

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Consultation on a new independent body for animal health: *A modern governance and funding structure for tackling animal diseases*

Annex 11 - Previous Consultations and Reports

Animal Health and Welfare Strategy

The Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain is the route map for work to improve the health and welfare of kept animals in England, Scotland and Wales. It is a Strategy for all who have a role to play - Government, the food and farming industry, vets, consumer groups and many others. It covers animals kept for pleasure or profit - pets, livestock, game and wildlife where it impacts on kept animals.

The Strategy's aim is to "develop a new partnership in which we can make a lasting and continuous improvement in the health and welfare of kept animals while protecting society, the economy, and the environment from the effect of animal disease".

The England Implementation Group (EIG) is an independent advisory group appointed by the Government to drive forward delivery, in England, of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain.

The group is working in partnership with government, the farming and food industries, animal owners, the veterinary profession, consumers and other stakeholders to foster wide ownership of the strategy and a shared commitment to its outcomes.

The 13 members of the group have experience and expertise in farming, the veterinary profession, animal welfare and other related industries.

Joint (Industry/Government) Working Group on Sharing Responsibilities and Costs of Animal Disease (JIGWIG)

The Joint (Industry/Government) Working Group on Sharing Responsibilities and Costs of Animal Disease¹ met between December 2005 and October 2006. It focused on exotic disease and its geographical remit was England.

The work of the Group marked a step change in thinking how industry and Government can work together to share the responsibilities and costs of exotic animal disease.

The Group published its report on 12 July 2006. The report's conclusions and recommendations represented a major breakthrough in that, for the first time, Government and farming industry representatives achieved a consensus around the principles of sharing costs and responsibilities in the event of an exotic disease

¹ <http://defraweb/farm/policy/regulation/csharead/jigwg/>

outbreak, recommending that where costs are shared, responsibilities should also be shared. A joint industry and government approach to sharing costs and responsibilities, based on genuine partnership was concluded as the right approach

A central recommendation of the 2006 JIGWG report was the creation of a new statutory body, embodying an industry and government partnership, for sharing the responsibilities and costs of animal diseases.

First consultation – Principles

In December 2006 Defra issued a consultation on the Principles of Responsibility and Cost Sharing, to be used to inform decisions on how responsibility and cost sharing was taken forward across the entire range of the Government's animal health and welfare policies.

Most respondents welcomed the consultation as a positive step forward and agreed in general with the principle of responsibility and cost sharing. Most agreed that it would be difficult to comment in detail until further work and proposals are put forward. However, the strong feeling from industry was that this should not merely be an exercise in passing costs onto the industry to save taxpayers money and that if a true partnership were to develop, it should be based on a greater and equitable say on policy development and share of responsibility.

Following the consultation exercise the following principles were agreed:

- Principle 1: Preserving public safety and maintaining confidence both nationally and internationally in UK food production;
- Principle 2: Preserving the principles of the *AHWS* – especially that prevention is better than cure;
- Principle 3: Maintaining and improving capability to deliver policies;
- Principle 4: Sharing responsibilities so that achievement of animal health and welfare outcomes is cost effective, efficient and best value for money;
- Principle 5: Sharing costs only where the activity provides a clear benefit or service;
- Principle 6: Focus cost sharing where it is most likely to reduce disease risk;
- Principle 7: Responsibilities should be shared where costs are shared but cost sharing should not be the boundary to responsibility sharing;
- Principle 8: Industry and Government will be jointly accountable to all stakeholders;
- Principle 9: The total regulatory burden should be reduced and measures simplified wherever possible and be proportional to risk;
- Principle 10: Consistency with EC and international developments with lobbying to ensure that legislation is proportionate;
- Principle 11: The sharing of costs should take into account affordability and competitiveness for sectors and regions;
- Principle 12: The system should be flexible to take into account unforeseen, unpredictable macro-issues; and
- Principle 13: Decisions should be based on the best available science and evidence.

UK Responsibility and Cost Sharing Consultative Forum

A group of key stakeholders was established to help develop policy on Responsibility and Cost Sharing. The Forum consisted of representatives of Defra, NFU, CLA, the 3 DAs and the farming unions of Scotland, Wales and NI and met for the first time on 6 December 2006.

The objective of the forum was to make recommendations to Ministers on a new Government and Industry partnership approach to how Animal Health and Welfare Policy was developed, delivered and funded in the UK. The aim of the UK Forum was to develop detailed proposals for sharing responsibilities and for sharing costs for animal health and welfare.

The work of the Forum was guided by the 13 principles that underpin the animal health and welfare responsibility and cost sharing agenda and also took into account the following factors:

- The benefits accruing from a GB/all island approach to animal health and welfare policy;
- The differing needs and the accountabilities of the players in the food chain both to each other, the public, Ministers, Parliaments/Assemblies and the role of the Chief Veterinary Officers;
- European Commission work on a common approach to sharing responsibility and costs for animal diseases;
- The scope of any proposed new arrangements insofar as it relates to farmed livestock and thereby the relationship with hobby/lifestyle animal keepers, wildlife conservation/protection interests, wildlife disease vectors; and
- The need to secure changes in approach and behavior towards risk management for disease prevention, eradication and control.

The last meeting of the Forum took place on 1st July 2008 ahead of the submission to Ministers on the proposals for responsibility and cost sharing.

EIG responsibility and cost sharing (RCS) subgroup

The Animal Health and Welfare Strategy called for an appropriate balance of the costs of livestock health and welfare between industry and the tax payer. This has to go hand-in-hand with an appropriate sharing of responsibilities, leading to better management of, and a reduction in, the risk and indeed costs of disease.

The EIG has set up the Responsibility and Cost Sharing Subgroup to support Defra by providing challenge, in line with the principles of the Strategy, to emerging output from the UK Consultative Forum on the key questions of:

- Scope of cost sharing;
- Scope of responsibility sharing;
- Mechanism(s) for cost sharing;
- Mechanism(s) for responsibility sharing.

Second Consultation - Responsibility and Cost Sharing for Animal Health and Welfare: Next Steps

A second Consultation exercise - Responsibility and Cost Sharing for Animal Health and Welfare: Next Steps was launched on 11th December 2007. This was an 18 week public consultation on possible approaches to responsibility and cost sharing, supplemented by a national seminar and 12 regional workshops during February and March 2008,

The consultation sought views on how the farming industry could be further involved in the decision-making process for animal health and welfare, such as during disease outbreaks, and whether this should be done through existing structures and organisations or new organisational structures.

The consultation also looked at the principles of how the funding for animal health and welfare could be shared between Government and the industry in the future and possible new arrangements that would better reflect the balance of the risks, roles and responsibilities of both the public and private sector interests and incentivise the right kinds of behaviour. It also looked at the possible statutory institutional structures to deliver the changed responsibility and cost sharing arrangements

The consultation also included, in a separate section, some specific proposals for the withdrawal or reduction of public subsidies for certain measures that concern BSE in cattle and scrapie in sheep.

The policy on responsibility and cost sharing was further developed as a result of the consultation and further work by the Consultative Forum. Detailed proposals have now been developed and form the basis of the third consultation.