

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 3 - The role of the United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer

1. Key elements of the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO's) role in the absence of a major exotic disease outbreak are as follows:
 - Professional veterinary input into policy development in England including veterinary risk assessments.
 - Advisor to Government, Defra Ministers and Permanent Secretary/Management Board (MB) on Animal Health and Welfare (AHW) policy, delivery and emergency planning.
 - International role including negotiating agreed UK policy positions in European Union (EU), The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (EUFMD) and with third countries.
 - Quality control of professional veterinary advice to animal health policies in England and, where appropriate, in support of policy development in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
 - Contributing to policy evaluations in England and reviews of delivery effectiveness in GB
 - Advice on veterinary and scientific content of the Defra funded Research and Development (R&D) programme and role in Research Advisory Group.
 - Preparation (with contributions from throughout FFG) and presentation of CVO Annual Report
 - Corporate Owner - managing Defra's relationship with Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
 - Head of UK Government veterinary profession – Government Veterinary Service (GVS)
 - A public face of Defra across the whole range of animal health and welfare issues to the media, the public, stakeholders, especially the veterinary profession, including the BVA and its specialist and territorial divisions.

- Appointed by the Privy Council as a member of the Council of the RCVS.
- Liaison at a senior level with other Government departments including: the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, the Science Advisory Council (SAC), the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the Department of Health, the Chief Executive of the Health Protection Agency, the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) and the Department for International Development (DfID).
- Liaison with the Chief Veterinary Officers of the Devolved Administrations.

2. In an exotic disease outbreak the CVO is responsible for confirming disease on a UK basis:

- The CVO leads the disease response for Defra. In support of Defra Ministers and in cooperation with policy colleagues, the CVO ensures that the immediate disease control response is directed by the strategic planning and objectives that they set.
- In an outbreak not involving England, the CVO will liaise closely with CVOs and policy colleagues in the affected country/ies to determine the appropriate Defra response
- Beyond the immediate disease control response the CVO ensures the provision of veterinary expertise in the decision making process alongside policy officials. The CVO also provides the strategic priorities for the activities of delivery and operational partners in England, delegating tactical and day to day decisions to the Deputy CVO as appropriate. In outbreaks outside England or multicentric outbreaks the CVO will liaise with CVOs and policy colleagues in the affected country/ies and with delivery partners to agree optimum use of resources for the overall GB disease control effort. Except for Ministerial announcements, the CVO is Defra's main spokesperson and provides briefing to the media. In addition the CVO provides veterinary briefing to Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), No 10 etc alongside the operational and policy briefing provided by Defra and Animal Health colleagues.
- The CVO has a key representational role in domestic and international relations with senior stakeholders, the OIE, Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO) and others. In an outbreak not involving England the CVO will represent the UK, working closely with CVOs and policy colleagues to determine the UK position and accompanied by other CVOs as appropriate. In addition the CVO has responsibility for ensuring that veterinary expert advice continues to be provided to other Defra policy areas during an outbreak.