keepers who used Manage My CPH, RPWOnline's mapping system.

To provide full traceability benefits, we wish to see the new CPH rules apply to all keepers, meaning keepers will be required to map all the land they use for livestock onto Manage My CPH.

What can be done?

The amendments we plan to introduce following a full consultation (autumn 2021) on the current registration and movement reporting processes for sheep, goats, cattle and pigs together with the proposed implementation of Bovine Electronic Identification (Bovine EID) will work alongside the forthcoming extension of EIDCymru to allow the recording of all Welsh livestock movements and registrations. The introduction of these changes will

make a positive difference to our industry, reducing regulatory burden where possible and making full use of digital technology to modernise our processes.

To further strengthen traceability across livestock in Wales, we will be enforcing the use of the new County Parish Holding (CPH) rules introduced in 2017 and the use of Manage My CPH for all keepers 2023.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Amended livestock movement and identification policies alongside the introduction of a new movement recording system, will provide us with more accurate data which means we can identify disease risks quickly and where hotspots are likely to be in an outbreak scenario. Improved data will enable us to get on top of disease quickly, safeguarding our industry and reducing the costs of a disease outbreak.

We intend to launch the new cattle system and service on EIDCymru in 2022, and the inclusion of pigs will follow soon after.

The *Changes to Livestock Identification, Registration and Movement Reporting* consultation, was published in autumn 2021, and following responses and changes to legislation, could potentially lead to significant advances in real time movement reporting and the mandatory introduction of Bovine EID from 2023.

What will the Framework Group do to support these objectives?

Animal Identification — support the development of the first multispecies traceability system for Wales by providing advice and guidance during its development.

Encourage industry to engage with Livestock Identification and movement policies to ensure high standards of traceability are achieved.

To also encourage the inclusion of animal health and medicine usage data, in the programme going forward.

Where can you find out more?

www.eidcymru.org/eidcymr



Veterinary Surveillance

Surveillance is the knowledge of the health status of a population, in our case the animals of Wales. It is impossible to achieve good standards of animal health and welfare without some understanding of what diseases are affecting animals, their extent and pattern. For some, mainly statutory exotic diseases, prompt identification of the first case in the event of an incursion is essential. Good disease surveillance is the keystone to effective health risk management.

Diseases and the agents that cause them are ever-changing requiring surveillance to be a constant endeavour.

The main purposes of surveillance for animal health are to:

1. produce knowledge that enable actions to be taken which safeguard and improve animal health and welfare
2. protect public health and the environment
3. detect new, emerging and re-emerging diseases including zoonotic diseases and pathogens that have crossed species boundaries
4. monitor trends around the health status of animal populations, and levels of risk
5. ensure compliance with international obligations and requirements
6. detect failures in the effectiveness and safety of veterinary medicines, including aspects of surveillance of antimicrobial and anthelmintic resistance
7. contribute to the resilience, sustainability and quality of veterinary services in the UK
8. increase consumer confidence, improve biosecurity and enhance reputation of UK livestock farming and animal-keeping.

Disease surveillance is therefore undertaken in one of two main ways:

Active surveillance is the approach taken when the threat is known, and the aim to identify how much of it is present, or to better understand its distribution. Active surveillance is usually commissioned through regulatory requirements, and is delivered largely by APHA.

Scanning surveillance is the approach taken to detect unknown threats, such as the presence of new diseases or a change in patterns of existing diseases. The person responsible for the animal must report detection of symptoms and instigate a veterinary diagnosis.

What can be done?

Welsh Government will:

- Liaise with Defra and APHA to ensure that scanning surveillance delivery in England and Wales has the capability and capacity to detect significant risks to animal health and welfare, through the Scanning Surveillance Delivery Project
- Through the UK Surveillance Forum, work with other Administrations to provide an overview of the UK's animal disease surveillance requirements, and to ensure they are delivered
- Support APHA's Surveillance Engagement Project to raise the awareness of the importance and benefits of surveillance among livestock keepers and vets in Wales.
- Actively review the requirements for, and gaps in delivery of, surveillance for health risks to companion animals – small animals and equines. Work with stakeholders

and other Administrations to fill significant gaps and exploit opportunities, as they arise.

- Work with stakeholders to strengthen the scientific and veterinary infrastructure that delivers animal health surveillance in Wales, including the on-going development of the APHA Veterinary Investigation Centre in Carmarthen, the Wales Veterinary Science Centre and the new veterinary school in Aberystwyth.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

- Ensure the prompt detection of significant threats to animal health and welfare, and of animal-related threats to public health
- Awareness of the coverage of our scanning surveillance systems and understanding the likelihoods of detection and non-detection of threats
- Monitor trends of the major infectious diseases of livestock in Wales that drive antibiotic use
- Improved responsibility-sharing - develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of, and requirements for, surveillance among key stakeholders, and how they can utilise surveillance knowledge to improve performance and risk management.
- To that end, and jointly with stakeholders, design and deliver easy to use information tools to make surveillance findings more relevant and usable. In particular to develop bespoke surveillance information exchange tools for

livestock keepers, farm animal vets and policy-makers.

- Work with the APHA to exploit opportunities for utilising new IT and data sources for the benefit of surveillance, for example animal demographic databases such as the multispecies traceability system.

Progress will be monitored through a suite of measures of scanning surveillance developed by the APHA, including monitoring of surveillance coverage in Wales.

What will the Framework Group do to support these objectives?

The Framework Group will advise Welsh Government and APHA delivery partners to review and refine surveillance outputs.

We will exploit opportunities to promote the importance of disease surveillance to livestock keepers and their vets.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-sf-uk-approach-to-animal-health-surveillance

apha.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/surveillance

www.bva.co.uk/news-campaigns-and-policy/policy/animal-disease-surveillance/disease-surveillance/



International Trade

International trade post-EU Exit is a key priority for Wales. We will seek to ensure imported animals and products of animal origin do not present unacceptable risks to public and/or animal health, nor undermine our domestic animal welfare standards. At the same time we will promote raising of standards globally and support exports from Wales to positively raise the bar for animal farming to produce high-quality livestock and food which can compete on the international market as part of “Brand Wales”.

Through the conditions we set in trade agreements and veterinary surveillance, official reporting is undertaken by our trading partners to inform the import controls we have in place. This enables us not only to set routine trade policy but also to take emergency actions, such as restricting or banning imports from countries with confirmed incidents of disease posing a risk to animal and public health.

Border controls are one of our most critical frontline defence systems to protect Wales and our farming industry from the incursion of exotic animal disease threats (“keep infection out”) and/or introduction of public health threats from animal products.

There are a wide number of pathogens of potential concern in the importation of companion animals from abroad, some of which can spread from animals to humans. The risk varies but the impact of exotic diseases entering Wales can be catastrophic, with outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever reminding us of this. We continuously monitor the health situation of other countries and liaise with the relevant veterinary authorities on the identification of risks to Wales and the UK.

What can be done?

We have an opportunity to increase our biosecurity controls on goods we import, and to create opportunities for and support exports (with a welcome side effect of promoting best practice on businesses who seek to export).

Wales will implement a post-EU imports single risk-based regime which enables efficient trade while increasing the protection of our biosecurity, and without treating the EU favourably in an arbitrary way. We recognise that Great Britain is an epidemiological unit as a whole so we will work with other UK governments through the Common UK Framework on Animal Health and Welfare to ensure there is a coherent GB-wide system.

In addition to pre-determined requirements for health conditions for animal products exported to Wales,

border checks will be undertaken on animals and animal products at Border Control Posts before they enter Wales to verify their compliance.

Wales will seek to influence UK Government in trade negotiations to maximise the export opportunities and to uphold the high animal health and welfare regulatory standards we have in to ensure that what we import is safe, and does not disadvantage our industry.

The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with and support initiatives with our operational partners and stakeholders to deal with illegal imports of animals and their products and highlight the disease risks and welfare issues posed by illegal trade. Businesses and the public have a role to play in keeping the risk of animal diseases and zoonoses low, by ensuring informed purchasing of animals and their products from reputable sources.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

A greater awareness and understanding of how importing animals and their products could pose a risk to public and/or animal health and the steps that should be taken to mitigate against this.

A published UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) strategy agreed by CVOs, for trade negotiations.

An imports policy and a border controls regime that recognisably enhances our biosecurity.

What will the Framework Group do to support these objectives?

Position paper on trade in animal goods – to support WG having internal UK discussions with Defra and DIT, and to promote our objectives more widely.

Position paper(s) on imports policy, on specific issues, e.g.:

- conditions for importing certain animals or products e.g., puppy imports,
- Operation of the borders regime, including enforcement.

Where can you find out more?

Border Operating

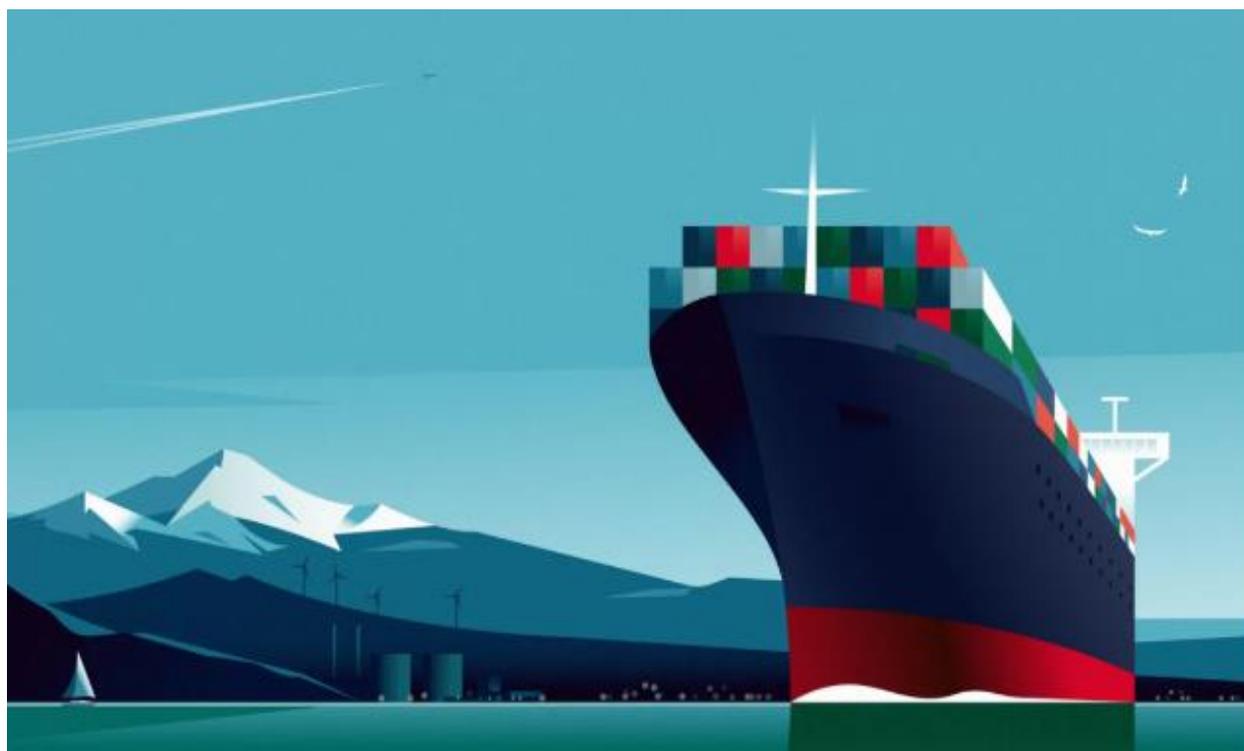
Model - www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-operating-model

Assurance Narrative

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/agri-food-chain-assurance-narrative.pdf>

Biosecurity Narrative

www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/animals-plants-biosecurity-narrative.pdf



Disease Eradication

Animal diseases are a constant threat to the livestock, poultry, pet and captive bird sectors in Wales and an outbreak can have a devastating effect on industry, rural communities and the economy of Wales. In addition, zoonotic diseases which are transferrable to humans (such as Salmonella and Rabies) can pose significant risks to public health.

Steps to prevent disease in the first instance are key, but when disease does occur, action must be taken to control and eradicate the disease and to limit its impact. Contingency planning is required to deal with possible disease outbreak in Wales, including exotic notifiable diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Avian Influenza, Swine Fevers and Bluetongue.

For those diseases already present within Wales, there are controls and monitoring procedures in place to determine the prevalence of the disease and to prevent risk to the food chain and public health.

It is essential that approaches to disease eradication are viewed through the lens of “One Health” whereby the nature and impact on health of animals, humans and the environment are considered both in the preventative and disease mitigation stage. Close working between government, local authorities, industry bodies, disease experts and animal keepers is key to achieving this approach.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is an infection of cattle caused by pestivirus, which can result in a variety of clinical outcomes, ranging from sub-clinical infections to more severe outcomes including abortion, infertility, and the fatal Mucosal Disease. The infection can also exacerbate endemic diseases in a herd and can contribute to welfare concerns.

The Gwaredu BVD industry-led scheme is seeking to eradicate BVD from Welsh herds. The Framework Group and Welsh Government are proud of the efforts across the agricultural industry to raise awareness of this viral disease, to protect the welfare of our livestock and the sustainability and productivity of farming businesses.

The Framework Group recognised the control of BVD as a priority for Welsh industry and supported the development and implementation of this industry-led scheme for Wales, securing £9m funding from the Welsh Government Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The scheme has had a successful impact, and since its launch at the 2017 Royal Welsh Show more than 8,500 (80%) of Welsh cattle herds have been screened. The challenge of removing persistently infected (PI) animals remains however, as over 50% of identified PI animals are either retained or sold, rather than being sent to slaughter.

What can be done?

Following the three year voluntary phase of the Gwaredu BVD programme, the intention of the

scheme managers was to introduce a compulsory programme, underpinned by legislation. The Welsh Government has stated legislation would be considered, provided a successful voluntary phase and appropriate evidence could be sustained to shape and justify legislative controls. Without this, gains made through the voluntary phase will be lost and BVD will remain a significant issue for Welsh farmers.

Voluntary screening will continue to December 2022, allowing time to develop legislation. The screening for BVD is undertaken at the same time as testing for Bovine Tuberculosis (TB). This is supplemented with veterinary advice and support to identify and remove PI cattle from the herd. All cattle keepers in Wales are encouraged to participate.



What outcomes would we like to achieve?

The desired outcome is to move Wales towards eradication of BVD from its herds. Freedom from BVD will provide significant financial benefits to the industry, and enhance the health of cattle in Wales. Sharing best practice, updates on scheme take-up and findings will help monitor scheme participation and disease prevalence across Wales.

One of the key principles of the Framework is working in partnership. It is important to continue this collaboration and build on this experience by applying lessons learned to other animal diseases.

We will contribute to the national BVD eradication effort by ensuring the Welsh programme aligns with those of the other UK administrations, especially in relation to data sharing and cross-border movements. Disease does not respect political borders, and this must be considered when developing our data systems and processes.

BVD is highly contagious and serves as an important reminder of the need for having good animal health planning practices in place to improve biosecurity standards across Wales.

There are also environmental benefits from the control of diseases such as BVD, by contributing to the increased efficiency of our national herds and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. BVD eradication can be a positive step towards achieving a high quality, sustainable environment.

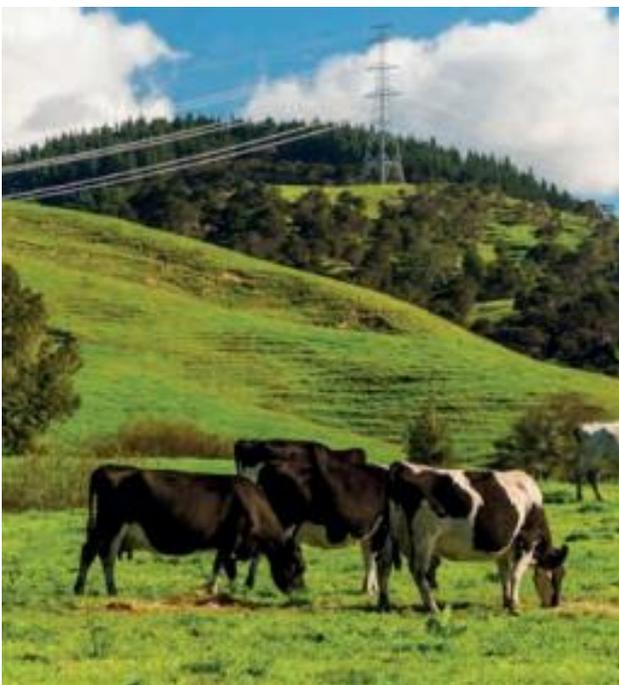
What will the Wales Framework Group do to support these objectives?

The Framework Group has an important role in setting our Framework Implementation objectives, in collaboration with Welsh Government and stakeholders to steer our national priorities to tackle key diseases such as BVD. The Framework Group will encourage cattle keepers to participate in the voluntary Gwaredu BVD scheme to support Welsh Government's vision of ensuring 100% of all Welsh cattle herds are screened.

Where can you find out more?

Animal Health & Welfare Wales:
www.ahww.cymru/en/home/

www.gov.wales/bovine-viral-diarrhoea-guide



Sheep Scab

Sheep scab continues to be a major threat to sheep welfare in Great Britain, and can result in significant costs to sheep farmers, including production losses and treatment expenses.

This disease is a particular problem to our sheep industry in Wales because of the large number and size of sheep flocks in Wales, patterns of sheep farming and extensive use of common grazing. The control and eventual eradication of sheep scab is a long-standing priority of the Framework Group.

Flock owners and sheep keepers are legally obliged to treat and control sheep scab in their flocks at their own expense. Local authorities have a duty to take action when owners of affected sheep do not take appropriate measures to treat sheep scab.

Between November 2020 and March 2021 the Framework Group offered, through APHA, free of charge examination of skin scrape samples from sheep showing suspect clinical signs of sheep scab from flocks located in Wales. The aim of this initiative was to raise awareness of the need for an accurate diagnosis in order to inform treatment decisions, and encourage farmers to use their vet to control sheep scab. There was a good uptake of this initiative.

Sheep scab needs to be prevented, rather than cured after it has arisen. There are limited treatments available for sheep scab and, particularly topical treatment, can cause environmental

damage unless administered carefully and correctly. Furthermore, resistance of sheep scab mites to available treatments is likely increasing and these treatments may become unsustainable in the future.

What can be done?

When sheep scab does occur, the affected farm should work with their vet to quickly and safely eliminate the infestation. Farmers have the duty to notify local authorities in cases of sheep scab on their farm and on other farms. They also need to work together with neighbours and other flocks with whom their sheep have had contact to quickly stamp out the disease.

Recent pilot projects and initiatives in Wales have shown an increase in skin scrape and/or wool sample submissions. These initiatives have also identified areas for improvement such as the need for engagement from all farmers and keepers in Wales and ensuring good quality samples are submitted by them. Support for further initiatives of this kind can improve the available diagnostic methods and ensure that future programmes to tackle the disease are fit for purpose and receive good take-up.

We need to continue and strengthen knowledge-exchange to ensure that sheep keepers, their pharmaceutical suppliers, their vets and the wider sheep industry fully understand and deliver best-practice for sheep scab prevention, including appropriate, effective and safe treatment, when the disease does occur.

The prevention of sheep scab needs to be built into flock biosecurity management, which will form part of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Significant reduction in the incidences of Sheep Scab outbreaks in Wales. Progress can be measured by monitoring the fall in prevalence of the disease or by the number of flocks that receive treatment, which is dependent on the eradication scheme adopted.

Better understanding of the incidence of sheep scab in Wales, including the patterns of its occurrence and spread, in order to best target future control measures. This entails prioritisation of sheep scab in sheep disease surveillance work.

Quick and accurate diagnosis of the disease when it does occur, so that treatment is appropriate, successful,



sustainable and safe. This can be achieved by monitoring of laboratory submissions from sheep with signs suggestive of sheep scab, and encouragement of laboratory testing.

Increased awareness within the sheep industry in Wales of the importance of biosecurity and safe sourcing of sheep, to control sheep scab, as well as all infectious diseases.

What will the Wales Framework Group do to support these objectives?

The Framework Group will work with Welsh Government and engage with sheep farmers and their vets to develop a collectively agreed approach to control the disease in Wales. This approach should focus on preventing the disease from entering sheep flocks, through simple but effective biosecurity measures that all sheep farms can readily implement. It also needs to contribute to safe and effective treatment when the disease does occur.

The Framework Group continue to play a vital role in response to the control and eradication of Sheep Scab as part of a One Health partnership approach with Welsh Government, industry, the veterinary profession, operational partners and other stakeholders.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/sheep-scab

Bovine Tuberculosis

Bovine TB is a zoonotic disease caused by a bacterium (*Mycobacterium bovis*) and treatment for infected cattle is prohibited by law. Since 2010, every herd in Wales has been tested on an annual basis with the aim of identifying infection before cattle show any clinical signs of illness. This helps to remove infected cattle before they have a chance to infect others. Eradication of bovine TB is only possible through a combination of measures aimed at all the sources of infection (domestic animals and wildlife).

The Welsh TB Eradication Programme was introduced in 2008 and since then, measures aimed at tackling the disease have progressively been introduced and built upon. In 2017 we established Low, Intermediate and High TB Areas as part of the regional approach to TB eradication which allows us to implement targeted measures to respond to any emerging disease situations.

Establishing these areas allowed us to implement more focused control measures and set target dates for each region to become TB free. In addition, it allows us to respond more quickly and effectively to emerging disease situations, for example, we have implemented measures in the Low TB Area to respond to an increased number of new TB incidents in the region.

We have seen good progress towards eradication since we established the programme, with long term decreases in new incidents and prevalence. From 2009 to 2020, in Wales, there has been a 48% decrease in new incidents and a 16% decrease in animals slaughtered.

What can be done?

We continually review and improve our programme to ensure it meet the needs of farmers, industry and other stakeholders and provided support at the very start of the coronavirus pandemic, by implementing a number of temporary concessions to respond to the restrictions imposed for social distancing and requirements for self-isolation.

We announced TB eradication targets for Wales in 2017, which, if achieved, will see Wales become officially TB free between 2036 and 2041. Interim targets, covering 6-year periods, were set for each of the TB Areas. These targets specify overall reductions in herd incidence as well as the transfer of Spatial Units from higher incidence areas to lower incidence areas. The first regional targets cover the period from December 31st 2017 to December 31st 2023. At the end of each 6-year period, with the first being at the end of 2023, we will review progress and set the milestones for the following period. Spatial Units will transfer from higher to lower incidence areas on the basis that an improved disease trajectory is seen over the previous period.

We will be refreshing the TB eradication programme in 2022, following a public consultation to seek views on some key policy areas such as Informed Purchasing, TB compensation and Pre and Post-Movement Testing. We will strengthen areas of the programme which we know have a significant impact on TB eradication, such as biosecurity, to ensure farmers experiencing a breakdown are fully supported, and those who are TB free continue to implement strong biosecurity measures.

Our Programme for Government includes the promise to forbid the culling of badgers to control the spread of TB in cattle. The available evidence is inconclusive and taken as a whole, does not make a strong case that culling badgers will significantly reduce TB incidence.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Our goal is to eradicate TB and the TB Eradication Programme contributes to this vision by seeking to minimise TB, and the associated animal welfare, social, economic and environmental impacts, safeguarding public health and eradicating the disease, thus contributing to the profitability of the livestock industry.

The TB eradication programme is built on sound evidence and we continually seek to update our approach as research findings emerge to ensure we can continue to meet the key principles of infectious disease control, which sit at the very heart of our programme;

Keep it out –

preventing disease from entering the herd.

Find it fast –

finding infected cattle at the earliest opportunity, through testing, before they have chance to infect others.

Stop it spreading –

promptly removing infected cattle and preventing the disease from spreading to other animals.

Stamp it out –

eliminating disease once infection has been found.

The TB eradication programme also contributes to a number of wider outcomes, including improvement of farm biosecurity via herd health plans, Cymorth TB visits and individual action

plans. The programme recognises the impact of a TB breakdown on the health and welfare of farmers by providing subsidised veterinary support and advice

What can the Wales Framework Group do to help support these objectives?

Our goal of eradicating TB in Wales can only be achieved by working in partnership with farmers, industry and other stakeholders - we all have a role to play. The Framework Group help support our objectives by providing a crucial link to these stakeholders, facilitating and streamlining the communication of key messages and providing links to the wider agricultural and rural community.

Where can you find out more?

TB Hub: www.tbhub.co.uk

TB Overview: www.gov.wales/bovine-tb



Contingency Planning for Exotic Notifiable Animal Diseases

It is essential for the Government, Local Authorities and Industry to have effective contingency plans in place to minimise the impact of animal diseases, to contain disease spread and eradicate disease quickly to enable recovery. As the wide-spread effect of the coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated, it is critical to ensure that there are effective plans in place to respond to emergency situations in an ever changing environment.

The Welsh Government's Contingency Plan for Exotic Notifiable Diseases of Animals sets out the organisation and systems necessary to respond effectively to a disease outbreak, including the roles and responsibilities of the Government, stakeholders and operational partners. Building resilience into our farming industry is a shared responsibility, one in which we all have a role to play.

The effectiveness of our contingency planning depends on how quickly the first incident of disease can be identified, with all those with responsibilities knowing the part they should play. Government vets monitor the global disease picture and conduct surveillance to identify and eradicate threats quickly and ensure an effective response to a disease outbreak. However, this activity must be supported by vigilance on the part of all animal keepers, who are in the best position to notice any changes in the health or behaviour of their animals.

Keepers should regularly inspect their animals, looking for anything unusual. If keepers in Wales, with advice from their private vets, suspect a notifiable animal disease they should immediately notify the Animal and

Plant Health Agency at (0300 303 8268). Keepers should also ensure their premises are made secure and stop all movements in and out until given advice from APHA. Detecting a disease early is imperative to limiting spread.

What can be done?

Disease prevention is easier and more efficient, than responding to a disease outbreak. Animal keepers must maintain high levels of biosecurity to protect their livestock from the threat of disease in the first instance. Individual actions can have real benefits, whether it is ensuring clothing and vehicles are clean, maintaining field boundaries, repairing breaches and making informed livestock purchasing decisions. This is a continuous responsibility, and there is always more that can be done.

Biosecurity measures should be reviewed regularly, and assessed as to whether they are working and what further steps can be introduced. Improved biosecurity together with monitoring of stock are critical in protecting animals from disease.

With any notifiable disease outbreak, both government and industry have a vital role to play. The Welsh Government continues to work in partnership with the Framework Group, the farming industry, veterinary profession, operational partners, (including public health authorities and environmental officers) and other stakeholders, as their advice and support is essential in minimising the risk, impact and eliminating the disease threat. This assists in achieving a 'One Health' approach to disease control and eradication, protecting both public and animal health.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Increased vigilance by keepers of any notifiable disease will ensure a quicker response, to contain and eradicate disease threats and reduce implications for animal health, public health and animal welfare. Adaptation by industry and Government to emerging disease threats arising due to climate change and increased protection of farming businesses through improved farm efficiencies and biosecurity, will enhance our resilience to such incidents, making Welsh Industry more robust and sustainable.

What will the Framework do to support these objectives?

The Framework Group play a critical role, acting as interface between Government and Industry. The Framework Group are key to promoting the benefits of effective animal health planning and implementing one health, one welfare and strict biosecurity practices, to maintain high standards across Wales. During an outbreak, the Framework Group will share messages and instructions to industry of steps to be taken in our fight against disease, and will relay to the Government the pressures and issues faced by keepers. This is vital to ensuring a consistent partnership approach, building resilience into our farming industries and rural economies.

Where can you find out more?

Contingency Plan:

www.gov.wales/exotic-animal-diseases-contingency-plan

Welfare and Responsible Ownership

Animal Welfare Act 2006

Animal Welfare is a wholly devolved policy area and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 ('The Act') is the principle law relating to animal welfare in Wales.

The Act places a legal duty on animal owners and keepers to care for the animals for which they are responsible, whether on a permanent or temporary basis. Responsibility for an animal includes having an understanding of its specific health and welfare needs and having the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for it. Those responsible for animals must also comply with legislation, be aware of the relevant code of practice for the welfare of those animals, and know when and where to seek qualified advice and guidance, e.g. from a veterinary surgeon.

The Act outlines how a responsible owner must ensure the welfare needs of their animals are met. These include the need:

- For a suitable environment (place to live)
- For a suitable diet
- To exhibit normal behavior
- To be housed with, or apart from, other animals (if applicable)
- To be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

The Act is broad and encompasses any animal that is normally domesticated or which is in captivity. This includes wild animals if they are,

for instance, kept in a zoo, a wildlife park, an animal welfare establishment, animals used in entertainment such as an animal exhibit and wild animals temporarily held in traps.

Responsible Ownership

Reasonable steps should always be taken to protect the welfare of animals. Failure by owners or keepers to act responsibly can cause unnecessary suffering and increase the burden on enforcement agencies, including Local Authorities, and animal welfare organisations.

Irresponsible ownership can include anti-social behaviour, from serious threats to public safety to fouling and environmental issues. Domestically, it can create problems within households. On farms, irresponsible ownership can lead to inefficiencies, negatively impact neighbouring farms and public perception of animal farming.

Animals must never be left in circumstances where they are likely to suffer. Animal owners and keepers are expected to have their own contingency plans for eventualities where animals may be at risk, for example during extreme weather events.

Owning an animal is a privilege, not a right and people must take responsibility for their actions when choosing to keep and care for any animal. Acquiring any animal should always be a planned process, taking in

to account the needs of the animal that will have to be met for the rest of its life, including the costs associated with keeping it. Ownership of an animal has positive benefits for people and can enhance their quality of life.

The concept of responsible ownership should be enshrined in all animal policy development and implementation. This extends to fish farming (aquaculture). For beekeeping (apiculture) it important that good husbandry standards and responsible ownership is practiced. Recently published, Implementation Plan for the Healthy Bees Plan 2030 sets out actions which beekeepers, bee farmers, bee associations and government will undertake to protect and enhance populations of honey bees.



Animal Welfare Plan for Wales

The Welsh Government has recently published a five-year Animal Welfare Plan for Wales (AWPW). This sets out a roadmap for the realisation of four Programme for Government commitments in relation to animal welfare, and also outlines how a broad

range of ongoing animal welfare policy work will be actioned, including statutory guidance for existing Regulations, licensing of animal exhibits, welfare of animals in transport, and Codes of Practice. The need for review of existing animal welfare legislation is recognised, along with flexibility should new policy actions be required. Finally, the plan addresses how, and where appropriate, work will be undertaken in collaboration with other UK administrations to achieve objectives in the best interests of animal welfare in Wales, and beyond.

What will the Framework Group do to support policy objectives in animal welfare?

The Framework Group will support policy objectives in animal welfare through monitoring the effectiveness and implementation of the AWPW and reviewing the schedule of actions and timescales to ensure continuing currency, relevance and impact.

The Framework Group will also perform a representative role as spokespeople on animal health and welfare issues, supporting educational and behavioural change.

Animal Welfare Act 2006

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45

Animal Welfare Policy

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare

Implementation Plan for the Healthy Bees Plan 2030

www.nationalbeeunit.com

Animal Welfare Plan for Wales

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26



Farmed Animals

CCTV in Slaughterhouses

Our network of slaughterhouses in Wales provides an essential service to farmers, butchers and consumers. It also supports a skilled workforce, locally-integrated supply chains and export markets. There are a number of controls already in place in our slaughterhouses to protect animal welfare, with Official Veterinarians (OVs) in attendance to oversee compliance with regulations. Larger slaughterhouses are also required to have their own dedicated Animal Welfare Officer (AWO). AWOs help staff to comply with regulations and must be present whenever animals are slaughtered. The industry has also published extensive guidance on best practice in protecting animal welfare.

Our larger slaughterhouses, which process the vast majority of animals,

already have CCTV at their premises as an assurance method for public confidence. They also adhere to a protocol jointly developed and agreed between the Food Standards Agency and industry bodies to enable OVs to access recorded footage. However, not all slaughterhouses in Wales have this facility.

What Can Be Done?

Whilst CCTV cannot replace direct oversight by slaughterhouse management or OVs, particularly in very small premises, it can provide objective supporting evidence of the standards in each establishment. CCTV provides additional assurance that there is effective monitoring and verification of animal welfare standards, and improved consumer confidence that welfare standards are being delivered. This is why the Programme for Government includes a commitment to require CCTV in all slaughterhouses.

What would we like to achieve?

The Welsh Government remain committed to working with slaughterhouse operators in a supportive relationship and will work with stakeholders to prepare and consult on draft regulations which will make it a requirement for approved slaughterhouses to install and operate CCTV in all areas where live animals are present. The aim is for the requirement for CCTV to be installed in all slaughterhouses in Wales to come in to force within the next two years.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26



Welfare of Animals in Transport

Animals should only be transported when necessary and journey durations should be minimised. The Welsh Government has consulted jointly with its UK counterparts on improvements to animal welfare in transport. Views were sought on banning live export for slaughter and on proposals to improve the conditions of animal transport more generally, including: maximum journey times, temperature conditions and ventilation, headroom height, sea transport and space allowances. The Summary of Responses and Government Response was published in August 2021.

What Can Be Done?

The export of animals for slaughter or fattening is unnecessary because they could be slaughtered or fattened domestically. The Welsh Government is working with the UK Government on introducing a ban on the export of live cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and equines for slaughter, including for fattening for subsequent slaughter, through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. The ban will be introduced as quickly

as possible after the Kept Animals Bill receives Royal Assent, which we expect to happen in 2022.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill includes provisions to deliver a number of reforms relating to the welfare of kept animals, including farm animals, companion animals, and kept wild animals. The Welsh Government is working with the UK Government in relation to these proposals and their application to Wales.

Exports for purposes other than slaughter or fattening, such as for breeding or competitions and shows, will continue to be permitted. Poultry are not in scope of the ban.

What would we like to achieve?

Through this and subsequent work with the UK Government and other administrations, the Welsh Government will continue to consider how the protection of animal welfare during transport can be strengthened. Evidence has shown very long journeys can cause stress, dehydration, and physical injuries in transported animals. It will now work with stakeholders and experts – including animal welfare and farming groups – to further develop these measures in order to help enhance the welfare of farmed animals during transport.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/improvements-animal-welfare-transport



Restrict the use of cages for farmed animals

The Welsh Government is committed to the welfare of animals at all stages of life. Battery cages for laying hens, sow stalls for pigs and veal crates for calves were banned because they presented inherent severe disadvantages for the welfare of the animals kept in those systems.

Some cage systems are still permitted and animals that are kept in cages for all or part of their lives may not have the freedom to express normal behaviours, one of the Five Welfare Needs developed by the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (now known as the Animal Welfare Committee). Cages restrict an animal's choice and do not fully provide for physical and behavioural needs.

What Can Be Done?

As part of our commitment to improving standards of farmed animal welfare the Welsh Government is working with the UK and Scottish Governments to examine the evidence around the use of cages in farming, including enriched cages for laying hens, farrowing crates for pigs and breeding cages for gamebirds. The aim is to have, as far as possible, a consistent approach across Great Britain in the best interests of animal welfare.

What would we like to achieve?

There is a demand from society to move to more ethical production systems. Our Programme for Government includes a commitment to restrict the use of cages for farmed animals.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.uk/government/groups/animal-welfare-committee-awc

Welfare Codes of Practice

The transformative impact of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 enshrined the principle “prevention is better than cure”, and set out the five welfare needs of all kept animals. In support of this, the Act also allows the Welsh Government to produce Codes of Practice for the welfare of companion animals and livestock. As a principal source of information, the codes are intended to encourage all those responsible for animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. They provide guidance on how to care for a range of animals, in order to meet the standard of care the law requires. They outline the steps that need to be taken to ensure animals are protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease, and outline the role of the veterinary practitioner in the animal's

care. The need for appropriate measures to be taken in terms of vaccinations, parasite control and routine care are also described in full. Codes have been published for equines, dogs, cats, rabbits, cattle, sheep, pigs, laying hens, meat chickens and game birds.

What can be done?

As part of our continuing commitment to maintain and extend our portfolio of Welfare Codes of Practice, the AWPW outlines how we will establish a review cycle for our codes, with updates scheduled as far as possible to reflect policy developments, including our Programme for Government Commitments. It also describes how we will consider the need for new codes in areas not currently covered and revise existing codes according to the review cycle to ensure the information provided is current and clear to all stakeholders. This work will

be undertaken in collaboration with key partner organisations.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Through broadening the reach and profile of the codes, we would like to facilitate an improved understanding of the responsibility of animal ownership, the needs of animals and how to care for them, and a reduction in unknowing incidences of poor welfare.

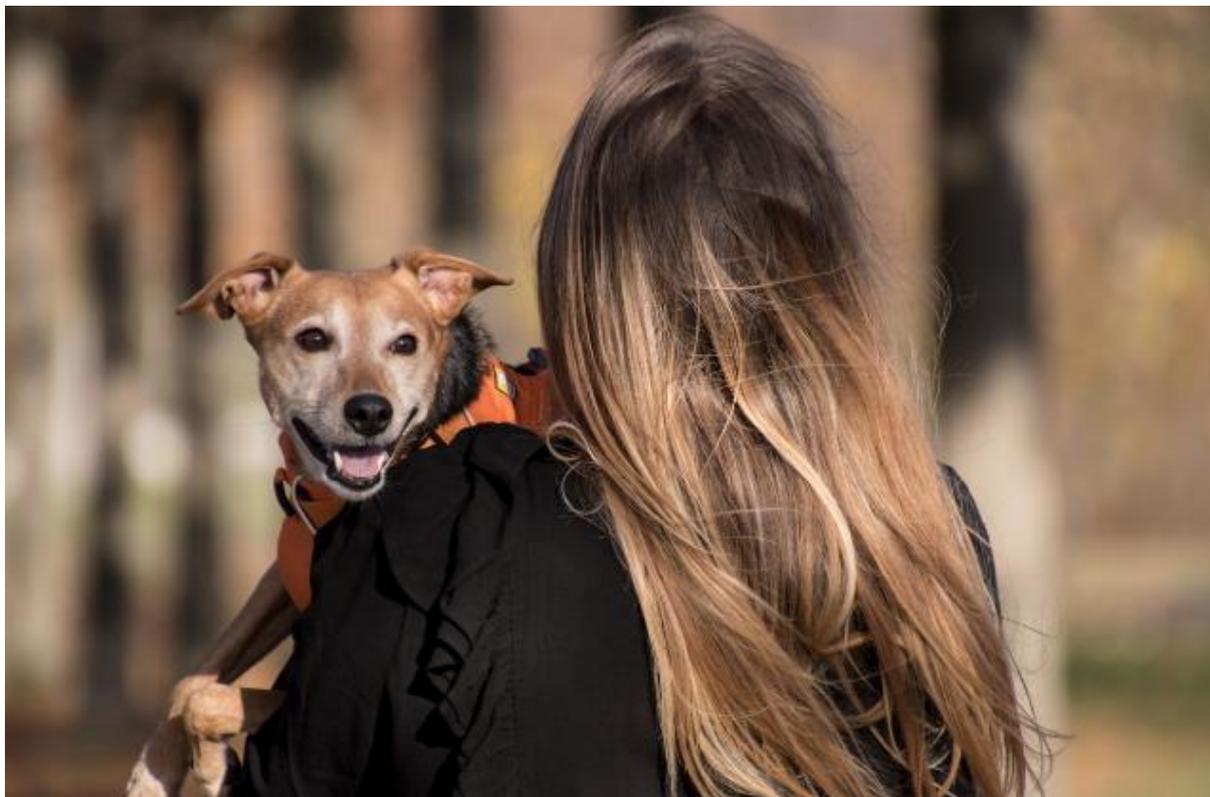
Where can you find out more?

Codes of Practice:

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26

www.llyw.cymru/cynllun-lles-anifeiliaid-cymru-2021-26





Companion Animals

Licensing of Animal Exhibits and Animal Establishments

There are concerns welfare standards are not routinely assessed in Animal Exhibits and Animal Establishment settings, such as mobile displays, outreach work and sanctuaries. Previous policy work in this area, with an aim to create an extended licensing and enforcement regime was suspended due to coronavirus pandemic related priorities. It was envisaged that the implementation of this scheme would have a lasting impact on the welfare of the animals involved, and on the attitudes of future generations of animal owners.

What Can Be Done?

Working in partnership with key stakeholders, we will re-visit our plans beginning with further consultations on the scope and impact of proposals, including the potential to extend their reach to include settings such as greyhound racing tracks. We will then bring forward legislation as required for licensing schemes to ensure high welfare standards are maintained and

that animals are exhibited, kept and treated in a way which is respectful and responsible.

What would we like to achieve?

We aim to complete the processes of consultation and to identify what legislative changes there are in line with the AWPW. If required, we will draft new legislation potentially under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26

www.llyw.cymru/cynllun-lles-anifeiliaid-cymru-2021-26

The Creation of a National Model for Animal Welfare Regulation

Since the devolution of powers for animal welfare legislation, much progress has been made in improving the lives and conditions of animals in Wales. We have introduced our own pieces of legislation and, where mutually beneficial, worked in collaboration with other UK administrations. Our work has covered a wide range of issues and species, and its enforcement has led to partnership working with a range of agencies, as well as officials from the Welsh Local Authorities. We believed that delivery and enforcement is stronger when there is a clear and shared understanding of what is expected and why, and clarity here is sometimes impeded by bespoke approaches adopted in policy over the years, as well as operational variation in methods of enforcement.

What Can Be Done?

In order to realise two flagship animal welfare commitments within the Programme for Government, we will, firstly, lay the foundations for a national model for the licensing and regulation of organisations and businesses which focus on kept animals, to ensure consistency of approach, and a robust and consistent delivery of Regulatory requirements across Wales. Secondly, we will continue to support the training of enforcement officers through a Welsh Government-backed pilot project in collaboration with Welsh Local Authorities while also establishing a working group in partnership with key enforcement agencies to assess the qualifications currently required by each enforcement delivery body.

What would we like to achieve?

Over the current Government's term of office, we aspire to a national model which will provide a standardised administration process for licence applications and a single point of reference for applicants and the public. It will ensure greater consistency in support both for businesses and enforcement agencies. The model will be applicable to future policy developments and improve resilience across Wales when enforcement agencies experience unforeseen incidents and require additional external support. In parallel, our work on enforcement also seeks to raise the status and qualifications of inspection officials, as well as consistency of approach.

Where can you find out more?

www.gov.wales/animal-welfare-plan-wales-2021-26

www.llyw.cymru/cynllun-lles-anifeiliaid-cymru-2021-26



Other Kept Animals

Revisions to the Standards of Modern Zoo Practice

The Welsh Zoo sector is licensed under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 the implementation of which is supported by the National Assembly for Wales' Standards of Modern Zoo Practice (2006). Since the publications of these standards, the sector has grown and diversified significantly, and our knowledge and understanding of best practice in the welfare of animals kept in zoos has evolved alongside significant scientific advances. The diversification of the sector has also brought a renewed focus on public safety, as well as raising issues in relation to compliance and enforcement in the processes of licensing and inspection.

What Can Be Done

In partnership with the UK and Scottish Governments, we have participated in the development of a wholesale revision of the Standards of Modern Zoo Practice. The Standards have been drafted for zookeepers and zoo staff, zoo operators, zoo inspectors and Local Authorities and will be applicable across Great Britain. They contain specialist, technical requirements for different species and zoo types, based on expert advice provided by the UK Zoos Expert Committee and a wide range of industry specialists. The new standards incorporate current understanding and best practice in the welfare of all animals now kept in zoos, together with strengthened

requirements which aim to protect the public and prevent injuries and fatalities caused by dangerous wild animals.

What would we like to achieve?

Following due consultation across the industry, the revised Standards are scheduled to be launched in 2022. Our aim is to work with the zoo sector in Wales to secure engagement in the processes of consultation and subsequent implementation for the benefit of animal welfare, the Welsh zoo industry, conservation and public safety. The new Standards will also facilitate a more straightforward inspection reporting process that allows inspectors to focus their expertise on recommendations to safeguard standards.

Where can you find out more?

Zoo Licensing Act 1981

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/37



Lameness in Livestock

Lameness impacts on the welfare, productivity and sustainability of our national flock and herd. Reducing lameness levels will have a significant positive impact and result in a wide range of benefits across all levels of the industry. Most importantly it will improve welfare at an individual animal level. This has additional positive outcomes due to reductions in antibiotic use, increased productivity, reduced economic losses and therefore a more sustainable industry. These benefits are well aligned with the One Health and One Welfare objectives of Welsh Government.

Lameness is multifactorial and therefore can be challenging to address, requiring an individual approach on each farm. Determining current lameness levels and understanding the main risk factors are key to developing an effective approach through lameness focused management programmes.

What can be done?

We would like to ensure that all cattle and sheep farms in Wales are aware of the levels of lameness on their farm and assessment of this is undertaken with their vet as part of general animal health planning and the Animal Health Improvement Cycle if this specifically applies.

Where lameness levels are high and impacting on welfare then measures should be put in place to work towards reducing this, for example through implementation of the AHDB Healthy Feet Programme (dairy cattle) or The Five Point Plan (sheep).

We will work with all key stakeholders to promote the importance and benefits of reducing lameness in the national herd and flock. This includes continuing to communicate and support farmers through the AHDB's HerdAdvance, HCC's Stoc+ and Farming Connect projects and engaging with all stakeholders including vets and cattle foot trimmers.

What will the Framework Group do to support these objectives?

All Cattle

- Encourage farmers to engage in knowledge exchange programmes on lameness e.g., through Farming Connect.
- Encourage every farm to have a detailed veterinary treatment protocol for lameness, including recording of cases.
- Improve on-farm competency in the treatment of lame cows.
- If a professional cattle foot trimmer is used, promote the importance of using a qualified trimmer who has either undergone a spot-audit by the Cattle Hoof Care Standards Board (CHCSB) or attended a verified check day with the National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers (NACFT) within the last two years.
- Promote the importance of good biosecurity in preventing the spread of digital dermatitis both between and within farms.
- Highlight the link between digital dermatitis and Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD) to encourage improved biosecurity between cattle and sheep on mixed farms.

Dairy Cattle

- Encourage all dairy farmers to have a mobility score by an independent Register of Mobility Scorers (RoMS) accredited scorer.
- Promote use of the AHDB Healthy Feet Mobility Scoring App to improve recording.
- Champion the benefits of the AHDB HerdAdvance Lameness Pathway.
- Highlight the benefits of working with trained vets (Mobility Mentors) to implement the AHDB Healthy Feet Programme (HFP).
- Encourage farms to undertake the HFP where lameness is identified by a vet to be of concern.
- Continue to support, promote and encourage research into automated lameness detection systems.

Sheep

- Continue to work with knowledge exchange programmes such as Farming Connect to promote the importance of reducing lameness in the flock
- Encourage all farmers to ensure they have someone competent in recognising, diagnosing and appropriately treating lameness on the farm
- Promote the importance of having a detailed veterinary treatment protocol for lameness and a recording system in place to allow evaluation of the causes of lameness

- Biosecurity in relation to infectious causes of lameness
- Encourage reduction of lameness to be embedded in all management decisions for the flock
- Explore the best way to manage sheep with chronic abnormalities.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Over the course of the Implementation Plan we would like to move towards a position where lameness levels reduce by a quarter.

This aim is closely aligned with many of the themes that also form part of the Implementation Plan. These include enhance data capture in relation to lameness, the Animal Health Improvement Cycle, improving biosecurity (specifically in relation to infectious causes of lameness) and sustainability due to the impact that reducing lameness will have on productivity, longevity and ultimately profitability of our national herd and flock.

Where can you find out more?

AHDB Healthy Feet Programme:
www.ahdb.org.uk/healthy-feet

Five Point Plan for Lameness Reduction in Sheep:
www.faifarms.com/lameness5pointplan



Contact details



Find the latest information on the Framework and the Framework Group at:
www.gov.wales/farmed-animal-strategy



Email us at:
WAHFG@gov.wales



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