Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework

Implementation Plan 2019-20

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Ministerial Foreword

Ensuring a resilient Wales during and post EU exit

Lesley Griffiths
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.

Since I published the 2017-18 Implementation Plan, we have been tasked with the challenge of ensuring economic resilience and continuing to progress animal health and welfare standards as we move through a time of unprecedented change due to leaving the European Union. The many issues which have been raised, though complex, provide a real opportunity for us to reflect on and identify what we want Wales to look like for our future generations. We must continue to use this opportunity to determine our position in a new and developing world-wide market.

This ongoing uncertainty continues as we endeavour to negotiate outcomes which are right for Wales. However, it is important to remember we do have a long term vision for the future in Wales; the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) has set us goals to improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of Wales and this continues to underpin all of our work under the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework for the next decade and beyond.

Publication of this 2019-20 Implementation Plan demonstrates our continued commitment to progress our key animal health and welfare priorities alongside the increased pressures which have arisen.

These priorities include taking forward the next phase of the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Sheep Scab and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Eradication Programmes, as well as continuing to meet our statutory obligations to safeguard animal welfare; the food chain; and the health and well-being of the public.

We are currently developing a separate 5 year Animal and Environment Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Implementation Plan for Wales, supported by a delivery group comprising both Government and private sector stakeholders. This is in direct response to the increase in AMR, which threatens our ability to control infections in people and animals and will be a key focus for us for this coming year.

We are committed to delivering a number of animal welfare priorities including banning third party sales of puppies and kittens, introducing a licensing scheme for animal exhibits, updating our existing Codes of Practice for the welfare of more commonly kept species; and ensuring the welfare of animals at the time of slaughter. I am also proud to be bringing forward primary legislation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. I welcome the positive contribution the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (Wales AHWF) Group can provide to these strands of work in the coming year.

Reflecting on our achievements since our last Implementation Plan we have much to celebrate.

We have made huge steps towards the eradication of BVD by launching Gwaredu BVD, our industry led scheme at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in 2017. The screening programme demonstrates the progress which can be made by partnership working and increased collaboration between Welsh Government, vets and industry.

The Sheep Scab sub-group of the Wales AHWF Group highlighted the challenge of Sheep Scab across Wales and as a result, in January this year, we announced £5m funding available through our Rural Development Programme to help tackle this disease.

In 2018 we reviewed and updated our Contingency Plan for exotic notifiable diseases, reflecting updated animal disease policies, and lessons learnt.

Our last implementation plan set out some ambitious objectives, and I have highlighted just a few of the successes achieved. Our plan for this year is no less ambitious, set against an uncertain landscape, but we will continue our unwavering focus on making improvements in standards of health and welfare for all animals kept in Wales.

Introduction

Christianne Glossop
Chief Veterinary Officer
for Wales.

"Our focus this year is to support the animal sectors in Wales to adapt to the changes arising from our evolving relationship with the European Union, whilst continuing to promote responsible ownership of farmed livestock, companion animals, working animals and kept animals involved in sport."

The priorities presented in this implementation plan are set against the backdrop of the challenges faced in establishing our future relationship with the EU and the impact this may have on the Welsh landscape, however, animal health and welfare remains the key priority for us.

One of the key principles of the Wales AHWF is "prevention is better than cure" – recognising responsible ownership can minimise animal disease and associated welfare impacts. This key message remains central to our work as we promote active Animal Health Planning and the considerable benefits it can provide for individual farm businesses and the wider industry. These include improved animal health and welfare standards, increased productivity and profits, plus the advantage of greater business resilience and enhanced trading opportunities. In addition, consumer-led demand for increased transparency and assurance of welfare standards has led to industry assurance schemes progressively raising the bar for animal health and welfare.

Regularly reviewed and updated animal health plans developed between the farmer and their private vet should be the norm, reflecting the individual needs of each farming business.

Animal medicines play an important role in the control and prevention of disease. However, we have a responsibility to ensure these are used correctly and not seen as a substitute for good management.

A "One Health" approach to the control of AMR risk has been taken in Wales, encompassing medical, veterinary and environmental considerations. To support the Welsh Government in meeting the commitment of the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to support the UK AMR 20 year vision and 5 year action plan, a new AMR Delivery Group has been established as a sub-group of the Wales AHWF Group. A detailed, Wales-specific implementation plan has been developed to provide specific focus to the specialist remit of the AMR Delivery Group, which comprises of government and private sector stakeholder representatives, selected for their particular interest and expertise in AMR.

Our focus on protection against the incursion and spread of infectious animal diseases and maintaining a state of preparedness to deal with any outbreak of notifiable animal disease that may occur in Wales will continue. These diseases must be tackled in the most effective way possible, with robust contingency plans in place to ensure an efficient and effective response. Key to this is continuing our current priority of 'veterinary surveillance' – monitoring animal disease trends and providing an early warning system of new and re-emerging disease threats.

Early, accurate detection enables us to make prompt and appropriate decisions to protect food safety, human and animal health and welfare, and the environment.

Responsible ownership remains a key theme, and owners should have an awareness of the animal's welfare needs and ensure they have preventive measures in place to meet the standards of care the law requires. The Welsh Government has Codes of Practice in place for the welfare of livestock and a range of companion animals, and is committed to revising existing codes for cats, pigs, laying hens and broilers this year, working in partnership with key stakeholders. Additionally, the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds will be reviewed to bring it up to date and a voluntary code on Animal Welfare Establishments has been developed by the Animal Welfare Network Wales (AWNW). The AWNW are also developing a voluntary code for racing greyhounds and for primates and are revising the existing Welsh Government Code of Practice for the Welfare of Rabbits.

Background

Stephen James
Chair of the WAHWFG

The Wales AHWF was launched in July 2014 and sets out our ten-year overarching plan for making improvements in standards of animal health and welfare, whilst also helping to protect public health and making a contribution to the economy and the environment.

The Framework covers the health and welfare of farmed animals, companion animals, working animals, kept animals involved in sport and aquaculture. Wildlife is also covered where our actions affect their health and welfare or where there is a risk of wildlife transmitting disease to other animals or humans.

The Framework sets out five strategic outcomes:

- Wales has healthy productive animals
- Animals in Wales have a good quality of life
- People trust and have confidence in the way food is produced and the way public health is protected
- Wales has a thriving rural economy
- Wales has a high quality environment

The Wales AHWF Group was established by the 'Minister for Natural Resources and Food' in June 2014 to support the implementation of the Framework. The Wales AHWF Group strengthens the link between the Welsh Government, livestock keepers, other animal owners and industry representatives, covering the whole spectrum of animal health and welfare challenges. The members play a key role in raising and considering new issues which could impact on achieving the key outcomes of the Framework, challenge new and emerging policy, review progress of outcomes, facilitate and streamline communication of key messages to industry organisations and representative groups, and provide links to the wider agricultural and rural community.

The recently appointed new Chair of the Wales AHWF Group; Stephen James brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. He is supported by seven other members, representing a range of sectors and areas of knowledge.

The Wales AHWF Group supports the implementation of the key priorities outlined in the Framework in the following way:

- Raises and considers new issues to meet the strategic outcomes within the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework
- Considers priorities and delivery of outcomes in relation to Brexit
- Challenges and supports new and emerging policy
- Liaises with stakeholders to better inform decisions
- Continuously reviews progress to identify, deliver and facilitate related projects improvements
- Develops a communications strategy to streamline the flow of key messages and information

- Establishes and maintains links to industry organisations and representative groups, the wider agricultural and rural economy as well as to areas such as human health, education, tackling poverty etc
- Performs a representative role to act as spokespeople on animal health & welfare issues

Wales AHWF Group:
gov.wales/wales-animal-health-and-welfare-framework-group

Wales AHWF:
gov.wales/animal-health-and-welfare-framework

2017-19 Implementation Plan Review

The 2017-18 Implementation Plan was extended to cover 2018-19, and developed a number of key priorities, including taking forward the next phase of the Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Eradication Programme as well as continuing to meet our statutory obligations to safeguard the food chain and public health. Welsh Government launched its refreshed TB Eradication Programme in October 2017, which contained enhanced measures to eradicate bovine TB in Wales.

We outlined a number of priorities for animal welfare such as Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs), Animal Welfare Codes of Practice and Welfare of Animals at Time of Slaughter. Following an overwhelmingly positive response to a public consultation on draft legislation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs introduced the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill on 8 July 2019. The Bill aims to address ethical concerns by banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales and if passed would come into force in May 2020.

The concept of responsible ownership is at the heart of what we do. Animal Welfare Codes of Practice have continued to be reviewed and updated with new codes being developed in partnership with key stakeholders.

The Plan contained distinct priorities which would be undertaken by Welsh Government, and those which would be led and implemented by the Wales AHWF Group. A key focus for the Wales AHWF Group in 2017-18 included Animal Health Planning and AMR. The Wales AHWF Group continued to support the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy and established the AMR Delivery Board.

The Wales AHWF Group also successfully supported the industry to develop an application for the Rural Development Plan to secure funding for the eradication of Sheep Scab.

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (Wales) Regulations 2018 came into force on 1st October 2018, bringing domestic regulations into line with European requirements for the control and eradication of TSEs, including both Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Scrapie. The Wales AHWF Group played a valuable role in the drafting and consultative phase to ensure effective implementation.

Closer relationships were forged between the Wales AHWF Group and the Great Britain Cattle Health & Welfare Group (CHAWG) and contributions made to the work of the CHAWG Antimicrobial Usage Data Collection Sub-Group. Discussions with the Veterinary Delivery Partners in Wales, Menter a Busnes and Iechyd Da has demonstrated potential for enhancing antibiotic stewardship standards, through the provision of guidance on prescribing and dispensing for vets.

A valuable consultative role was provided by the Wales AHWF Group during the development of proposals to deliver Animal Health Planning in Wales, which informed the development of the Agriculture and Horticulture Delivery Board's (AHDB) Animal Health Planning initiative, HerdAdvance, which is funded by the Rural Development Programme and aims to help Welsh dairy farmers.

Some of the key successes of the Framework demonstrate the results of collaborative working with industry and other partners. Programmes are being worked on jointly between the Wales AHWF Group and Farming Connect, to raise awareness of and aid delivery of Framework priorities.

Further collaboration led to the development of Gwaredu BVD (an Industry-led BVD eradication scheme) and implementation is underway. Response is very encouraging with 6,999 farms having been screened across Wales for BVD so far (as at May 2019).

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and the WALES AHWF and its Implementation Plan demonstrate a commitment against all 7 goals; A prosperous Wales, A resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, A Wales of cohesive Communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a globally responsible Wales.

Table 1: Well-being Goals and the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework

To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. The Wales AHWF make a valuable contribution to these goals as outlined in Table 1.

Goal	Animal Health and Welfare Framework
A prosperous Wales	Healthy livestock kept to high standards of welfare supports marketing and trade opportunities and helps farmers increase profit margins as well as sustain and create jobs. An outbreak of animal disease incurs direct and indirect economic impacts which can lead to substantial cost and disruption.
A resilient Wales	One of the key principles underpinning the Wales AHWF is that prevention is better than cure to minimise the risk of disease through: ▪ Robust contingency planning. ▪ Robust business continuity plans. ▪ Robust and timely response to welfare incidences to negate further intensive interventions.
A healthier Wales	Preventing, controlling and eliminating animal disease contributes towards safer food and improved public health. Minimising the risk to people from diseases such as, for example, salmonella can help reduce the demand on health services, and the need for antibiotic treatment. Welsh Government is applying the 'One Health' approach by addressing human, animal and environmental aspects of the AMR threat together. Animals can also contribute to the well-being of people both mentally and physically.
A more equal Wales	Animals can play a key role in contributing towards a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic). They contribute towards the well-being of people and can help reduce social exclusion created by equality barriers such as disability, for example therapy pets and assistance dogs allow people to live fuller more inclusive lives and become a part of their wider community. Equally, those with learning or behavioural barriers may benefit from undertaking voluntary and caring work in various settings with animals, developing responsibility, communication skills and social skills. The recognition and appreciation of animals as sentient beings is essential in the promotion and development of empathy, particularly in young people.

Goal	Animal Health and Welfare Framework
A Wales of cohesive communities	Minimising the impact of animal disease helps protect rural communities by sustaining profitable farm businesses – helping to safeguard and create jobs.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Implementation of the Wales AHWF will comply with the Welsh Government's commitment towards the Welsh Language through application of the Welsh Language Standards.
A globally responsible Wales	A serious and growing concern in both veterinary medicine and global public health is AMR. There is commitment through the Wales AHWF to support the UK Government's five year AMR Strategy. To think about the long-term, working effectively with individuals, communities and each other to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act puts in place a "Sustainable Development Principle" which advises organisations on how to meet their duty under the Act. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long term challenges we are facing.

Animal health and welfare make a major contribution to the sustainability of the livestock sector, to the wider food and farming industry, and more broadly to the countryside, the environment, communities and the economy. The Wales AHWF aims to apply the Sustainable Development Principle as follows:

Long-term: The Wales AHWF has been agreed for a 10 year period, but the strategic outcomes themselves set out a longer-term vision.

Prevention: A key principle underpinning the Wales AHWF is that prevention is better than cure to minimise the risk of disease. No matter what disease we are concerned about, the basic approach is the same:

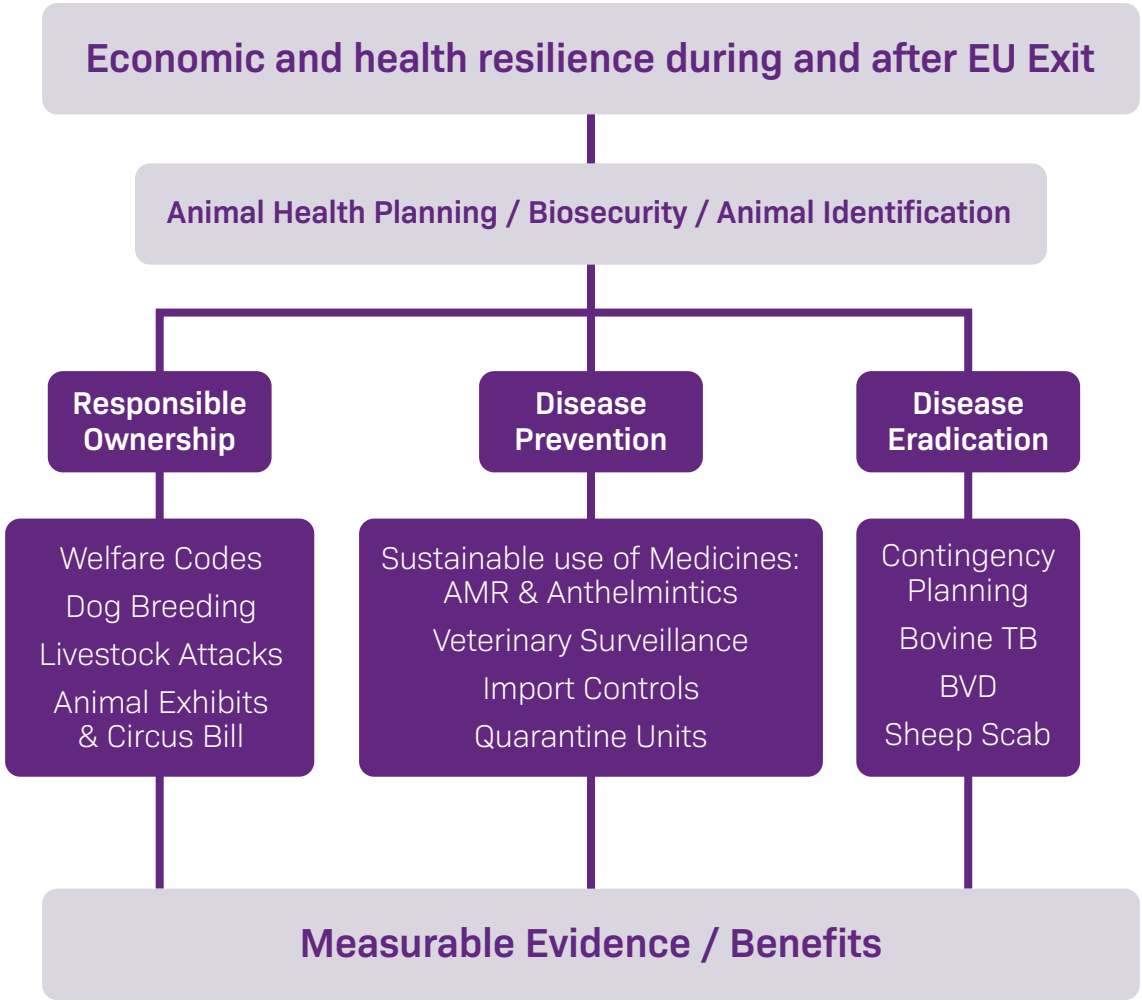
- Keep infection out
- Identify infections early
- Stop infection spreading
- Stamp infection out and/or develop programmes to manage the problem

Integration: Throughout the development of the Wales AHWF and its implementation, work has been on-going to consider how animal health and welfare policies/interventions may impact on each of the well-being goals and how this can be maximised by establishing links with other areas such as the proposed Strategic Framework for Agriculture, the Environment Act, the Economy and Public Health.

Collaboration: Crucial to the success of the Wales AHWF is increased collaborative working with industry and other partners to collect, share and use information to agree priorities, identify solutions (including low/no cost solutions) and make effective decisions to maximise impact and ensure best use of resources.

Involvement: Working in partnership is a key principle which underpins the Wales AHWF. The Welsh Government and the Wales AHWF Group are actively encouraging people to get involved to build partnership networks. These can be across Government, other administrations, delivery agencies as well as with industry representatives, livestock keepers and other animal owners.

Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group Priorities 2019/20



Implementation Plan 2019-20

Animal Health Planning

A key principle of the Wales AHWF is 'prevention is better than cure'. Prevention of disease and threats to welfare are tackled by action-focussed Animal Health Planning, which can deliver huge benefits to individual farm businesses and the wider industry. These include improved animal health and welfare standards, increased productivity and profits plus the assurance of greater business resilience. In addition, there are increasing demands from consumers for increased assurance of welfare standards. Industry advantage schemes increasingly require Animal Health Planning and annual review with veterinary involvement as an essential element.

AHDB's Animal Health Planning initiative, HerdAdvance, is funded by the Rural Development Programme, as part of the Wales Dairy Improvement Programme. Herd Advance will help about 500 Welsh dairy farmers introduce action-driven Animal Health Planning to the management of their business, until 2020. In addition to this initiative, Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) has launched Stoc Plus aimed at sheep and beef producers across Wales with an aim to enhance flock and herd health planning.

Welsh Government is supported by the Wales AHWF Group to ensure all livestock units in Wales utilise Animal Health Planning as an integral part of their business. At the heart of this concept is ensuring livestock keepers clearly understand the benefits of Animal Health Planning to their business, working with their own private vet to ensure health plans are reviewed and regularly updated to reflect the individual needs of the farm business.

What can be done?

The Wales AHWF Group have identified some key criteria for successful Animal Health Planning, which will guide all of our work in this area:

- There must be a positive relationship of trust and respect between the livestock keeper and their veterinarian, recognising that both have valuable knowledge and skills to bring to the process
- Other professionals, such as nutritionists, animal housing and genetics experts need to be consulted where appropriate
- Animal Health Planning is based on an analysis of the performance of the herd or flock, so this information must be readily available
- The analysis, conducted by the keeper and their vet, should identify a small number (for example, between one and five) of areas for improvement, with those giving the biggest potential for improved performance being prioritised
- For each, an action plan should be devised, agreed and implemented, with regular measures, reviews and revisions until the desired improvement has been achieved and maintained
- The process of performance analysis, identification of measure to improve, implementation and review then starts again. The cycle could take from weeks to several years, depending on the measure that is being addressed

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We would like to ensure all livestock units in Wales utilise Animal Health Planning as an integral part of their business. We will apply all approaches available to communicate the benefits of Animal Health Planning to farmers and vets, including the Farming Connect Programme.

Where can you find out more?

AHDB:
ahdb.org.uk/herdadvance

Hybu Cig Cymru:
hccmpw.org.uk/en

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the collective term for ensuring infections do not enter the farm and do not spread within and from it. The process of Animal Health Planning must include review of the management of farm biosecurity.

It has several components, including:

- Policies for bringing animals onto the farm: safe sourcing, risk assessment, quarantine, testing and treatment
- Farm boundaries – ensuring that diseases cannot spread across farm boundaries
- Vehicles, and equipment coming on and off the farm – entrance and routes and separation from animals; disinfection
- Effective management of fallen stock and farm waste, including animal manure and slurry, and animal feed
- People coming on and off the farm – their clothing and footwear, and contact with other livestock
- Effective management of wildlife, where they could pose a risk of disease transmission, such as keeping birds out of feed stores

Although the principles of good biosecurity are the same, modified approaches are required for the different settings in which animals are kept, for example, on farms, in markets, at shows and in transit.

Biosecurity is the responsibility of everyone, beyond Government and Industry. Individuals have a responsibility to protect themselves and the environment by taking protective steps for both themselves, and for any animals for which they have responsibility.

Good biosecurity prevents the spread of animal diseases and protects both individual farms and animal groups, and, when applied at a national level, entire countries. It also protects public health, particularly of people who live, work on and visit livestock farms and shows.

Implementation of good biosecurity practices is the first line of defence against serious notifiable infectious diseases, such as Foot and Mouth disease or Bovine TB. It should be a vital part of daily farming practice, to help ensure that animals stay healthy and businesses remain profitable.

Biosecurity remains a priority for the Wales AHWF Group as:

- It helps to protect the health and welfare of animals
- It helps to protect the health of people
- It helps industry to control and eradicate costly disease, therefore protecting the industry as a whole and reducing cost to both industry and the wider society
- It helps reduce the use of antibiotics and other pharmaceutical products
- It allows farming to continue with public access to the countryside maintained, therefore supporting local communities

The Wales AHWF Group is continuing to work in partnership with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of good biosecurity practices and the benefits these can bring.

What can be done?

The key delivery milestones for 2019-20 are to:

- Continue to progress the recommendations in the Biosecurity Survey Results Report, advise on the way forward and oversee the implementation of these recommendations
- Commission a further survey to re-assess the level of understanding of biosecurity. Compare the results with the original 2015 survey to identify areas for improvement and advise on an action plan to address these and oversee its delivery
- Review the Cattle Keepers Handbook and produce a Sheep Keepers Handbook to promote key messages and good practice
- Ensure good biosecurity remains a core element of the animal health and welfare theme within Farming Connect and any other relevant overarching strategies
- Consider equine biosecurity as part of the overarching campaign on biosecurity, working with partners to establish and promote key messages
- Ensure biosecurity is considered in any proposals developed by the Wales AHWF Group during 2019-20

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We would like to see a reduction in the incidence of disease which will reflect improvements in biosecurity measures.

Where can you find out more?

gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/biosecurity/?lang=en

gov.wales/biosecurity-guidance

gov.wales/biosecurity-survey-results

Animal Identification / Multi-Species Database Wales

The development of EID Cymru into the first multispecies traceability system for Wales represents a significant investment by the Welsh Government on behalf of the livestock sector in Wales. The benefits of the new system will enable us to get on top of disease quickly, safeguarding our export markets and reducing the costs of a disease outbreak.

Bringing together the separate systems for cattle, sheep and pigs will fulfil European requirements thus supporting the continuation of trade post-Brexit. It will improve traceability in the event of a disease outbreak and deliver significant opportunity for the Welsh red meat industry to use the improved data to benefit farmers and the wider supply chain. For example if the data is robust, patterns emerge that can allow predictive interventions based on high confidence of where animals are likely to be, likely to be going, and where hotspots are most likely to be in a given outbreak scenario. This data analysis can also be useful to industry in supply chain planning and forecasting. Linking animal movement data to health status and medicines usage will, in time, provide invaluable information supporting informed purchasing and judicious use of pharmaceutical products.

What can be done?

The Multispecies Database Wales is intended to be launched in September 2020 for bovines; sheep revisions and inclusion of pigs will follow soon after.

Separate programmes are in place in Scotland, England and Wales to replace existing livestock traceability services with new, multi-species services. Northern Ireland is also upgrading its IT infrastructure. All administrations recognise the importance of trade across the UK's internal borders and that the fact data should accompany animal movements. Welsh Government officials are working closely with all administrations to ensure, as far as possible, the development of our respective systems move forward together and the transfer of reporting arrangements from the current UK cattle and pig systems is managed effectively to ensure the highest levels of traceability.

Bovine EID

The EU Commission has published amendments to the regulations for bovine identification and registration therefore requiring bovine electronic identification. There will be a transition period

of 5 years from adoption before electronic identifiers become an official means of identification, and include derogations to control the application of electronic identifiers to existing or imported conventionally-tagged cattle. Officials are working closely with UK administrations to ensure consistency in approach and launch where possible. Welsh Government will publish a consultation later this year.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We intend to launch the Multispecies Database Wales in September 2020 for Bovines and sheep revisions and inclusion of pigs will follow soon after.

Where can you find out more?

eidcymru.org/eidcymru

What will the Wales AHWF Group do to support these objectives?

Animal Health Planning — promote the importance of Animal Health Planning through engagement with industry organisations and representative groups to ensure all livestock units in Wales utilise this as an integral part of their business.

Biosecurity — support Welsh Government to consider the metrics/measures that are potentially available with a view to recommending practical, meaningful and useful measures of biosecurity for future use. Continue to work in partnership with Welsh Government to raise awareness of good biosecurity practices and the benefits these can bring. Support the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Biosecurity Survey Results report, the commissioning of a further survey and resulting action plan, and the review of the cattle keepers handbook.

Animal Identification — support the development of the first multispecies traceability system for Wales by providing advice and guidance during the consultation phase and roll out. Encourage industry to engage with the consultation to ensure a robust but practical method of implementation is achieved. Also ensure animal health and medicine usage data is included in the programme going forward.

Responsible Ownership

Animal Welfare is a wholly devolved policy area governed primarily by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (The Act).

Under The Act, animal owners and keepers have a legal duty to care for the animals for which they are responsible, whether on a permanent or temporary basis. A person is responsible for an animal if they own it, or if they are in charge of it. Responsibility for an animal includes having an understanding of its specific health and welfare needs and having the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for the animal. Those responsible for animals must also comply with legislation, be aware of the appropriate Welfare Code of Practice and know when and where to seek qualified advice and help, e.g. from a veterinary surgeon.

The Act outlines how a responsible owner must ensure the welfare needs of their animals are met. These include the need:

- For a suitable environment (place to live)
- For a suitable diet
- To exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- To be housed with, or apart from, other animals (if applicable)
- To be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease

The legislation is broad and encompasses any animal that is normally domesticated or which is in captivity. This therefore includes wild animals if they are, for instance, kept in a zoo or used in a form of entertainment such as an Animal Exhibit.

Irresponsible pet ownership has the potential to create far reaching issues such as:

- Welfare problems for the animals
- Anti-social behaviour related to fouling and environmental issues
- Additional costs to Local Authorities
- An increased burden on welfare organisations
- Human safety issues (from disease and animal attacks)

Many of these issues appear to go beyond the scope of the Act. However, the knock-on effect of poor welfare standards must be acknowledged.

Owning an animal is a privilege, not a right and cultural change is necessary to ensure people take responsibility for their actions when choosing a pet and caring for it. It is clear that ownership of an animal has positive benefits for humans and can enhance their quality of life. The concept of responsible ownership should be enshrined in all animal welfare policy development and implementation.

Welfare Codes of Practice

The Act allows the Welsh Government to produce Codes of Practice for the welfare of companion animals and livestock. The codes are intended to encourage all those responsible for animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. The Welsh Government Codes of Practice provide guidance on how to care for a range of animals, in order to meet the standard of care the law requires. The codes outline the steps that need to be taken to ensure the animal is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease, and the role of the veterinary practitioner in the animal's care. The need for appropriate measures to be taken in terms of vaccinations, parasite control and routine care are outlined in full.

What can be done?

Codes have been published for equines, dogs, cats, rabbits, cattle, sheep, pigs, laying hens and game birds. Updated Codes for equines and dogs were published in 2018, and work is ongoing to revise existing Codes for cats, pigs, laying hens and rabbits and a new code for broilers is being drafted. Welsh Government has been working with the AWNW to produce a voluntary Code of Practice for Animal Welfare Establishments (Sanctuaries) in Wales. The AWNW are also developing a voluntary code for racing greyhounds and for primates and are revising the existing Welsh Government Code of Practice for the Welfare of Rabbits.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We would like to facilitate an improved understanding of the responsibility of animal ownership, the needs of animals and how to care for them, to reduce incidences of poor welfare.

Where can you find out more?

Codes of Practice:
gov.wales/animal-welfare

Dog Breeding / Third Party Sales

The introduction of the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014 has helped enforce our commitment to ensuring high standards of welfare at dog breeding establishments in Wales. The Regulations introduced stricter criteria for licensed breeders and include provisions for socialisation, enhancement plans and appropriate retirement of ex-breeding bitches.

Further to the Regulations, there are concerns commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens may be associated with poorer welfare conditions for the animals compared to direct purchase from the breeder. For example, this might include the introduction to several new and unfamiliar environments, and the increased likelihood of multiple journeys the puppies or kittens have to undertake. All of these can contribute to an increased risk of disease and a lack of socialisation and habituation for the puppies and kittens.

A campaign to ban third party sales of puppies "Lucy's Law" calls for an immediate ban on the sale of puppies by pet shops and other third-party commercial dealers.

The term 'commercial' means sales as part of a business, for profit. Third-party sellers are dealers; people who did not breed the dogs and who operate as 'middlemen' between the breeders and the buying public.

Currently, puppies and kittens can either be purchased via a third-party seller, directly from a breeder, or from a rescue/ rehoming centre. There are no national records of the number of puppies and kittens sold via third-parties but it is estimated between 40,000 and 80,000 puppies are sold this way in Great Britain per year.

What can be done?

A consultation to gather information on the supply chain of puppies and kittens was launched in February 2019 and ran until 17th May 2019.

Over 300 responses were received and these will help identify areas where Welsh Government intervention could have the greatest impact. Proposals will be presented to the Minister in autumn 2019.

Any proposed changes in policy or legislation will be subject to a full impact assessment and further consultation with stakeholders and industry representatives.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Officials will take account of key findings and recommendations received through the consultation process and proposals will be provided to the Minister later this year. Our aim is to ensure the highest standards of health and welfare of puppies and kittens sold within Wales. We would like to see a resulting reduction in cases of poor welfare relating to breeding and the early lives of dogs and cats as evidenced from information from veterinary surgeons and welfare organisations.

Where can you find out more?

Consultation:
gov.wales/third-party-sales-puppies-and-kittens

Livestock Attacks

The legislation on this subject is a mixture of devolved and non-devolved elements, but the specific issue of the enforcement by the police of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 is non-devolved. Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, a dog owner commits an offence if their dog worries livestock on agricultural land. In fields or enclosures where there are sheep, a dog must be kept on a lead or otherwise under close control.

The Welsh Government introduced a legislative requirement for all dogs to be microchipped from aged 8 weeks via the Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015 which should assist traceability of any straying or unaccompanied dogs. This is in addition to the

requirement for a dog to have a collar and a tag with a contact telephone number.

What can be done?

The increase in livestock attacks and the cost, not only financially but emotionally for those who own or find dead and injured livestock, are wholly unacceptable, as are the animal welfare implications. We take the issue of responsible animal ownership and dogs attacks, whether on agricultural land or not, very seriously.

We are committed to tackling rural crime in Wales. We particularly value and support the work and commitment of the North Wales Police Rural Crime Team and the partnership working established with the Welsh Government to help combat rural and wildlife crime.

Welsh Government officials are members of the UK wide National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Livestock Offences Group with other key stakeholders including Farmers Union of Wales (FUW), National Farmers Union (NFU) and Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and will continue to work in a collaborative way to tackle this serious issue. The NPCC Livestock Offences Group is awaiting Crown Prosecution Service opinion on the use of alternative legislation to deal with dog attacks on livestock.

What would we like to achieve?

Tackling this issue requires joint working and cannot be achieved through legislation alone. Owning a dog is a privilege and not a right, and owners must commit to the responsibility of ensuring their animals are properly socialised.

The promotion of responsible ownership remains a key priority for the Welsh Government. We produce a number of Codes of Practice for pets and farm animals, including dogs. The updated code of practice for the welfare of dogs, published in November 2018, reminds owners of their obligations relating to controlling their pets and the governing legislation.

The Welsh Government works closely with agricultural and countryside organisations such as the NFU Cymru, FUW and Countryside Alliance to name but a few. These organisations regularly run campaigns, particularly prior to the lambing season, to encourage dog owners to be responsible. AWNW, who ran an excellent campaign last year called Animals, Land and You, are reproducing their signage for farmers advising dog owners to;

- Be aware their dogs can scare or harm farm animals
- Put their dog on a lead around farm animals
- Take home their waste

These signs will be available free of charge, at Wynnstay stores, via members of AWNW and also at events such as the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in July.

We will continue to work with counterparts in England to ensure any changes in legislation are relevant to the devolved powers of Wales.

Where can you find out more?

gov.wales/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs

Animal Exhibits and the Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill

There are concerns welfare standards are not routinely being assessed in Animal Exhibits (AEs). In 2017 we launched a public consultation on the introduction of a licensing or registration scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAE's). We also asked for views on banning the use of wild animals in circuses.

What can be done?

Following the consultation, the Minister announced her intention to introduce a licensing scheme for MAEs in Wales, the implementation of which will have a lasting impact on the welfare of the animals used in such exhibits, and on the attitudes of future generations of animal owners in Wales.

A review of the MAE policy scope was undertaken in April 2019 prior to the drafting of the Regulations. The purpose of the review was to assess

the relationship of the policy to other existing and potential pieces of work. A decision was made to widen the scope to include all Animal Exhibits which meet a given criteria and a full public consultation on draft Regulations is due to take place in summer 2019.

The licensing scheme will provide for checks to be made to ensure good welfare standards are maintained and that animals are exhibited in a way that encourages respectful and responsible attitudes towards all species.

There are no circuses using wild animals based in Wales, but they do visit, and each time they do there are renewed calls to ban the practice. In July 2018, the First Minister made an Oral Statement on The Legislative Programme, announcing a Bill to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses would be brought before the Assembly in the next 12 months. Following an overwhelmingly positive response to a public consultation on this draft legislation, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs introduced the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill on 8 July 2019. The Bill aims to address ethical concerns by banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales.

What would we like to achieve?

A ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. Travelling circuses have toured the United Kingdom for over two hundred years and will continue to be welcome in Wales, provided they do not use wild animals.

Where can you find out more?

Welsh Government Consultations, Mobile Animal Exhibits**: beta.gov.wales/mobile-animal-exhibits**

Welsh Government Consultations, Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill **beta.gov.wales/wild-animals-travelling-circuses-wales-bill**

What will the Wales AHWF Group do to support these objectives?

Responsible Ownership — perform a representative role as spokespeople on animal health and welfare issues, supporting educational and behavioural change.

Provide a consultative role to Welsh Government to;

- Revise existing codes of practice and produce a new code of practice for Animal Welfare Establishments (Sanctuaries) in conjunction with AWNW
- Develop proposals for ensuring stringent standards of health and welfare for commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens
- Develop a licensing scheme for Animal Exhibits

Disease Prevention

The Wales AHWF Group will continue to promote protection against the incursion and spread of infectious animal diseases and the importance of contingency planning to deal with a possible disease outbreak in Wales, including exotic notifiable diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Avian Influenza and Bluetongue. The need to ensure resilience and safeguard our agricultural economy is essential during this transitional period of leaving the European Union.

The Wales AHWF Group will continue to engage with delivery agencies, agricultural industry, third sector agencies and rural community stakeholders to provide evidence and advice to support the development of Welsh Government policy, to continue to reduce the risk of animal disease outbreaks and the potential economic and operational disruption.

The Wales AHWF Group is committed to supporting the mitigation of the negative impact animal disease could have on the ability to market Welsh produce in future trade opportunities and the development and promotion of Welsh provenance.

Sustainable Use of Medicines – Antimicrobial Resistance and Anthelmintics

Animal medicines play an important role in the control and prevention of disease and animal suffering. They have the potential to cause harm if not used properly. In the UK, consumers have long enjoyed the benefits of rigorous systems designed to protect them from harmful residues of medicines in their food. These include statutory controls on the authorisation, distribution and use of medicines.

Antimicrobial Resistance

Antibiotics are vital medicines in both human and animal health. AMR is a serious concern and the responsible use of antibiotics in all sectors, including livestock production, is needed to help tackle the problem. Antibiotics should not be used as a substitute for good farm management. The habitual use of antibiotics to prevent disease is not a responsible use of these important medicines.

The rise and spread of AMR poses a threat to the ability to control infections in people and also in animals. The impacts of leaving AMR unchecked are wide-ranging and extremely costly, not only in financial terms but also in terms of global health, food security, environmental wellbeing and socioeconomic development.

AMR is a growing concern for animal health and a major threat to global public health. Antibiotics provide the only effective means of treatment for a number of animal diseases and are therefore essential to ensure the health and welfare of animals. Veterinary Medicine (including antibiotic) Regulation currently is set by an EU Directive implemented into UK law by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

In response to the threat of AMR, in 2013 the UK Government published a five year strategy to address AMR taking a fully integrated, cross-sectoral approach. In Wales, a five year AMR Delivery Plan for the NHS was developed to deliver the ambitions of the strategy.

A new UK Five Year National Action Plan (NAP) 2019 – 2024 was launched by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, at the World Economic Forum in January 2019.

The Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs jointly wrote to the UK Government to give their approval and support for the UK AMR 20 year vision and 5 year action plan.

This will build on the achievements of the 2013-2018 strategy and sets out challenging ambitions and actions for the next five years, importantly, adopting a One-Health approach across humans, animals and the environment.

What can be done?

The Animal and Environment AMR Delivery Group for Wales, was established on the 13 May 2019. The AMR Delivery Group recommended an Animal and Environment AMR Implementation Plan to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, which was agreed and published in July.

The new AMR Implementation Plan and Delivery Group will deliver Wales' contribution to the UK Five Year National Action Plan. It will work closely with medical and public health counterparts in Wales to ensure a fully joined-up, "One Health" approach to addressing the threat of antibiotic resistance.

The Wales AHWF Group's goals over the next five years are to:

- Reduce the need for use of antibiotics in animals through prevention of infections
- Minimise the development and spread of antibiotic resistance in the environment
- Optimise the sustainable use of antibiotics in animals
- Ensure adequate surveillance capability to provide the information required to control antibiotic resistance
- Collaborate with others to deliver effective antibiotics in the future

The rise and spread of AMR poses a serious threat to the ability to control infections in healthcare settings, in the wider community and in animals.

It is hoped that a co-ordinated approach between government, animal keepers and veterinarians will prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases and reduce the need for antibiotics used to treat them.

The Animal and Environment AMR Delivery Group will report both to the Wales AHWF Group and to the Wales Healthcare-associated infection / AMR Steering Group, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales as a member.

Welsh Government is working with the NHS Wales and Public Health Wales on awareness raising and education on the appropriate use of antibiotics. The Wales AHWF Group is represented on the CHAWG sub group on the collection of Antibiotic Usage Data.

The emphasis should be on promoting sustainability: good farm management, biosecurity, appropriate vaccination strategies and hygiene practices are vital to minimise the occurrence of disease and therefore reduce the need for antibiotic use.

An important and constructive development in the control of antimicrobial resistance is the inclusion in the major farm assurance schemes in Wales of a new requirement to review antimicrobial use. This review is done at least annually, jointly by the livestock keeper and their veterinarian. It includes planning to ensure optimal use of antibiotics for all species (and of anthelmintics for sheep and beef cattle only). The new annual review requirement of the Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Scheme (FAWL) provides a means for veterinary advice on the control of anthelmintic resistance to sheep and beef farm units that have previously had minimal veterinary inputs.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

A reduction in antimicrobial drug usage with an improvement in health standards and continued assurance of good welfare standards, with continued access to appropriate antimicrobials when necessary.

For regular Animal Health Planning and annual veterinary reviews to become an integral part of the management of livestock farms in Wales.

Where can you find out more?

gov.wales/animal-and-environment-antimicrobial-resistance-delivery-group

wlbp.co.uk/index.php/en

Anthelmintics

The routine use of highly effective anthelmintics (wormers) combined with grazing management has controlled parasitic worms successfully in the majority of UK sheep flocks for many years. However, the reliance on these treatments has led to the development of resistance to the anthelmintics used. Increasing numbers of flocks are finding several of the treatments used are no longer effective in eradicating some worm species.

Resistance to the oldest three classes of anthelmintics was detected in sheep flocks in Wales during a study completed in 2015. Two newer classes of anthelmintics are licensed for sheep in the UK and are advised to be used for quarantine and as a mid-season treatment to prolong the efficacies of the other anthelmintic classes.

The Wales AHWF Group recognise anthelmintic resistance is an increasing threat to all sheep farms and also that sheep scab is seen as a major threat contributing to this issue.

What can be done?

The Centre of Expertise for Extensively Managed Livestock has been established at the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) Carmarthen Veterinary Investigation Centre. The Centre provides laboratory capability to diagnose parasitic disease and to determine resistance to anthelmintics. It significantly strengthens our resilience to address the challenges of anthelmintic resistance.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Welsh Government would like to achieve the following outcomes;

- For parasitic diseases to be effectively prevented, or at least controlled, in Wales
- For anthelmintics to be used only when necessary, and to prevent parasite diseases rather than to cure them
- To ensure that the right anthelmintic is given at the time to the right animals

These will benefit the animals at risk of disease, their owners (who will benefit financially through increased production and reduced spending on ineffective treatments) and the environment through minimising harmful impact of anthelmintics excreted by treated animals.

All of this should be done by good, action-led Animal Health Planning, as a joint endeavour between the livestock keeper and their veterinarian.

We intend to work with farm assurance schemes to gather information, for the first time, on the use of anthelmintics on Welsh sheep and beef farms.

We will also make use of opportunities from existing engagement activities with livestock-keepers (such as Farming Connect knowledge exchange meetings), to gather information and seek feedback and ideas.

Where can you find out more?

Sheep
scops.org.uk

Cattle
Promoting Sustainable Control of Cattle Parasites - COWS - cattleparasites.org.uk

Veterinary Surveillance

There are four principles of ensuring the control of infectious diseases;

1. Keep it out
2. Detect it early (surveillance)
3. Stop it spreading
4. Eliminate it

Veterinary surveillance provides prompt detection and investigation of new or re-emerging animal diseases, identifying threats to animal health and welfare. It also allows us to understand the patterns of disease and monitor the health of animal populations. In summary, it enables;

- Early detection of new and re-emerging animal-related threats, including prompt detection of notifiable diseases
- Identification of threats of animal origin to human health and to food safety, so enabling public health protection
- Monitoring of trends of endemic diseases, to inform their control
- Detection of changes to how diseases manifest themselves in animal populations
- An analysis of how threats have developed (epidemiology)
- Assurance of farm-level and national animal health status required to enable international trade

Diseases and the agents that cause them are ever-changing requiring surveillance to be a constant endeavour.

Disease surveillance is undertaken in one of two main ways:

Active surveillance

This is the approach taken when the threat is known, and the aim to identify how much of it is present, or to better understand its distribution. It is delivered by structured surveys or studies. For example, the regular surveys of salmonellosis in poultry farms. It is a top-down, planned activity in which the investigation is designed by the nature and scope of the disease. Active surveillance is usually commissioned through regulatory requirements, and is delivered largely by the APHA.

Scanning surveillance (also referred to as passive or early warning surveillance)

Is the approach taken to detect unknown threats, such as the presence of new diseases or a change in patterns of existing diseases. The person responsible for the animal must report detection of symptoms and instigate a veterinary diagnosis.

Laboratory and post mortem examinations (PME) tend to be important for effective scanning surveillance providing diagnostic knowledge for the owner and their vet. It cannot deliver statistically valid data, as with active surveillance, however, it is the only way of detecting new threats. For farmed animals, scanning surveillance is delivered by the APHA and their expert PME providers, through provision of diagnostic services to veterinary practices.

Our goal is to ensure that Wales has the capability and capacity for effective surveillance to enable threats to be detected, characterised and managed effectively. This requires the participation of:

- Livestock keepers
- The wider food chain
- Vets in clinical practice
- Laboratory and PME diagnostic services
- Data analysts
- Policy owners

What can be done?

Welsh Government will continue to undertake the following steps:

- Liaise with Defra to ensure that scanning surveillance delivery in England and Wales detects significant risks to animal health and welfare, through the Scanning Surveillance Delivery Project
- Through the UK Surveillance Forum, work with other Administrations to provide an overview of the UK's animal disease surveillance requirements, and to ensure they are delivered
- Support APHA's Surveillance Engagement Project to raise the awareness of the importance and benefits of surveillance among livestock keepers and vets in Wales.
- Continue to collaborate with APHA on the continuing development of their Centre of Expertise in Carmarthen
- Work with APHA and Defra to ensure contracts for private sector contributions to scanning surveillance in Wales (PME provision and carcase transport for PME) build on past successes and deliver improvements for the future

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Our outcomes are as follows:

- Ensure the prompt detection of significant threats to animal health and welfare, and of animal-related threats to public health
- Monitor the major infectious diseases of livestock in Wales, in order to support our AMR control goals
- Continue to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of and requirements for surveillance among key stakeholders
- Progress will be monitored through a suite of measures of scanning surveillance developed by the APHA, including monitoring of surveillance coverage in Wales.

We will undertake work to determine how best to monitor engagement with the surveillance system and are working closely with the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

Where can you find out more?

apha.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/surveillance/index.htm

bva.co.uk/news-campaigns-and-policy/policy/animal-disease-surveillance/disease-surveillance

Import Controls

The Welsh Government has implemented various measures designed to ensure imported animals and products of animal origin do not present unacceptable risks to public and/or animal health. This is one of our most critical and frontline defence systems to protect Wales and our farming industry from the incursion of exotic animal disease threats ("keep infection out"), and the veterinary surveillance (discussed above) is undertaken at an international level to inform the import controls we have in place. This enables us to take emergency safeguard action, such as restrict or ban imports from countries which have confirmed an outbreak of animal disease. In preparation for EU Exit, we have been working hard to ensure EU trade rules are included within our domestic disease controls going forward, and that our animals are protected from disease, but also that our trading position as an exporter is also maintained and enhanced.

Physical and document checks are undertaken on all animals and animal products from non-EU countries in approved facilities before they enter the UK and additional document checks and health requirements must be met before animals from the EU can arrive. Through such checks, we have been able to take effective steps on the importation of cattle and sheep that may carry the Bluetongue virus. The Welsh Government has since taken pro-active steps to remind industry that it is in their interest to source imported animals from countries and regions that are free from disease.

This extends beyond livestock, and our companion animals are also protected from the risk of animal disease, including rabies. All dogs, cats and ferrets entering the UK must be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies, travel with an approved carrier and be accompanied by either a Pet Passport or an official third country veterinary certificate. The UK maintains a high level of protection against rabies.

Every dog entering the UK must be vaccinated and a robust checking regime is in place to make sure that pets entering the UK do not pose a risk to animal or human health.

There are a wide number of pathogens of potential concern in the importation of companion animals from abroad, some of which are zoonoses. The risk attributed to these diseases will vary according to large number of factors, including both the biology of the pathogen and the geographical region from which the animal is sourced. Only one of those diseases is currently notifiable – rabies, and that risk is addressed by the requirement of compulsory vaccination and certification by the vet when it has been done. Those rules are specified in PET Travel Scheme.

Some of the key pathogens of concern are:

- Distemper
- Canine babesiosis
- Leishmaniasis
- Brucellosis canis
- Echinococcus multilocularis
- Tongue worm – Linguatula serrata
- Eye worm – Thelazia callipaeda
- Heartworm (Dirofilaria immitis).

Diseases such as distemper, canine babesiosis, leishmaniasis, and heartworm can be harboured by dogs that show no signs of the disease at the time of travel. Those diseases are potential life-threatening exotic diseases not traditionally seen in the UK. Dogs that are asymptomatic carriers are sometimes referred as “Trojan” dogs.

What can be done?

The importation of companion animals, in particular dogs, has seen a recent increase. When an individual seeks to import an animal from a different population, they should consider differences in the health status in the source and destination populations and take the appropriate actions to prevent the importation of pathogens from one to the other. They have a duty of care, not only to ensure the welfare of the animal, but also to the wider population which is potentially at risk.

Stringent penalties are in place for those that breach the law by smuggling dogs or using false documentation. The Welsh Government works closely with operational partners and voluntary organisations, sharing information and jointly considering what enforcement options are appropriate and how they may be achieved. This has included close involvement in multi-agency operations targeted at illegal animal importation of puppies from the Republic Of Ireland.

The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with our operational partners and stakeholders to deal with illegal animal imports and highlight the disease risks and welfare issues posed by smuggling animals. The public has a role to play in keeping the risk of diseases such as rabies low, by ensuring informed purchasing of puppies from reputable sources.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

We would like to facilitate a greater awareness and understanding of how importing animals could pose a risk to public and/or animal health and the steps that should be taken to mitigate against this.

Where can you find out more?

gov.uk/take-pet-abroad

Quarantine Units

Standstill controls, with some exceptions, require a six day standstill period (6DSS) to be observed when cattle, sheep and goats are moved onto a holding. This will prevent animals moving from the holding, except for movements direct to slaughter. Pigs moving onto a holding will trigger a 20 day standstill, due to the higher risk they represent.

In May 2015, the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food and the Minister for Natural Resources, agreed to the introduction of a general exemption to the 6DSS for cattle, sheep and goats for farms using approved Quarantine Units (QUs). The decision was informed by a business case which assessed the benefits, costs and risks for different options for delivery of QUs.

A QU is a biosecure enclosure to house animals moving onto a farm from a market or other holding, or for animals returning from an agricultural show or market. QUs have been designed to strike a balance between flexibility of movement and maintaining a high standard of biosecurity to help prevent the spread of disease.

A set of operational rules and standards guarantee the highest level of biosecurity for the farm and restrict contact between quarantined animals and animals on the main holding.

A milestone review of the QU scheme was undertaken in 2018 to consider the impact of QUs on show attendance. Nine recommendations were made with the aim of making it easier for farmers to obtain and maintain a QU and to simplify and better communicate the relevant guidance. The Wales AHWF Group will work with Welsh Government to deliver the recommendations throughout 2019-20. The first of the recommendations relating to improved communications and clarification of QU guidance have now been completed.

What can be done?

The key delivery milestones for 2019-20 are to:

- Explore the remaining recommendations compiled following the Milestone Review of the QU scheme.
- Implement the changes and recommendations that will benefit farmers' operating/ considering taking up the scheme.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

The aim is to make the QU scheme more straightforward for farmers to operate, and raise the profile of the scheme amongst the farming community as an effective biosecurity tool that will also allow farms to operate flexibly during periods of peak animal movements, and during the show season. We would like to see an increasing number of QUs being registered as a result, and their use becoming part of the biosecurity regime for introducing new livestock onto a holding. The operation of QUs in this way will help lead the way in improving attitudes and approaches to general farm biosecurity.

Progress will be monitored through the Livestock Identification Advisory Group, overall monitoring of the Working Smarter Report and the Milestone Review targets.

Where can you find out more?

gov.wales/what-quarantine-unit

What will the Wales AHWF Group do to support these objectives?

Antimicrobial Resistance: provide representation on the Animal and Environment AMR Delivery Group for Wales, supporting the development of the 'Animal and Environment Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Implementation Plan for Wales'.

Anthelmintics: utilise links with industry to support investigatory work to understand the nature and scale of the use of anthelmintics on Welsh sheep and beef farms, and provide expert advice and guidance on resultant proposals.

Veterinary Surveillance: engage with delivery agencies, agricultural agencies, third sector agencies and rural community stakeholders to facilitate a greater awareness and understanding of the importance of effective surveillance.

Quarantine Units: provide a consultative role to explore and deliver the recommendations following the milestone review of the scheme, making them easier to operate and more widely utilised across Wales.

Disease Eradication

Animal diseases are a constant threat to the livestock, poultry and captive bird sectors in Wales and an outbreak can have a devastating effect on industry, rural communities and the economy of Wales. Also, for zoonotic diseases (transferrable to humans e.g. salmonella, rabies) there is the potential for public health impacts.

As outlined, steps to prevent disease in the first instance should always be taken, but when disease does occur action must be taken to control and eradicate the disease and to limit the impacts it has. For those diseases present within Wales, there are controls and monitoring procedures in place to determine the prevalence of the disease and to prevent risk to the food chain and public health.

Notifiable Diseases

Notifiable diseases are those diseases which require legislation to ensure their effective control, and if suspected, must be reported to the APHA immediately for further investigation. Diseases may become notifiable because their occurrence may have serious consequences on public health, our international trading position and the wider society as a whole, including considerable economic cost in trying to eradicate once present. Legislation allows for a co-ordinated approach to eradication, which should give greater chance of overall eradication.

Notifiable diseases can be:

- Endemic – already present in the UK, such as bovine TB
- Exotic – not normally present in the UK, such as foot and mouth disease

Some endemic and exotic diseases are zoonotic which means they can pass between animals and humans, such as rabies.

Non-notifiable Diseases

In addition to those diseases that are controlled by legislation, there are other animal disease risks that are non-notifiable, because they pose no risk to human health, international trade or wider society, and can be managed more effectively with traditional practice based controls, as opposed to legislation. That is not to say however that such diseases are without impact. BVD and mastitis all have a significant impact on the production of those animals affected. It is therefore in the interest of owners to protect their stock from such diseases and treat them effectively should they be present on their holding. As well as affecting profits, such diseases are detrimental to the welfare of the animals and owners have a responsibility to ensure their animals are neither in pain nor suffering from the health implications of these diseases on their animals.

Whilst the responsibility of owners, the Welsh Government welcome the work of industry where it is acknowledged that individual control of such diseases are not working, and that coordinated, whole of Wales based approaches are needed to tackle a disease threat. The Welsh Government wishes to support Industry in their endeavours, to ensure successful outcomes, and has actively supported programmes as the Gwaredu BVD programme and is encouraging Industry to produce collaborative solutions to eradicate sheep scab.

Contingency Planning

Having effective contingency plans in place ensures that we maintain a state of readiness to deal with animal disease to minimise the impact, contain disease spread and eradicate disease quickly to enable recovery.

The Welsh Government's Contingency Plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals sets out the organisation and systems necessary to respond to a notifiable exotic animal disease outbreak, including the roles and responsibilities of government, stakeholders and operational partners. This Plan is updated regularly.

The effectiveness of this Contingency Plan depends on how quickly the first incident of disease can be identified. Government vets monitor the global disease picture and conduct surveillance to identify threats quickly and ensure an effective response to a disease outbreak. However, this activity must be supported by vigilance on the part of all animal keepers who will have regular contact with their animals and are in the best position to notice any changes in their health or behaviour.

Keepers should regularly inspect their animals, looking for anything unusual. If animal keepers, with advice from their private vets, suspect a notifiable animal disease they should act quickly and notify the APHA (0300 303 8268). Detecting a disease early is vitally important in limiting spread.

What can be done?

Animal keepers should maintain high levels of biosecurity to protect their livestock. The smallest detail can have a real benefit, whether it is ensuring clothing and vehicles are clean, maintaining field boundaries, repairing breaches and making informed livestock purchasing decisions. Improved biosecurity together with vigilance are important in protecting animals in Wales from disease.

As such, with any notifiable disease outbreak, both government and industry have a vital role in controlling and eradicating it. The Welsh Government will continue to work in partnership with the Wales AHWF Group, the farming industry, veterinary profession, operational partners and other stakeholders as their advice and support is essential in ensuring the risk and impact of animal diseases are minimised.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Increased vigilance by keepers will ensure a quick response to any exotic notifiable disease, ensuring that we can minimise the impact and spread of the disease and eradicate it promptly.

Where can you find out more?

Contingency Plan:
gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/welsh-government-contingency-plan-for-exotic-notifiable-diseases-of-animals-2018.pdf.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Bovine TB is caused by a bacterium (M bovis) and can affect all mammals. The risk to public health is kept low because of regular testing of cattle, milk pasteurisation and post mortem examination at abattoirs. Nevertheless, the disease has a significant impact on farms and the agricultural economy. There is no treatment for infected cattle. Since 2010 every herd in Wales has been tested on an annual basis with the aim of identifying infection before cattle show any clinical signs of illness. This helps to remove infected cattle before they have chance to infect others. Eradication of bovine TB is only possible through a combination of measures aimed at all the sources of infection (domestic animals and wildlife).

What can be done?

The Welsh TB Eradication Programme was introduced in 2008 and since then, measures aimed at tackling the disease have progressively

been introduced and built upon, with a refreshed Programme being launched in 2017. An overarching Programme document set out its foundations, core values and key policies, and a Delivery Plan detailed measures and enhancements being adopted on an all-Wales and regional basis.

The refreshed TB Eradication Programme in 2017 established Low, Intermediate and High TB Areas as part of the regional approach to TB eradication. Establishing these areas has allowed us to implement more focussed control measures and set target dates for each region to become TB free.

The Programme allows flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to emerging disease situations, for example in the Intermediate TB Area North (ITBAN) where we have put in place additional eradication measures in response to a spike in disease incidence.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

The Welsh Government recognises TB eradication is a long term objective. It is anticipated the measures contained within the Programme will lead to sustained reductions in TB incidence and prevalence and eventually the eradication of bovine TB in Wales.

TB eradication targets for Wales and interim targets for each TB region were announced in December 2017 – which, if achieved, will see Wales become officially TB free between 2036 and 2041. This will contribute towards the achievement of all of the strategic outcomes within the WALES AHWF.

Where can you find out more?

TB Hub: **tbhub.co.uk**

Data is published monthly on the number of new herd incidents and numbers of cattle slaughtered in Wales. A comparison is made to the figures of previous months to give an indication of the direction of disease prevalence. gov.wales/incidence-tuberculosis-tb-cattle-great-britain

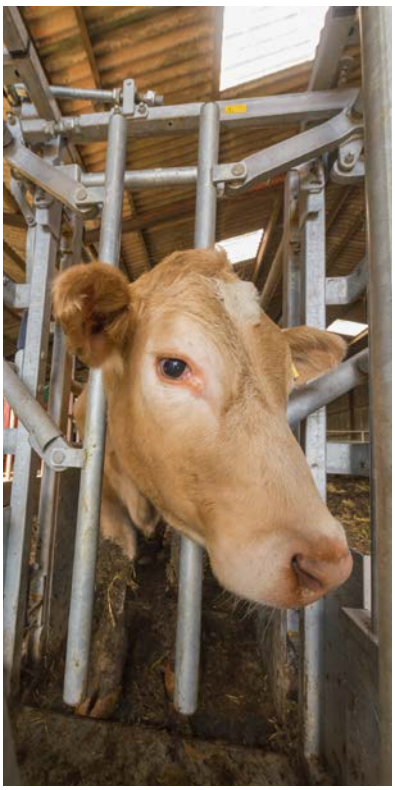
TB Dashboard: **gov.wales/bovine-tb-dashboard**

TB Surveillance Report: **gov.wales/bovine-tb-annual-surveillance-reports**

TB Overview: **gov.wales/bovine-tb-0**

Eradication Programme: **gov.wales/bovine-tb-eradication-programme**

Delivery Plan: **gov.wales/wales-bovine-tb-eradication-programme-delivery-plan**



Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

BVD is a viral infection of cattle which can cause a variety of clinical outcomes ranging from sub-clinical infections to more severe symptoms, including abortion, infertility, reduced resistance against other infections in the herd and the fatal Mucosal Disease. BVD is maintained by a small population of animals that become "persistently infected" with the virus. Persistently infected (PI) animals are the major reservoir of BVD, becoming infected whilst in the uterus during early pregnancy. Such infections remain throughout the pregnancy and after birth, for the lifetime of the animal.

BVD impacts on production with the potential for significant economic consequences to cattle producers and also has animal welfare implications. Eradicating BVD in Wales will bring significant benefits not just to standards of animal health and welfare, but also in reducing the impact on production and the serious economic costs to farm businesses.

Establishing a BVD Eradication Scheme for Wales has been a priority of the Wales AHWF Group for the past 3 years and remains so. An industry group established under the WALES AHWF Group, led the work to develop the scheme entitled 'Animal Health and Welfare Wales - Gwaredu BVD' and secured funding of nearly £10million from the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-20 to deliver the programme of eliminating BVD from Wales.

What can be done?

Gwaredu BVD is a three year voluntary screening programme, which is available to all Welsh cattle herds. The screening is undertaken at the same time as the TB testing. This is supplemented with veterinary advice and support to identify and remove any PI cattle from within the herd as required. The scheme consists of a voluntary testing phase for 3 years with a view to considering introducing legislation in year 4 that would require compulsory testing.

Now in its second year, all cattle keepers in Wales are encouraged to participate in the programme.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

The complete eradication of BVD from Welsh herds and the reassurance of freedom from BVD would provide significant financial benefits to the industry, and enhance the health of cattle in Wales.

To date some 6,999 cattle herds have been screened (May 2019) for BVD since the launch of the programme in September 2017. Continued updates on scheme take-up and on the findings of the disease across Wales will help monitor scheme participation and disease prevalence across Wales.

Where can you find out more?

Animal Health & Welfare Wales: **ahww.cymru/en**

Sheep Scab

Sheep Scab is one of the most contagious diseases of sheep in Wales and eradicating it remains a priority. It is caused by a mite which lives on the surface of the skin. Their droppings cause an allergic reaction which results in intense irritation meaning the animal stops grazing and loses condition. In addition to these health and welfare implications, there are significant financial impacts for the industry resulting from the disease.

Sheep Scab is the responsibility of the sheep industry to control. Flock owners and sheep keepers are legally obliged to treat and control sheep scab in their flocks. Local Authorities have a duty to improve the control of sheep scab when owners of affected sheep do not take appropriate measures.

The Wales AHWF Group commissioned a report undertaken by Bristol University to determine the extent of the disease across Wales. This report provided an evidence base which gave an indication of prevalence of disease and also identified hot spot areas across Wales where Sheep Scab is most concentrated.

Sheep Scab is an increasing threat to the national flock, with an increase in its prevalence over recent years, combined with a misunderstanding and incorrect application of correct treatment. As the disease is taking hold, it has become a larger and more difficult issue to tackle effectively on an individual basis, and the Wales AHWF Group understands the need for a collaborative approach to try and control it.

The Sheep Scab sub-group of the Wales AHWF Group has since published a report outlining the problem and a potential solution for industry.

What can be done?

On 7 January 2019, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, announced £5m

has been made available through the Rural Development Programme to help Industry eradicate sheep scab. This will be subject to application via fair and open competition, and the Wales AHWF Group will be vital in ensuring any eradication plan is delivered effectively.

What outcomes would we like to achieve?

Sheep Scab is a serious problem, and has increased in its prevalence and severity since compulsory dipping ended. Control of the disease is vital and eradicating it completely has the potential to deliver significant lasting economic benefits for the sector at a particularly challenging time.

Progress can be measured by monitoring the fall in prevalence or by number of flocks that received the treatment, which is dependent on the eradication scheme adopted.

Where can you find out more?

Overview:
gov.wales/sheep-scab-0

SCOPS: **scops.org.uk/external-parasites/scab**

What will the Wales AHWF Group do to support these objectives?

Contingency Planning: continue to play a vital role in our response to the control and eradication of any notifiable disease outbreak, as part of a wider partnership approach with Welsh Government, industry, the veterinary profession, operational partners and other stakeholders

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB): aid the implementation of the refreshed TB eradication programme, building on success and speeding up progress by improving the evidence base and enhancing measures further.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD): encourage cattle keepers to participate in the Gwaredu BVD scheme to support Welsh Government's vision of ensuring 100% of all Welsh cattle herds are screened.

Sheep Scab: support the implementation and delivery of the industry-led project to eradicate Sheep Scab, proving advice and input to Welsh Government and industry as part of a collaborative approach.

Contact details

Find the latest information on the Framework and the Wales AHWF Group at: **gov.wales/farmed-animal-strategy**

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