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## News Release

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### VETERINARY LABORATORIES AGENCY'S RETIRED CEO RECEIVES OIE GOLD AWARD

Professor Steve Edwards, who retired as chief executive of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) in 2008, has been awarded the 2009 OIE Gold Award.

This annual award from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognises an individual's technical, scientific and administrative contributions to veterinary science and animal disease control.

Nigel Gibbens, Chief Veterinary Officer, said:

"I would like to congratulate Steve on receiving this well deserved award. It reflects his dedication to veterinary laboratory science throughout his career on both a national and international level.

"His election to the Presidency of the OIE Biological Standards Commission was a crowning achievement of his international work.

"He played an active part in expanding and improving the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests & Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* which is now a key international standard for the veterinary diagnostic laboratories and vaccine manufacturers."

Barry O'Neil, the President of the OIE, presented the award in May 2009 during the opening ceremony of the 77<sup>th</sup> General Session of the OIE International Committee in Paris.

## Notes for editors

1. During his 28 years at VLA, Professor Steve Edwards became a recognised expert in respiratory diseases of cattle and pestiviruses. He was appointed chief executive of VLA in 2000 and retired from this post in 2008.

In 1991, he was elected Secretary General of the Biological Standards Commission of the OIE and actively participated in the work of the Commission for 17 years as elected Vice-President and later as President.

2. VLA is an Executive Agency of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is a regional network of 16 veterinary laboratories including a central facility near Weybridge in Surrey.

VLA provides a wide range of applied research and consultancy on livestock diseases and surveillance of new and emerging diseases for the Government and animal health industry. It is also a national and international reference laboratory for many farm animal diseases including avian influenza, bovine tuberculosis, classical swine fever and TSEs.  
[www.vla.gov.uk](http://www.vla.gov.uk)

3. The OIE is the intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It has 174 member countries.

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