

WALES ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FRAMEWORK GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held in Cathays Park, Cardiff on 15th December 2016

Present:

Jo Price	Chair
Christianne Glossop	Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales
Huw Davies	
Ifan Lloyd	
David Davies	
Moss Jones	

Welsh Government

Lesley Griffiths	Cabinet Secretary For Environment and Rural Affairs (Item 8)
Carol Harris	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Janet Perry	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Suzanne Lewis	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO)
Irene Allen	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) (Item 8)
Tom Henderson	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) (Item 8)
Sally Williams	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO) (Item 8)
Helen Minnice –Smith	(Item 5)
Lesley Stubbings	(Item 6)
Kevin Roberts	Chair of Ameath Cymru (Item 7)

Apologies

Peredur Hughes	Chair of the Wales AHWF Group
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Agenda Item 1: Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the eleventh meeting of the Group. The Chair explained Peredur Hughes had sent apologies. She explained Helen Minnice-Smith (WG) will be joining the meeting to discuss some of the work that is being done, looking at the challenges the changing climate will have on animal production. She explained that Lesley Stubbings (a independent sheep consultant) would also be joining the meeting to discuss the implications of the WAARD (Wales Against Anthelmintic Resistance Development) Final Project Report, which will form the basis of Lesley's presentation later.
2. The Chair also explained Kevin Roberts, Chair of the Amaeth Cymru Partnership Group would be joining the meeting in the afternoon to give an update on their work. Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs would be joining for the last hour to discuss Responsible Ownership and Poultry.

3. The Chair also welcomed Suzanne Lewis to the meeting and explained she had recently joined the Secretariat Team. She also mentioned Sally Williams, a vet seconded from APHA will be joining the meeting in the afternoon as an observer.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes and Action Points from 12th June

4. The Chair explained the final minutes and updated action points from the last meeting were emailed to Group Members as part of the papers for this meeting.
5. The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

Agenda Item 3: Update from Chair

6. The Chair provided an update as follows;

a) Public Appointments process

The Chair confirmed the re-appointment of herself, Ifan, Moss and Dai by the Cabinet Secretary for a further 3 years. She explained the advert to recruit two new members to the Group has been placed on the Welsh Government Public Appointments website, and other various publications. The closing date for the advert is 6th January. The sift will be conducted in February with the interviews taking place in March. She said the Group will be kept informed of developments.

b) Update from Four Chairs meeting

The Chair explained Peredur had attended the Four Chairs Meeting on the 21st September 2016 in Edinburgh. It was a very good meeting, covering the EU Referendum and the implications for Animal Health, Surveillance, BVD and AMR. The next meeting will take place in England in March.

c) BVD Update

The Chair explained the BVD Sub Group had received formal approval of their Phase 1 application for funding from the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. This covers elements such as setting up a governance structure, communications planning, training of vets and data collection. She explained there are now bi-weekly catch up meetings in place with the BVD Sub Group who are in the final stages of preparing their application for Phase 2 funding. The BVD Sub Group met with Welsh Government policy officials on 23rd November to discuss this application, the meeting went very well with everyone indicating their support for this scheme.

d) Sheep Scab update

The Chair thanked the Group for meeting on the 18 November where they discussed the sheep scab survey results and recommendations on the way forward. She asked Ifan and Moss to provide an update on latest position.

Moss explained he had met with NFU, FUW and NSA to discuss the survey results. A key issue of concern was the apparent misuse of products for treating sheep scab. It was agreed there needed to be more focus on knowledge transfer to help address this. There would be another meeting in January to consider pulling together a proposal to apply for funding from the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Ifan explained, he will need to ask Professor Wall if it is possible to identify highest incidence farms, farms having problems annually and potential cluster areas.

Action Point 1 > Ifan to contact Professor Wall regards additional analysis of the survey results.

f) Natural Resources Policy Consultation

The Chair explained the Secretariat had circulated a link to the consultation on the development of a Natural Resources Policy on 29 November. She explained one of the strategic outcomes within the Wales AHWF is Wales has a good quality environment so it is important the Group consider this consultation from the animal health and welfare perspective, a key area being biosecurity. Development of Natural Resources Policy is also linked in heavily with work being taken forward to consider the implications of the EU Referendum Result and the Wales we want for the future.

The Chair confirmed Peredur and Dai attended the Natural Resource Policy workshop on 7th December. The main concern was the lack of emphasis on animal health and welfare. The Group agreed it was important to feed their views into the consultation and would send their comments to the Secretariat in order to submit a Group response.

Action Point 2> All members to consider the consultation on Development of a Natural Resources policy and submit comments to the Secretariat Mailbox.

Agenda Item 4: Update from Christianne

7. Christianne provided an update as follows;

a) Cattle Health and Welfare Sub Group on AMR

Christianne explained Gavin had attended a meeting of the sub Group set up by CHAWG to consider AMR. The Group agreed it was important for them to be represented at these meetings and agreed to consider which member should attend.

Action Point 3> Group to consider who is best placed to attend the CHAWG Sub Group on AMR.

b) Avian Influenza

Christianne provided an update on the latest position regarding avian influenza as at 15th December. The Group welcomed the update and asked to be kept informed of developments. Dai queried whether it would be possible as part of the application

process for Business Development Grants to ensure any new poultry sheds being constructed are fit for purpose in terms of the animal health and welfare of the poultry.

c) Exercise on Foot and Mouth Disease

Christianne explained she had participated in an exercise to test the Foot and Mouth Disease Contingency Plan. The exercise had been very positive, highlighting the importance of testing contingency plans and working closely with all involved partners.

d) Equine Biosecurity

Christianne explained she had attended the World Horse Welfare Conference. This had been a very useful conference and in follow up, a series of meetings has been arranged to discuss equine biosecurity. The Chair agreed to discuss the possibility of holding an Equine Biosecurity Conference in Wales and whether it was possible to hold an event at the Royal Welsh Show.

Action Point 4> The Chair and Christianne to discuss the possibility of holding an Equine Biosecurity Conference in Wales and the option of holding an event at the Royal Welsh Show.

e) Bovine TB

Christianne explained the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs had made a statement on the consultation for a refreshed TB Eradication Programme. She explained the TB Eradication Programme was also being considered by the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee. The Group agreed they would provide a response to the consultation.

Action Point 5> Group members to provide comments on the TB Consultation to the Secretariat Mailbox

Action Point 6> Secretariat to circulate link to the record of proceedings for the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee discussions on TB.

The Group discussed the importance of getting clear messages out about the refreshed TB Eradication Programme and agreed to consider how best to communicate these messages. It was agreed for the TB policy team to provide a paper on key messaging to ensure consistency.

Action Point 7> Group members to consider how best to communicate TB messages to farmers and increase understanding of the consultation proposals.

Action Point 8> Secretariat to ask TB Policy Team to provide an update paper on key messages to ensure a consistent approach.

Agenda Item 5: Update from Helen Minnice-Smith on Industry Climate Change Group

8. The Chair welcomed Helen Minnice-Smith (WG) to the meeting and explained she would be updating the Group the work being done to consider the challenges the changing climate will have on animal production.
9. Helen provided her presentation on the Decarbonisation programme. She explained the key purpose of the programme is to manage Wales' transition to a low carbon economy, in line with the Welsh Government's statutory emission reduction framework; and to ensure that Wales derives maximum benefit and value for money from this transition. She explained there would be three phases of work running through to 2020. There are also plans to hold a workshop in January and an invitation will be issued to Group members. This will be followed by a public Consultation in the Spring. The Group agreed to consider and respond to this consultation.

Action Point 9> Helen to invite Group members to workshops in January

10. The Chair thanked Helen for her update and asked if it would be possible for the Group to have a short paper on key recommendations and messages.

Action Point 10> Helen to provide Secretariat with a short paper on the Decarbonisation Programme

Agenda Item 6: Update and discuss the WAARD (Wales Against Anthelmintic Resistance Development) Project and SCOPS work - Lesley Stubbings

11. The Chair welcomed Lesley Stubbings (an independent sheep consultant) to the meeting. She explained Lesley would be giving a presentation on the implications of the WAARD results and the work of SCOPS regarding the slowing of Anthelmintic Resistance.
12. Lesley provided her presentation. She explained the significance of the WAARD results and their conclusions. These included;
 - Anthelmintic Resistance is an increasing threat to all sheep farms
 - Sheep scab is a major threat contributing to this issue
 - Early action is essential
 - Evidence supports the effectiveness of SCOPS principles.
 - The group 4 and 5 anthelmintic products are key to future strategies.
13. There was a discussion on the need to encourage sheep farmers to take action before resistance to anthelmintic becomes obvious. The Group also noted the risk of sheep scab and how this can link back to the work the Group are taking forwards in light of the results of the commissioned sheep scab survey. Lesley also highlighted the risk of losing market products due to lack of demand. This also poses a risk to the development of new products.

14. Everyone agreed the vet has a key role in discussing treatments with sheep farmers and consideration is required as to how these discussions can be improved. A number of initiatives were mentioned including Farm Health Clubs, the link to animal health planning and lechyd da also starting to consider responsible Use of Medicines. It was agreed education was key, in particular through vet schools and agricultural colleges. Lesley agreed to share details of the SCOPS publicity strategy with the Group

Action Point 11> Lesley to send SCOPS publicity strategy to the Secretariat.

Action Point 12> Group to consider how Anthelmintic Resistance can be incorporated into animal health planning

Action Point 13> Lesley and the Group to consider how best to discuss this issue with vet schools and agricultural colleges.

Agenda Item 7: Update from Kevin Roberts Strategic Framework for Welsh Agriculture Partnership Group

15. The Chair welcomed Kevin Roberts, Chair of the Amaeth Cymru Partnership Group to the meeting. She asked if he could provide an update on the work of the Partnership Group and for an update on how the EU Exit work is progressing as Kevin sits on the high level First Minister's Brexit Group.
16. The Chair also explained Peredur in his capacity as Chair of the Wales AHWF Group has formally been invited to sit on the Amaeth Cymru Partnership Group – Strategy Sub Group.
17. Kevin explained the key objective of the Partnership Group was to develop a strategy to deliver a vision for agriculture. Since the EU Referendum result, the Group have had to re-assess the way forward and are now in the process of developing an EU Exit position paper. Everyone agreed trade is important to the Red meat Sector in Wales and disruption to trade is in the short term a significant threat. Other issues discussed included development of a more coherent branding strategy for Wales and transition arrangements.
18. Huw asked whether the partnership Group needed a vet as a member. Christianne explained she had agreed with Kevin that if veterinary expertise is required, he will ask her for advice.
19. The Chair stated there is a need to promote the message that high animal health and welfare standards can protect Wales and are crucial to any current and future trade agreements.
20. Ifan queried the levels of financial support available to the industry. Kevin explained there were threats to the size of the budget at Westminster and subsequently Welsh Government and there will be more scrutiny around the issue of how agriculture is funded.
21. Christianne stressed the importance of the work currently underway on the EU

Animal Health law. She explained there key aspects within this law which could form part of a UK Framework. Cross referencing this law will also help support any trade negotiations going forwards.

22. The Chair thanked Kevin for his update and stressed the importance for the Group to continue to work with the Partnership Group and the Food Industry Board as they move forward.

Agenda Item 8: Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs - to cover Responsible Ownership and Poultry Register

23. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Secretary to the meeting and explained the discussion would cover Responsible Ownership which is a key Welsh Government priority within the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Implementation 16/17 and also engagement with the poultry sector, including the GB Poultry Register.

Responsible Ownership

24. The Chair explained the Group had been sent a paper from the Welfare Policy team on Responsible Ownership. The paper sets out the background on Responsible Ownership and seeks views from the Group on;
 - The recommendations in the RSPCA's Review of Responsible Dog Ownership
 - How best to engage with internal and external stakeholders
25. The Chair explained the discussion would focus on the recommendations under **Issue A: Prepared for and understands the commitment and responsibility which ownership requires.**
26. Huw queried the scale of the issue around Responsible Ownership and what was the benchmark for measuring the impact of any agreed actions. Christianne stated it was difficult to measure and it would be useful for the Group to consider potential KPIs, for example number of abandoned animals, number of prosecutions, number of animals registered.
27. Ifan stated the importance of veterinary engagement around purchasing an animal in the first place, including choice of animal, home environment, potential costs. He explained it was difficult for vets to have the opportunity to engage with these people before they have pets. Dai also stressed the importance of costs and getting this message across.
28. The Cabinet Secretary stated the National Curriculum was being reviewed and there could be opportunity to factor responsible ownership into this work, in particular work on PSE. The Group supported this suggestion and agreed the foundation for a lot of this work going forwards was education.
29. The Chair summed up three areas for further consideration;

- Engagement with education and the national curriculum
 - Engagement with parents (potentially through schools)
 - Working to change mindsets around pet ownership, in particular prior to pets being purchased.
30. The Cabinet Secretary offered to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education on the issue of Responsible Ownership.

Action Point 14> The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education on the issue of Responsible Ownership

31. Moss stated the revised Animal Welfare Codes of Practice could potentially be a useful educational tool. Ifan agreed and it was suggested there be an easy to read version available.
32. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions. The Group agreed to send more detailed comments on the Responsible Ownership paper to the Secretariat team. These will be incorporated into advice on the way forward for the Cabinet Secretary.

Action Point 15> Group to send comments on Responsible Ownership paper to the Secretariat. Animal Welfare Policy team to incorporate these into advice to the Cabinet Secretary on the way forward.

Poultry Register

33. The Chair explained one of the Framework Groups priorities for 2016/17 is Engagement with the Poultry Sector. An action under this priority is to work with delivery agents and industry partners to undertake a publicity campaign to encourage poultry keepers to register their poultry on the GB Poultry Register.
34. The Chair explained the Secretariat had sought initial views from the Group and also the Egg Marketing Inspector Wales within APHA. Suggestions included;
- Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) writing and targeting the supplying companies to:
 - Inform/remind their customers that there is a legal requirement to keep records of poultry that they sell and to whom i.e. name, address, date and quantity.
 - To communicate that all poultry keepers, including those with fewer than 50 birds, are encouraged to provide details of their flocks to the Poultry Register. This will ensure that they can be contacted immediately in an avian disease outbreak so that they can take action to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity.
 - Welsh Government and APHA considering visits to poultry suppliers businesses (chickens, ducks etc) in Wales which are not included in their normal inspection routine as APHA EMI.
 - Advertise in specialist poultry magazines and on poultry society websites.

- Smallholding events.
 - Gwlad articles.
35. There was some discussion about how to establish the size of the problem in terms of how many poultry keepers were not registered. The Cabinet Secretary also asked the Group for their views on enriched cages and how Wales could become a 100% free range egg production country.

Action Point 16> Group members to send views on enriched cages to the Secretariat to collate for the Cabinet Secretary.

Agenda Item 9. AOB

36. Concerns had been raised from various sources regarding the effective working of the Animal Welfare Network Wales. This is starting to impact on the work of the Wales AHWF Group and potentially affecting the reputation of the Group.

Action Point 17> Secretariat to add Animal Welfare Network Wales to the agenda for the next meeting.

37. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed that the next meeting is on the 9th March in Cathay's Park.

CLOSE