

Guidance notes for Student Placements

State Veterinary Service Agency (SVS)

The SVS has an important role in the control of notifiable disease, veterinary public health, International trade and animal welfare. In order for you to optimise your time on placement with the Agency we have prepared a checklist of a range of activities that you may have first hand experience with whilst on your placement. Because the work of the SVS is very varied during your short time with us it is unlikely that you will experience all of the activities listed below: animal health and welfare issues also vary according to the husbandry practices across the country.

A discussion with colleagues at the Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) when you arrive will allow you to focus upon the likely activities you will experience while on placement.

Suggested Activities

- o **Animal Health and Welfare**

Determine the Vision, Objectives and Goals and performance targets of the SVS Agency: understand the Structure of the Agency

- o **Farm visit**

Accompany a Veterinary Officer (VO) on a farm visit to investigate, report upon and advise as appropriate on suspect cases of:

- Anthrax
- Foot and Mouth
- Notifiable diseases of poultry
- Rabies
- Bat rabies
- Swine fever
- Sheep scab
- Brucellosis

- Enzootic Bovine Leucosis
 - TSE
 - Swine Vesicular disease
 - Diseases of horses
 - Warble fly
 - Aujeszky's disease
 - Bluetongue
- **Animal by-products**

Accompany a VO to an animal by-products premises to approve a new premises or monitor standards in an existing plant to ensure compliance with animal by-products legislation.
 - **Blood sampling**

Accompany a VO to take blood samples as part of animal health surveillance procedures.
 - **TB testing**

Accompany a VO to administer a Tuberculin test (intradermal comparative test)/Interferon test: accompany a VO on a follow-up visit and understand the routine adopted following a 'reactor' and an 'inconclusive reactor'.
 - **TB Post-mortem at abattoir**

To observe a post-mortem, including welfare at slaughter, and monitor the accuracy of stunning at slaughter.
 - **Understanding of TB Epidemiology**

Report visits.
 - **BSE visits/suspect cases**
 - **Residues in meat**

- o **Zoonotic diseases**

Accompany a VO to take and record samples, particularly in the surveillance for:

- Salmonella
- Psittacosis / ornithosis

- o **Suspect Scrapie visit**

Accompany a VO to investigate a report of an animal infected with Scrapie and to observe advice on its control/eradication offered.

- o **Sheep Genotyping**

Where appropriate accompany an Animal Health Officer (AHO)/VO in support of the National Scrapie Plan.

- o **Avian Influenza (AI)**

- o **Newcastle disease in poultry**

- o **Welfare – Market visits**

- o **Portal surveillance work**

Where the AHDO covers a Portal Office arrange with the DVM to visit and observe the work of staff working at a Border Inspection Post (BIP).

- o **International trade**

Observe the checks undertaken and the documentation required for the issue of export certificates. Understand the relevance of the RCVS 'Twelve Principals of Certification'.

Self Study Activities

- o Access the SVS Agency website, 'SVS inSite', and the associated Defra website, 'Defra online', and explore the information contained.

- o Read the SVS Corporate Plan April 2005 – March 2008, and any subsequent yearly updates.
- o In particular understand the role of the Agency as a ‘delivery agent’ under the “*Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain*” (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/default.htm>) and its relationship with its policy partner, Defra’s Animal Health & Welfare Directorate General and with the Devolved Administrations, Scotland and Wales.
- o Also pay particular attention to the current issues:
 - TB in cattle
 - Scrapie in sheep
 - BSE in cattle
 - Newcastle disease in poultry
 - Avian Influenza (AI)
 - Swine vesicular disease
- o Investigate the online **V**eterinary **I**nstructions, **P**rocedures and **E**mergency **R**outines (VIPER), the SVS Field Service Manual, and in particular understand how the Agency informs its staff of new and revised procedures via Action Notes (ANs) and Field Information Notes (FINs).
- o Explore back copies of the SVS in-house magazine ‘inView’, and the Defra equivalent, ‘Landscape’.
- o Publications.
- o Understand the structure of the AHDO: the relationship between the Veterinary Officer (VO), Animal Health Officer (AHO) and the administrative support: the role of the duty VO: the role of Local Veterinary Inspectors (LVIs).

- o **Notifiable diseases:** ensure you know which diseases are notifiable and how you would recognise them: understand how all notifiable diseases are recorded by the AHDO.
- o **Contingencies:** familiarise yourself with the local and departmental policy with regard to dealing with an emergency disease outbreak.
- o Familiarise yourself with the 'Vetnet' IT system used across the Agency: understand the system to 'trace' the offspring and cohorts of suspect and confirmed diseased animals: the issue of movement restrictions.
- o **Health & Safety:** familiarise yourself with the Agency's policy on Health & Safety, both whilst in the office and when visiting farms and other premises: familiarise yourself with personal protective equipment (PPE).
- o **Animal Welfare Bill:** investigate the provisions of this Bill and the vertebrates covered.
- o Understand the Diversity and Equal Opportunities policies operated by the Agency.