



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE)

Activity Report for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

June 2023

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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Introduction from Lord Benyon, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



I am pleased to introduce the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) report for 2020, 2021 and 2022. Since 2011 the board has worked with ministers, officials and external partners to improve the health and welfare of animals, providing key strategic advice on a broad range of global issues and challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the largest ever outbreak of

avian influenza. The work of the board has influenced policy across these areas, and in doing so has made a significant contribution to the health and welfare of animals – both on farm and companion – across England.

I was delighted to welcome the new non-executive directors who joined the board in late 2021 and to congratulate Jonathan Statham, a previous non-executive director, on his appointment as the new chair. This report covers the first full year in their respective roles, during which, among much more, they have contributed to the future farming pathway, impact of current global events and the effects on food security, the supply chain and impacts on the cost of living, avian influenza and the government's food strategy white paper. All are of great importance to this country, and I have been impressed with their professionalism expertise and dedication.

I am grateful to all board members, both past and present including Michael Seals who was awarded a CBE in the 2022 New Year's Honour list for his work as Chair of the Board. This was not achieved without the support and considerable commitment of all board members, to advancing the cause of health and welfare of the animals in this country for whom we have a responsibility. Our country has a long tradition of caring for animals with welfare a high priority for the British public. We will continue to work hard to raise our standards and enhance welfare and biosecurity. The board's expertise and commitment has never been more crucial.

Lord Benyon, Minister of State (Minister for Biosecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs)

Introduction from Jonathan Statham, Chair of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England



As the current Chair of the Board, I am proud to introduce the AHWBE Activity Report which covers a 3-year period from 2020 to 2022. I took up my role as the Chair of the Board in October 2021, having previously been a non-executive director of the Board for 5 years before that. I have gained valuable insight and experience working closely with government officials, Ministers, and external partners alike to contribute to the formulation and delivery of key animal health and welfare policies.

The years covered in this report have brought massive challenge from the COVID-19, the changes brought about by leaving the EU, the war in Ukraine including its impact on supply chain, cost of living crisis and the impact of Avian Influenza. The board has provided a single source of support, advice and constructive challenge to Defra for animal health and welfare policy throughout.

We are pleased to report that we as a board were able to influence and contribute to the future direction of animal health and welfare policy in Defra - with particular focus on future farming and the progress of the animal health and welfare pathway, genetic technologies, anti-microbial resistance, supply chain issues, sustainable productivity within a wider 'One Health' approach for society over the next 3 to 5 years.

The board's vision and strategy is appended to this report (at annex A) and demonstrates the wide range of issues being considered by government to improve animal health and welfare.

I am particularly proud of the work of my new board in 2022 but would also like to thank previous board members that served till October 2021 for their efforts and commitment and for setting a high bar for the level of work they produced. I would also like to specially thank Emma Slawinski who stepped down from her role on the board at the end of October 2022. Emma's contribution to the aims of AHWBE, particularly on animal welfare matters, has been impressive and greatly appreciated.

We continue to work hard to build and sustain stakeholder networks and maintain an ethos of partnership working between government and industry. In doing so, we strengthen the foundations for the continued challenges ahead. We are excited at the opportunity to influence the direction of future animal health and welfare policy.

About the board

Mandate

The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE), provides advice and constructive challenge to Defra's Ministers and their officials in the development and implementation of animal health and welfare strategy and policy.

The board will provide leadership, championing the ethos of partnership working between industry, animal keeping sectors and government. It will act as a focal point for communication and co-ordination across the various sectors of industry, ensuring broad, deep, two-way engagement.

The board will encourage and enable action by all animal keepers at individual and sectoral level to minimise threats to animal and public health and animal welfare, whilst maintaining competitiveness.

The board will continue to work collaboratively with policy and delivery teams across the Defra Group to achieve this. It will look at both policy development and its practical application, offering insight into which interventions or initiatives will be most effective in the different sectors.

This will be achieved by:

- clearly articulating the respective roles and responsibilities for animal keepers and government
- promoting producer-led action to reduce endemic disease, whereby businesses benefit from:
 - improved productivity and competitiveness
 - greater value in the food chain (given increasing premium on high health, low antibiotic use for example)
 - reduced risk of exotic diseases that have a disproportionate effect on all producers
- where action is government-led (for example, exotic disease response or risk mitigation):
 - encouraging policymakers to articulate how achievement of the required standards can be demonstrated – and being clear on what is required in order to access public funds
 - encouraging the use of incentives and rewards such as proportionate regulation and recognition, including the use of appropriate assurance

- identifying opportunities to reduce overly prescriptive rules, leading to a clearer enforcement focus
- adhering to the principles of better regulation
- identifying clearly government's role and responsibilities (for example, in relation to laboratory capability, surveillance and co-ordination)

Specific areas of focus:

- support the department to incentivise best practice in endemic disease control and in reducing Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), as part of a One Health approach
- support and develop animal health and welfare including sustainable and environmental resilient farming
- support and develop new models of regulation, balancing confidence in health and welfare with proportionate effective legislation and sectorial responsibility
- identifying opportunities for greater flexibility in the application and enforcement of rules
- maintain and develop sector council and industry communications through providing a forum for effective interaction
- support, inform and communicate development of sectoral databases and their wider utilisation under the livestock information programme
- support and promote effective surveillance for animal diseases

These areas of focus will be reviewed regularly and will evolve over time.

Membership

Non-Executive members

Michael Seals CBE, FRAGS (Chair until October 2021)

Michael is the Chair of the National Fallen Stock Company. He farms 200 acres of arable crops with a pedigree South Devon herd in South Derbyshire, in addition to horse breeding with other with equestrian interests. He is a past trustee of the British Horse Society, has sat on the National Farmers Union (NFU) Council and was Chairman of the NFU National Food Standards Committee.

Jonathan Statham MA VetMB DCHP FRCVS (Non-Executive Director till Oct 2021 and Chair from October 2021)

Jonathan has been a Non-Executive Director on the AHWBE since 2017 and became the Board Chair in October 2021.

He is a qualified veterinarian and partner at the Bishopton Veterinary Group in Yorkshire and has years of experience of working with the farming industry.

He is also Chief Executive Officer at RAFT Solutions Ltd and a Professor of Sustainable Livestock Health and Welfare at Harper and Keele Veterinary School.

Previously, Jonathan has been President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association and Yorkshire Veterinary Society. He has served on various representative and industry groups, including the GB Cattle Health and Welfare Group and Veterinary Policy Group of the British Veterinary Association.

Yvonne Ball (until October 2021)

Yvonne is a barrister with a PhD in balancing the public interests of investigating wrongdoing and the protection of human rights. She is a member of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) national policy board and brings experience of working across Whitehall.

Claire Horton CBE (until April 2021)

Claire was the chief Executive of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home (2010 to 2021). She stepped down from her role as Non-Executive on the board in April 2021 after taking up the role of Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. She has spent 28 years working in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Her specialist areas whilst on the board included companion animals and equines. Claire was the Chair of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) - the membership body representing

over 130 large and small animal charities UK-wide. She was a founder member and sat on the steering board of the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) and was a member of the Greyhound Forum and the Pet Advertising Advisory Group. She has an MBA from the University of Warwick Business School, and in 2015 was made an Honorary Doctor of Laws by Roehampton University for services to welfare and the community.

Stewart Houston, CBE FRAgS (until October 2021)

Stewart is a past board member of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and he also sat on the board for the Food Standards Agency. He has been a pig producer since 1970. He is a partner at Microware Pig Systems and has had high level roles in the National Farmers Union. Stewart was awarded a CBE for his contribution to agriculture and is a recipient of the David Black Award for a sustained contribution to the pig sector. Stewart is an ex-Chair of the British Pig Executive and National Pig Association. In 2019, he was appointed to the Board of Red Tractor and leads the pig sector work there.

Tim Morris (until October 2021)

Tim is a science and welfare advisor to a number of organisations. He is involved in thoroughbred racing and breeding, other equine organisations, and commercial organisations related to animal care and use. He is a trustee of several not-for-profit organisations. He is a veterinary surgeon with a PhD in livestock reproduction and has held a large number of leadership roles in veterinary professional organisations, commerce, industry bodies, animal science and welfare charities.

Gwyn Jones (2017 to date)

Gwyn has been a non-executive director of the AHWBE since 2017. Gwyn established his own farm business in West Sussex where he spent 35 years dairy farming. He has a long history with the NFU, serving as National Dairy Board Chairman for three consecutive terms (2004 to 2010) and Vice President (2010 to 2012). He is a main board member of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHBD), chairing the Dairy Board, the Volatility Forum and acting as a main board member with responsibility for competitiveness and benchmarking across all sectors. He is also past Chairman of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), past Chairman of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA) Animal Health and Welfare Working Group, and Vice Chair of the European Platform for Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals.

Daniel Parker (until October 2021)

Daniel studied veterinary medicine at Cambridge, working in both large and small animal practices in the UK and Hong Kong. He established a veterinary practice in Cambridge in 1996, growing the business from a single site poultry practice to multi-site practice with

locations across the UK. He has also undertaken consultancy work to a number of large integrated poultry producers outside of the UK.

Daniel currently acts as Director and Owner of Pharmsure UK and Pharmsure International companies, which develops and distributes a number of pharmaceutical products for use in poultry production in the UK, Europe and Russia.

He is a Past President of the British Veterinary Poultry Association, and has acted as a poultry and veterinary expert advisor for the British Veterinary Association, British Poultry Council and Defra. He continues to lecture in poultry medicine and production at Cambridge Veterinary School. Daniel is also a member of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) and the related targets taskforce group.

Peter Laurie (October 2021 to date)

Peter has been Chief Executive Officer of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home since January 2021.

He has worked at the organisation since 2015 and has years of experience of working in the companion animal and regulated animals in sport sectors.

He was the Chief Executive of the Greyhound Trust until 2015 and the Deputy Director of Regulation for the Greyhound Board of Great Britain until 2011. He is still on the Greyhound Board of Great Britain UKAS Impartiality Committee that is involved in the inspection and licensing of greyhound racecourses.

He is a Trustee of Petplan Charitable Trust which funds advances in veterinary science and animal health and a founding Trustee at the Southern Thailand Elephant Foundation.

Emma Slawinski (October 2021 to October 2022)

Emma Slawinski was a member of the board from October 2021 to October 2022. Emma is the Director of Advocacy and Policy at the RSPCA and previously Global Director of Campaigns and Communications at Compassion in World Farming, during which time the organisation won the 2020 Charity Film of the year and was awarded 2nd place (as part of a coalition) in the European Commission's EU Health Award for reducing the threat to human health from antimicrobial resistance.

Emma has also been a Director at World Animal Protection, running campaigns on wildlife tourism and working with the Serbian and Romanian Governments on dog population management.

James Russell (October 2021 to date)

James is an independent veterinary consultant and an officer of the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

His role at the BVA has allowed him to take positions as a member of the RUMA group and the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Veterinary Group, Ruminant Health and Welfare Group and both Defra's TB Partnership Group and the Welsh Government's TB EPI Group.

Red Tractor appointed James Russell as an Independent Director to the Assured Food Standards (AFS) board. He is also a SEMEX named veterinary surgeon where he is able to support farmer training.

John Reed (October 2021 to date)

John is a small livestock farmer and a non-executive director of Avara Foods.

He brings extensive experience of agriculture to the board and has been involved with the Red Tractor Assurance Scheme for the last 20 years.

He has been involved in numerous industry and government committees, initiatives and reports on poultry and animal health and welfare including the Radcliffe Cost and responsibility review and several Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) reviews.

He has been involved with and represented the poultry meat industry for many years, including an eight-year term as Chairman of the British Poultry Council.

He is the co-founder and former chairman of the Poultry Health and Welfare Board and a member of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

Charles Sercombe (October 2021 to date)

Charles is a first-generation sheep farmer involved in a wide variety of work in agriculture.

He has significant experience of chairing and contributing to a diverse range of boards and committees including Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Steering Group; the Sheep breeders Round table; Sheep Health and Welfare Group and the Ruminant Health and Welfare Group.

He is also an independent farmer member on the NOAH Complaints Committee.

He has also been the Chair and member of several NFU boards, including the Livestock Board and a member of the NFU National Policy Board and Governance Board.

Julia Wrathall (November 2022 to date)

Julia Wrathall is an applied animal welfare scientist and advocate with extensive experience of working with multiple stakeholders to achieve positive change. Julia worked for nearly 30 years in the RSPCA science team including as Head of Farm Animals and Chief Scientific Officer. Julia is now an independent animal welfare consultant.

Executive members

Gareth Baynham-Hughes

Gareth Baynham-Hughes became interim Director for Animal and Plant Health and Welfare in the summer 2019 which subsequently became a permanent appointment. The Directorate covers a wide range of policy issues including exotic and endemic disease control, animal welfare, plant health, animal and plant health aspects of future farming as well as international trade in animals and animal products and plants.

Before joining APHW Gareth had been working in Defra to establish the Office for Environmental Protection under the planned Environment Bill. Before that, Gareth had worked as Deputy Director for Fuel Poverty in DECC and as Programme Director for Electoral Registration in Constitution Group in the Cabinet Office. Gareth spent the first 10 years of his career working on various agriculture and fisheries policies in London and in the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels and also worked for the FCO in London.

Christine Middlemiss

Christine joined Defra as the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) in March 2018, having previously been CVO in New South Wales since August 2016. During her time there, she led major improvements to biosecurity across many farming sectors. She comes from a farming family in the south of Scotland, with a background in beef cattle and sheep.

Christine returned to the Defra group, having previously been Deputy Director for Animal Traceability and Public Health in 2016. She is an experienced veterinarian and worked for a number of years in private practice in Scotland and the north of England, prior to joining the Animal Health Agency (now part of Animal and Plant Health Agency) in 2008 as a Divisional Veterinary Manager in Scotland.

Richard Irvine (until March 2023)

Richard was appointed Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer for the UK in 2020 to 2023. He then went onto secure the role as the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales. He is an experienced veterinarian with a background in animal health and welfare policy and science. He currently is Deputy Director for Global Animal Health and Trade in Defra and has overseen a number of successful market access gains including recent agreements

on exporting UK beef to China, the USA and Japan. Prior to this, Richard led the APHA's Surveillance Intelligence Unit and was Head of the National Reference Laboratory for Viral Diseases of Poultry at APHA Weybridge.

Chris Hadkiss (until April 2021)

Chris Hadkiss was the Chief Executive of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) since January 2013. His previous roles include Home Office advisor on forensic science, and roles at Forensic Science Service Ltd, including executive director, operations director and lead regional manager.

As Chief Executive of APHA, Chris was responsible for the delivery of the agency's services and was the accounting officer for the budget.

Ian Hewett (April 2021 to July 2021 Interim Chief Executive of APHA)

Ian Hewett stepped in as the interim Chief Executive of APHA once Chris Hadkiss has taken retirement. Ian's previous role was Director of Service Delivery, EU Exit and Trade within APHA. He had also been Deputy Director for the Transformational Change Directorate within Defra, Operations Director, Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and Change Director, Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

David Holdsworth (July 2021 to date)

David Holdsworth was appointed as the Chief Executive of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in July 2022. Before joining APHA as the Chief Executive, David was the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the UK Intellectual Property Office. He has also had senior roles at the Charity Commission, the Home Office and spent five years in the private sector.

David is a fellow of the Institute of Directors and has been Chairman of the Liverpool city region branch. David is currently a non-remunerated Board Trustee of the Council of Deans of Health – the voice of UK university faculties for nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions.

As Chief Executive of APHA, David is responsible for the delivery of the agency's services and is the accounting officer for the budget.

Priya Shah (October 2021 to January 2023)

Priya held the role as the Deputy Director for Animal and Plant Health and Welfare Evidence and Analysis. Priya is an economist by background and has years of experience leading multidisciplinary analytical programmes. She spent 12 years at DWP before joining Defra where she has led on the development of a number of challenging business cases and the design of monitoring and evaluation programmes.

Non-executive member work portfolios

Each non-executive member is responsible for engaging with a defined portfolio of internal and external stakeholders.

Board member portfolios from 2020 to October 2021

Yvonne Ball (Legal):

- aquaculture
- exotic disease

Tim Morris (Vet/Prof):

- equine
- goats and camelids
- livestock information plan (LIP)

Stewart Houston (Farmer):

- pigs
- greyhounds
- surveillance
- Food Standard Agency and LIP

Claire Horton (strategy and practice):

- companion animals

Daniel Parker (vet):

- poultry

Jonathan Statham (vet):

- sheep
- veterinary Liaison
- bovine

Gwyn Jones (Farmer):

- bovine

Board member portfolios from October 2021 to 2022

Each board member was responsible for a range of health and welfare topics, sustainability and environmental issues and education and training. All board members were also responsible for AHW Pathway and Group Liaison, including:

- Livestock Information Programme (LIP)
- Animal Welfare Committee (AWC)
- UK Genetics for Livestock and Equines Committee (UKGLE) (formerly FAnGR)
- TB Partnership

Emma Slawinski (until Oct 2022) and Julia Wrathall (from Nov 2022):

- welfare
- aquaculture
- sustainability and environment

James Russell

- vet liaison
- One Health
- outreach and comms

Gwyn Jones:

- bovine dairy and beef
- Devolved Administration Liaison
- Sector Council Chair

Peter Laurie:

- companion animals
- equines
- communication

John Reed:

- poultry
- pigs
- trade

Charles Sercombe:

- sheep and goats
- contingency planning and exotic disease
- surveillance

Summary of board activity

The board have engaged on wide-ranging issues over the course 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Impact of COVID-19 on the board's ways of working

Towards the start of 2020 the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic with the first of a series of lockdowns for the nation at the start of 2020. This was no doubt one of the biggest challenges the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England had to face in terms of their own working and ensuring ongoing support to Ministers and senior Defra officials. The board decided to make the board meetings online during lockdown and many of the board planned activities had to either be cancelled, rearranged to a later date or done online where possible. As technology improved this did enable the board to continue its work but without the luxury of face-to-face engagement.

The board used their industry contacts and expertise to tease out perceived and actual welfare challenges faced by industry because of the change in circumstance and the reduced freedoms to conduct business as before. They also provided support to the Animal Welfare Committee on the COVID-19 emergency response.

Future Farming: Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

The board continued its work on the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, playing an active role in co-designing policy alongside colleagues in Defra and other farmers and vets. However, with COVID19 affecting the nation most of the work on the pathway had to be paused and majority of the Defra team had been re-prioritised to work on COVID-related work. Under the board's leadership, industry continued to develop proposals and agree priorities to make as much progress as possible.

Regulations set out the standard of welfare for farmed animals across all farms. It is right that those responsible for farming have high standards of welfare. The board will continue to support the maintenance of England's world-leading standards through regulatory requirements and statutory codes of practice. The board will do so in a way which is sustainable for the sector and is informed by the latest scientific developments and best practice.

The board views universal participation in the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway as critical to success. Countries (e.g., Republic of Ireland and New Zealand) which have successfully addressed endemic diseases have involved all keepers; this matches our own experiences in the UK.

The board had several discussions throughout 2022 on a range of matters linked to the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, including:

- discussions on proposals to pay for key welfare outcomes, linked to welfare priorities and to explore proposals to trial it ahead of full roll-out and seeking feedback regarding welfare grants and the Pathway
- discussions and advice leading up to the Spring launch of the annual health and welfare review
- presentation on education and training, including educating animal keepers, the key importance of practical and online skills and a strategic discussion on the role of training in all kept animal sectors

Livestock Information Programme (LIP)

The aim of the LIP is to have complete traceability of livestock from farm to fork. The board contributed to the Traceability Design User Group (TDUG) which includes Government, industry sector bodies, trading standards, academia, NFU and more. The Livestock Information Programme (LIP) will put in place a multi-species livestock traceability service in England. That service will interoperate with equivalent services across the UK, enabling Defra to continue to maintain the 'UK view' for international trade purposes.

Defra and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) signed an agreement for AHDB to continue to lead the collaboration between industry and government to deliver the LIP. In line with that agreement, AHDB has created a new subsidiary company called Livestock Information Ltd (LI Ltd) which is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with AHDB as its majority owner and Defra having a minority stake. That company is mandated to design and implement a multi-species traceability service in a way that works for both government and industry.

Impact of COVID-19 on the industry

The impact of COVID-19 on the industry was devastating with many small businesses having to close down due to staff not being able to work during lockdown or going off sick with COVID-19. Social distancing had been enforced strictly for vets and farmers with guidance reviewed as time went on. Many near misses reports on injuries had increased as many staff had to work on their own, this was having short term impact on health and safety issues for staff and welfare issues for animals.

The poultry sector along with others had been affected by flights being cancelled due to restrictions on movement which affected export. There was also discussion on whether furloughed staff could provide care for their employers' animals/livestock during lockdown with the general agreement that in line with Government guidelines, they could work on a paid or voluntary basis for another employer. Therefore, establishments having difficulties providing care for animals could utilize appropriately skilled staff.

The companion animal sector came together to develop guidance for staff to help them to continue to work whilst enforcing social distancing. They published guidance for pet owners on how to best care for their pets during this period.

Animal Welfare

Work continued with the rescue and rehoming sector along with the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) to understand impacts of regulating the sector, especially on smaller rescue centres. Discussion groups were held, and evidence was collected.

Due to COVID-19 the canine and feline sector experienced an issue with smuggled dogs and cats coming to the UK. The sector noted that checks taking place at ports need to be tightened. There is no requirement for onsite animals at the port to have checks on health and welfare and only scanning of the microchip and paperwork is carried out by the carrier.

The board continued to contribute its knowledge and experience on a range of welfare issues, including the impact of the war in Ukraine on pets; a range of welfare Bills (Animal Sentience Bill, Animals Abroad Bill) and input to inform future strategic goals in relation to animal welfare.

Bovine ID and Movements – Electronic ID (EID)

Following both Defra and Industry's desire to become digital by default, work has been ongoing to move away from paper passports to an Electronic ID system for bovines in England. There was a discussion around some of the technical issues to achieve this, and on the consequences of different approaches by each UK administration.

Defra continues to work with Devolved Administration colleagues to align policies wherever possible, respecting devolution. Where policies and timelines do not align, Defra will work to ensure smooth cross border trade and traceability.

Contingency Plan for Aquatic Animal Health

The board contributed as an external observer to a contingency exercise for an aquatic animal disease. The purpose of the exercise was to test the preparedness of government, its agencies and others to respond to a major animal disease outbreak.

This was a major exercise involving the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) and several Defra teams. Other government departments and agencies were also involved, including the Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency, Public Health England and APHA, as well as colleagues from the devolved administrations including Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, and policy and

science teams from Scotland and Northern Ireland. Stakeholders involved included the British Trout Association and the Fish Veterinary Society.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

The board have continued to take a keen interest in the department's drive to encourage the reduction of antibiotic use in animals. They have provided contributions and support to both Defra policy team and the VMD who spear head this work on behalf of government. Since the work on AMR began in 2014 the sales of antibiotics for use in food-producing animals has dropped from 62% to 31%, a huge drop of 50%.

The board were updated on Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) activity and the One Health agenda, including the five-year National Action Plan (2019-24), which covers required actions to tackle AMR in animal husbandry and human infections. Under the plan, there will also be investments to innovate, research, supply and access. This will include basic research, development of new therapeutics, development of and access to diagnostics and better-quality assurance.

They also discussed the AMR 20-year vision to 2040 and the nine ambitions for change.

Zoonoses Policy – Salmonella National Control Programme

Work has been taking place by the Defra policy team on salmonella National Control Programmes and they are working towards the future, the team aims to have a well-established National Control Programmes for poultry. This has been mainly successful, but some trends of concern, particularly outbreaks in laying flocks linked to packing stations.

The policy team have been looking at ways to improve this and they have found working closely with delivery partners such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and working with industry (farmers and labs) to improve detection has helped. The strategy for salmonella is to review the current approach and to start looking beyond poultry.

Under the EU Animal Health Regulations which came into force on 21 April 2021 to which the UK must comply for trade, the EU have added some additional endemic diseases which need to be reported, including:

- Q Fever
- Psittacosis
- Additional Salmonellas (pullorum;gallinarum)
- Avian Mycoplasma
- Trichomonosis
- Infections Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)/Infectious pustular vulvovaginitis
- Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)
- Johnes

- Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)
- Bovine genital campylobacteriosis

Animal Welfare Labelling

The board provided advice and constructive challenge into how the proposals for the call for evidence on animal welfare labelling can be translated into policy proposals. It had discussions on priority sectors for a labelling scheme; options for the welfare standards underpinning any labelling scheme; how labelling relates to international trade; and how it could add value there.

There were also discussions on the mandatory welfare labelling reform in the Food Strategy White Paper, and the Food Data Transparency Partnership. The Partnership aims to bring together Government, industry, and other stakeholder groups with the aim of making it easy for consumers to purchase higher-welfare, sustainable, healthy food.

The board gave advice on how to ensure the Food Data Transparency Partnership's effective operation, including join-up with the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway. For example, a Welfare Labelling Task and Finish Group could report to the appropriate groups under both the Pathway and the Partnership, with Pathway members also represented in the Partnership at the appropriate strategic and operational levels.

The board also gave input on long-term implications and opportunities regarding food labelling.

Border Control issues

The board engaged with policy teams on the post-Brexit border control work and discussed the provision of border animal facilities and resources. They also considered disease prevention and biosecurity infrastructure at the border with regard to changes in Summer 2022. This covered options for management measures and the work that is being done with Border Force and SPS regulations, and provided input regarding the impact on animal movements, including AI protection zones on the poultry sector. This work also covered laboratory and surveillance needs going forwards.

They also discussed concerns around resourcing of infrastructure and staffing including vets (30% down), which considered implications for trade and surveillance with regard to risk management of biosecurity for national outbreaks.

Bovine TB Update

The board was given a presentation on the cattle vaccine trial and the DIVA skin test.

In February 2021 the Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group for England (TBEAG) became the Bovine TB Partnership. The aim of the bTB Partnership is to encourage

shared ownership, coordination and decision-making surrounding England's 25-year bovine TB eradication strategy.

Companion Animals

The board was involved in a range of discussions and input in the companion animal sector. They had a presentation and discussion on the consideration of the implications of enforcement and regulation of companion animal rescue centres. There was a board debate on the impact on pets due to Covid and the cost-of-living challenges.

Equine sector

The board engaged in discussions on policy development around equine electronic identification and how it links with future movements policy. They also discussed the implications for trade in the equine sector with regard to supply chain issues around veterinary medicines and current regulatory framework.

Food Security and Supply Chain

The board was updated on Sector Council discussions on industry readiness planning and on food security and supply chain resilience for farming. It was informed of the creation of the Defra and industry market monitoring panel - set up in March 2022 following the start of the war in Ukraine and the impact this had had on rising input costs across the agricultural sector, with the potential associated animal health and welfare impacts.

The majority of the farming sectors are also being heavily impacted by the rise in energy costs. It was reported that many farm businesses are struggling to plan beyond the short term if energy costs continue to rise.

Board members highlighted the need to make a connection between health and welfare, food security and sustainability, and joining it all up.

Genetic Technologies

The board fed into early discussions to the development of the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023 to ensure there would be effective regulation and guidelines to carry out these activities correctly and as intended. The board also advised on welfare implications of this technology.

Visit to Animal and Plant Health Agency, Weybridge

The July 2022 AHWBE meeting was hosted by APHA at their headquarters at the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Weybridge, Surrey.

Board members were given a tour of the Weybridge site which included a visit to the high containment laboratory which deals with emergency response and the avian influenza outbreak, the pathology building and post-mortem room, and the diagnostic laboratories for international trade and exotic disease large scale testing.

Day one of the board meeting focused on APHA and Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), including contingency planning; Avian Influenza; the availability of veterinary medicines; and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

On day two the board explored current priority welfare issues, mainly for the companion animal and equine sectors. This included debate on legislation progress, the new Sentience Committee and the potential welfare considerations surrounding Gene Editing (GE) in animals.



Meetings of the Four Chairs (AHWBE, TB Partnership Board, Animal Welfare Council and the UK Genetics for Livestock and Equines Committee)

The Chairs of AHWBE, TB Partnership (formerly TB Eradication Advisory Group), Animal Welfare Council (AWC) and The UK Genetics for Livestock and Equines Committee (UKGLE – formerly The Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee FAnGR) meet twice a year to forge close working, to update on work of the respective groups and identify synergies for the benefit of all.

On 9 February 2022 meeting between the Four Chairs where they were given an update on the Livestock Information Programme which came into effect with a new ear tagging system for livestock in March 2022; and the switch from Animal Reporting and Movement Service (ARAMS) to the Livestock Information Service (LIS), which covers sheep, deer, and goat, which also came into effect in March 2022. They also had a presentation on genetic technologies in animals and effective regulations and guidelines to avoid detrimental effects on welfare.

In August 2022 meeting, there was a further update on the Livestock Information Programme, including the Livestock Unique Identification Service (LUIS) and separate movements service for sheep, goats and deer which was deployed in March 2022. There were also presentations on the Genetic Technology Precision Breeding Bill; the Animal Welfare (sentience) Act 2022; and the new Sentience Committee.

External speakers at board meetings

National Office of Animal Health (NOAH) Vision for the Future of UK Animal Health and Welfare (January 2020 and October 2022)

NOAH represent the UK animal health industry. They promote the benefits of safe, effective, quality products and services for the health and welfare of all animals. There is a unique opportunity to improve animal health and welfare and NOAHs vision is to place animal health and welfare at the heart of future policy. There is a collective responsibility to help shape the future policy to positively benefit livestock, companion animals and society. All sectors need to work together to deliver better animal health and welfare.

NOAH updated the board, at the January 2020 and October 2022 AHWBE meeting, on their recent strategic industry report and debating associated opportunities for both Productivity and One Health aspects (including Anti-Microbial Resistance).

Health and Welfare Standards – New Zealand (April 2020)

The board were presented with an update on how New Zealand (NZ) was working towards good health and welfare standards. With increasing globalised trade and global warming changing pest ranges, the NZ Government has identified the need to further strengthen management of the NZ bio-security system. They have a well consulted and publicised biosecurity 2025 Strategy in place and are currently undergoing implementation. At the heart of the strategy is recruiting '4.7 million New Zealanders (every person and business)' into the system to become more aware of biosecurity and understanding their responsibility for managing Biosecurity from examples of such as checking mail coming from abroad and identifying any risks from the package. A small but key step towards delivery of the plan.

Professionalisation in the industry and the Skills Leadership Group/AHDB Project (July 2020)

The board received an update from The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH). The aim of the project is to professionalise the sector through an independent professional framework. This will ensure the provision of industry led training that is fit for purpose qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD). They would also like to develop and market clear industry career paths and progression opportunities to provide professional business support.

Poultry Passport (April 2021)

A representative from Poultec Training Limited joined the meeting to present on developing an Industry Training Standard. Poultec is a private training provider, established in 1996. They provide apprenticeships, traineeships, study programmes and short courses. The poultry passport was established in 2009, initiated by Red Tractor. Poultec were approached by Red Tractor to help provide courses and training. They were set the task of developing a common standard of training and recording training across sectors. A working group was established to work with industry and producers to help develop established approval mechanisms for courses.

Current Issues Around the Canine and Feline Sector (July 2021)

New legislation on puppy imports were introduced for illegal activity building on Animal Welfare (Licencing of Activities Involving Animals Regulations (LAIA) Regs), Lucy's Law and the Petfished campaign. There has also been a ban on importing dogs with ear cropping and docked tails. There has been an increase in dog bite reports and behavioural issues over the last few years - mainly due to COVID and self-isolation issues for the owners. Discussion has been focused on how to avoid relinquishment and social problems.

The Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) (January 2022)

The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) is a new Professional Body set up with the ambition to position agriculture and horticulture as a dynamic industry, attracting and retaining talent from a wide range of backgrounds, investing in people in order to improve productivity, staff engagement and retention.

The gave a presentation to the board in January 2022 on education and training. This included educating animal keepers, the key role in the Pathway, and key importance of practical skills and online. The board was updated on the current direction for TIAH and on future strategies for improving stockman ship in order to strengthen health and welfare outcomes. They had a strategic discussion on role of training in all kept animal sectors.

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) (October 2022)

RCVS presented to the AHWBE board at the October 2022 board meeting. updating on the Capacity and Capability of Vets, Consultation and the 'Review of 'under care' and 24/7 emergency cover'. They had a discussion on challenges and possible solutions for both government and private sector veterinary capacity and capability.

Published board meeting notes

You can read the 2020 to 2021 board meeting notes in the National Archives:

- [January 2020 Board meeting note](#)
- [April 2020 Board meeting note](#)
- [July 2020 Board meeting note](#)
- [October 2020 Board meeting note](#)
- [January 2021 Board meeting note](#)
- [April 2021 Board Meeting note](#)
- [July 2021 Board Meeting note](#)
- [October 2021 Board Meeting note](#)

Minutes have not been published since January 2022. If you wish to be included to the distribution list for the AHWBE newsletter which updates recipients on the work of the board, please send an email with your request to ahwbeseecretariat@defra.gov.uk.

Non-executive director engagements

During the report period, board members attended a wide range of meetings and events where they collected and shared knowledge and promoted the work and values of the board.

Here are some examples from 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Stewart Houston

During 2020 and 2021:

He continues to chair the Sector Councils meetings, of which three were held this year, Stewart has attended all of the Traceability Design User Group (TDUG) meetings as its members continue to support the development and delivery of the Livestock Information Program. In particular, he has been part of the TDUG Data Subgroup, who have developed a report which categorises data into statutory and industry led. It also makes recommendations to an oversight body to decide what industry data can be shared and how.

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Steering Group has been formed of individuals from the AHWBE Board and key Stakeholders. Regular meetings have developed the Pathway further and three species subgroups were formed to provide the detail necessary to deliver the plan. To that end, we were able to hold a Pig Pathway Workshop in February, just before Covid restrictions were put in place. It was attended by over 80 individuals from across the industry including vets, producers, and allied industries, who, together with Defra colleagues, provided the detail for a report which outlined an industry plan which described what was needed to deliver a Pig Health and Welfare Pathway.

A Pig Pathway Project Group (PPPG), again from across industry and Defra further developed the report into a series of modules, including one on welfare and another on vet visits, that described the way forward for the Pathway. Further work has progressed how this might be done.

Integrated with the work on improving health is a workstream looking at how a Payment by Results Scheme might work through improved Welfare Outcomes. Over the year a number of new faces have arrived in senior roles. We have made sure that the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB)'s new chair, Nicholas Saphir and CEO Jane King understand what we are trying to achieve through delivery of the Pathway, as well as Laura Ryan, new Chair of TDUG.

Stewart has engaged regularly with the industry representative bodies, including the National Pig Association's Pig Industry Group, Pig Veterinary Society (in particular, their Autumn Conference), Assured Food Standards (Red Tractor), and AHDB Pork. Indeed,

members or staff of these organisations have played their part in the output from the PPPG. A great deal of time was spent with Defra and Industry finalising the business case and Invitation to Tender for an Rural Development Programme England (RDPE) funded Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) Scheme.

He also attended an Industry/Defra meeting looking at the threat of African Swine Fever (ASF) which was organised by NPA, and later, a Scottish Government ASF Exercise. There have been fewer National Pig Core Group meetings as Defra colleagues continued to deal with avian Influenza incursions, but we were able to focus on Feral Wild Boar and the more open use of the Aujeszky's levy.

Incursions by a number of animal rights groups highlighted some poor handling practices in the pig sector and Stewart supported a small group in designing a Welfare Handling training module which was to become embedded in the Red Tractor Standards to ensure compliance. The group usefully made contact with Poultec, who have done similar work for the poultry meat sector. There was also a focus on piglet euthanasia and work is on-going. An additional focus for AHWBE was on the Animal Welfare in Transit consultation, where we were able to provide helpful input.

Stewart along with other board members also met with Minister Lord Goldsmith to discuss the implications of new welfare regulation, in particular, the potential effect on piglet mortality if producers were unable to use conventional farrowing facilities.

He chaired the panels for the Pig Innovation Award, the National Pig Awards and Trainee of the Year. As well as taking part in the Pig World Round Table, which focussed on the Pathway and Vaccination strategies, several articles were penned for Pig World to keep the industry up to date with Pathway progress. He also represented AHWBE at a number of meetings of the Industry/Government Covid Forum, where post Brexit challenges combined with processing plant closure due to Covid infections of staff, risked compromising pig welfare through potential overcrowding on pig units as slaughter capacity reduced.

Tim Morris

During 2020 and 2021:

Covid support

Provided extensive advice and assistance across sectors to stakeholders for their response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Equine sector engagement

Extensive liaison with industry, Defra colleagues and Ministers to support, progress and communicate on zootechnical issues, equine ID and international equine movement, both in the context of the UK leaving the EU, its aftermath, but also with the new EU Animal Health Law.

Continued coordinated work with Defra colleagues and industry on specific proposals for a High Health Horse Status in the EU Animal Health law, to allow expedited equine movement.

Supported Defra and stakeholders with reviews of Animal Welfare in Transport

Supported Sector and Defra engagement and communications at a number of meetings, including the National Equine Forum.

Supported the initiation of an equine Health and Welfare Pathway.

Small and local abattoirs

Continued support to the work of the stakeholders on small and medium sized abattoirs, including liaison with Defra teams.

Initiated and supported the creation of an Abattoir Sector Group.

Livestock attacks by dogs

Co-ordination and support to the work of police, farming and other organisations to highlight the impact on human and animal welfare.

Assisted Defra and Police with policy and legislative proposals.

Other engagement activities

Reviewed drafts of a large number of Statutory Instruments related to Animal Health and Welfare prior to their presentation for Parliamentary approval to assist rapid transposition of EU law to UK law.

Further work on game birds to help inform Defra colleagues on welfare priorities.

Supported stakeholder communication by producing regular post meeting e-newsletters.

Yvonne Ball

During 2020 and 2021, Yvonne:

Contributed to the discussions at the Sector Council Chairs meetings and informal engagement with stakeholders.

Remote engagement with aquaculture stakeholders.

Attended Aquaculture Common Issues Group meetings

Attended British Game Association Meeting, Ulverston to discuss proposals for improvements to the health and welfare of gamebirds and accreditation for shoots.

Met with Professor Don Broome, Cambridge University to discuss proposals for the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway in relation to welfare.

Contributed to the discussions at the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Cattle Grants meeting and informal engagement with stakeholders.

Contributed to the discussions at the Pig Sector Animal Health and Welfare Pathway meeting and informal engagement with stakeholders

Met the Chair of the Horse Welfare Board to discuss the Horse Welfare Strategy.

Contributed to the discussions at the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Pig Grants meeting and informal engagement with stakeholders.

Attended the Horse Welfare Strategy Launch event.

Contributed to the discussions at the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Poultry Grants meeting and informal engagement with stakeholders.

Met with Helen Errington and David to discuss Animal Health and Welfare Pathway in relation to poultry.

Attended the National Equine Forum.

Attended the Canine and Feline Sector Council Big Tent event.

Contributed to the discussions at the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Goats Grants meeting and informal engagement with stakeholders.

Claire Horton

During 2020 and 2021:

Claire commented that this period has been like no other with very significant time being spent engaging on an ongoing basis to working with and directly supporting the sector through the myriad challenges of dealing with COVID-19.

Claire carried out the following engagements and duties:

- attended Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) scheduled meetings in January, February, May, June, September
- from March when Covid-19 hit fully, Claire initiated, led or attended multiple cross-sector stakeholder groups including Canine and Feline Sector Group working groups meetings (by phone or on Zoom) continually throughout the year, speaking almost daily to colleagues across the sector
- attendance as Special Advisor to APGAW meeting (once during the year)
- hosted a roundtable meeting on the breeding and sale of puppies and associated issues between Defra and sector experts
- met with Lord Goldsmith to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the sector (in the company of six CEOs from the largest companion animal charities)
- met monthly with the Defra animal welfare team – this increased to fortnightly during the height of the pandemic between April to December

She initiated and led a formal cross-sector, multi-stakeholder response in the creation and distribution of emergency funding by creating the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes Covid Emergency Relief Fund. She co-chaired the Grants Committee, overseeing a total fund of £311,000 that distributed grants to 54 rescue and rehoming organisations in most urgent need, over two programmes of funding.

She worked in close cooperation with the National Equine Welfare Council who were setting up a similar sector fund to ensure that approaches were aligned and that results could be combined and collated to provide Defra with detailed information on the state and need of the sector. Claire led on the reporting back to Government.

Claire led two sector wide surveys into the sustainability of the country's rescue and rehoming organisations and submitted two major reports to government during the second and third quarter of the year detailing the sector's response to COVID-19, likely legacy issues and future risks.

Outside of the Covid response, Claire was involved in regular discussion throughout 2020 with DEFRA teams around the commitment to the publication of rescue and rehoming licensing consultation, ongoing discussions on issues around the Dangerous Dogs Act, supporting sector bodies, MP's and others in their pursuit of the Animal Cruelty Sentencing Bill which saw Claire (through her Battersea team) hosting a reception in Westminster for over 100 parliamentarians on the Bill.

Claire continued to support CFSG in the process of refining regulation on different activities, and refinement of sector-backed policy positions on a range of topics.

Claire stood down from her role on AHWBE in the first quarter of 2021 after five and a half years in post.

Gwyn Jones

Much of the work during this period was done remotely with meetings on-line via Zoom or MSTeams.

Pathway Programme

Much of Gwyn's time was spent discussing, planning and working on the Pathway Programme. A number of industry groups were set up with industry which consisted of Dairy Farmers, Beef Farmers, Calf Rearers, Vets, Scientists and other interested parties such as the RSPCA, Red Tractor, Dairy Processing, consultants and livestock markets.

Over a number of months and several meetings, these groups of over 60 people co-designed with us a 'straw man' for both dairy and beef sectors. These straw-men will form the basis for the Pathway programme in these two sectors (dairy and beef). The main emphasis is on the vet visit, with disease screening in order to establish endemic disease prevalence in beef and focusing on lameness and calf respiratory problems and calf rearing in general in the dairy sector.

A number of other mandatory measures are included in the two straw-men, such as medicine records uploaded onto the national data-base and all dairy farmers being part of both Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) and Johnes schemes. Mobility scoring is also seen as very important on all dairy farms which would highlight the scale of the problem and a programme to tackle the issue.

Membership of a BVD programme is seen as important for the beef sector too as the voluntary arrangement currently in place does not work. Vaccination strategies, proper bio-security which includes risky trading and access to various grant schemes for both sectors to assist in higher welfare targets being met on all farms is in the plan.

Vet accreditation and training is seen as a must in order to ensure consistency and data feed-back which will show level of improvement on farms. The vet/farmer model is a proven one and is the only way to deliver a programme as ambitious and wide-ranging as this one.

Attendance and participation on the AHWBE meetings, the Pathway Steering group meetings and other Pathway meetings especially Pig and Sheep meetings in order to ensure similarities and consistency in approach.

Gwyn chaired and participated in many meetings on dairy calves and the need to put an end to on farm euthanasia which the industry has agreed to end by 2023 with all dairy calves reared with care from then on. This is a complex issue and presents many problems ranging from proper rearing of all newly born calves on dairy farms, to establishing supply chain links through calf rearer to finisher.

The Jersey X spring block calving herds present a real challenge and I have been talking to leading players in other countries (New Zealand/Netherlands/Ireland) in order to establish which bulls will present a beef X calf which is good enough to finish and make the tight criteria operated by the beef industry. We are now in a position where we believe genetics can provide an answer and talks are being held with processors and wholesale/retail business to see if we can put a trial together.

Bovine TB is another issue which complicates the dairy calf issue and Gwyn had regular talks with the Defra bTB team and have been involved in Wales where we might have a project which could assist. The change of rules in Wales makes this possible and again I am in discussions with the Defra bTB team to see if this could work in England.

Gwyn had many meetings with retailers, processors, levy bodies, farming unions, devolved governments, veterinary organisations, and other major stakeholders about the Pathway programme, the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals (RUMA) targets on antibiotics and the need for data in order to monitor the usage in cattle and sheep and set meaningful targets.

There is enough evidence to show that where there is data (pigs, poultry, gamebirds, salmon, and trout), we can set targets and meet them in the given time. There is still work to do in order to explain the value of data to farmers and other players in the industry e.g., dairy processors and consulting firms.

Meetings with Lord Goldsmith and other welfare team members at Defra have been both challenging and interesting. Gwyn is now in talks with Professor David Main to speak at the ruminant Welfare Workshop in June and we are exploring the possibility of an International Welfare Forum/Platform as part of the Global Britain policy agenda.

With Gwyn's involvement in the ruminant Health and Welfare group, they are also looking at low prevalence/high impact diseases, connecting with grass root farmers in order to listen to them and see what their concerns are – rather than sticking to the usual 'We know best' expert assessments of the past.

With Gwyn's involvement in both RUMA and the FIIA, he has a unique opportunity to do what he can to bring supply chain and government closer together as he sees that as essential as we face future challenges on welfare, antibiotic/medicine use/ environmental pressures. Gwyn is also in a position at the Ruminant Health and Welfare group through our 'Four Nations Group' to again bring everyone closer together, replicate good ideas and ensure that we don't have 4 plans for every issue as trade flows freely across borders as do the issues associated with it and therefore, we should work together wherever possible in order to simplify things and then insist that those standards are adhered to.

Daniel Parker

During 2020 and 2021, Daniel:

- Attended face to face meetings in the early part of the year of 2020 were abandoned due to Covid-19 related lockdown. However online meetings did continue where possible.

Poultry Health and Welfare Group

- Participated in the veterinary sub-group of the Poultry Health and Welfare group meetings. This group is working with Defra to review secondary cleaning and disinfection protocols post an incursion of Notifiable disease in the light of viral survival work sponsored by the British Poultry Council (BPC) and the British Egg Industry Council (BEIC).

Meetings with Defra policy teams

- Daniel continued to meet with DEFRA welfare grants team to discuss the proposed welfare grants and supported and advised when required.
- In July 2021 Daniel along with other Board members attended a meeting with Lord Goldsmith to discuss the merits of a ban on enriched cages for laying hens.

Other

- Daniel continued to attend the AHWBE Sector Council meetings, during the one in June 2022 which was a virtual meeting, he presented on the impact of Covid-19 on sectors
- In October 2021 Daniel pre-recorded a webinar on biosecurity for poultry keepers and the attended the webinar to answer live questions.
- In November 2020 attended joint **meetings** of the UK Chief Veterinary Officers and the Poultry Health and Welfare Group.
- In November attended a virtual meeting of the veterinary technical group of the PHWG with APHA to discuss Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza situation in Europe and UK.

Jonathan Statham

During 2020 and 2021, Jonathan as a Non-executive member:

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Stakeholder Steering Group met monthly throughout 2020, mainly virtually by videoconference. Including 30 January, 18 March, 14 May, 18 June, 21 July, 8 October,

In attendance were AHWBE members, Sector council chairs and reps, AHDB, BVA, NFU and Defra executive team. Purpose of the meetings was to design measures for improving animal health and welfare outcomes, consider the range of ways to implement those measures and create the structures and strategies for delivering sustainable change and leadership from the farming industry. Outcomes include platform set out for the above aims.

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Stakeholder Vet Group, in attendance were AHWBE members, Vet association chairs and reps, BVA, and sometimes Defra executive team. Purpose of the meetings was to design measures for improving animal health and welfare outcomes, consider the range of ways to implement those measures via this veterinary group and create the structures and strategies for delivering sustainable change and leadership from the farming industry. Outcomes include platform set out for the above aims and drafting communications for Pathway dissemination and engagement.

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Cattle Steering Group met frequently throughout 2020; In attendance were AHWBE members, Sector council chairs and reps, AHDB, BVA, NFU and Defra executive team. Purpose of the meetings was to design measures for improving animal health and welfare outcomes, consider the range of ways to implement those measures via this cattle group and create the structures and strategies for delivering sustainable change and leadership from the farming industry. Outcomes include platform set out for the above aims.

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Stakeholder Sheep Group In attendance were AHWBE members, Sector council chairs and reps, AHDB, BVA, NFU and Defra executive team. Purpose of the meetings was to design measures for improving animal health and welfare outcomes, consider the range of ways to implement those measures via this sheep group and create the structures and strategies for delivering sustainable change and leadership from the farming industry. Outcomes include platform set out for the above aims.

Canada AgriTech Trade Mission and lecture tour in January 2020. The trade mission was representing UK AgriTech and building bridges to future trade between UK and Canada. Six key priorities were addressed - genomics and advanced breeding; precision farming

systems; diagnostics and sensors; big data; disease and pest management; food manufacturing quality. Outcome strengthened UK Canada agritech collaborations.

Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (CIEL). Attended virtual meetings with the Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock AgriTech Centre throughout 2020. Topics included Sustainable Livestock production and review of report; research topics including AMR.

Attended the VMD Veterinary Products Committee Meetings in 2020 and discussed veterinary medicines and AMR issues in regard to EU exit and other matters. Meeting dates included 13 Feb, 4 June and 1 October but other sub-group meetings besides including environment and products group Sep 2021

Dairy Cattle Mobility Steering Group (DCMSG). Attended Dairy Cattle Mobility Steering Group (DCMSG) meetings virtually in 2020. The discussions included a review of future training and highlighted the importance of cattle mobility from a welfare perspective. Discussion regarding a review of the cattle welfare codes included presenting the findings of the group to AHWBE. Review of procedures for foot-trimming ongoing during 2020 regarding Covid-19 impacts.

FIELD Wellcome Trust Project in September 2018 'Linking science, social science & the humanities to inform the sustainable reduction of endemic disease in British livestock farming' Inputted to the FIELD Wellcome Trust Project. Led by Prof Abigail Woods of Kings College, with a Panel of stakeholders and academics. Inputted to stakeholder BVD interviews January 2020. Feedback and direction from stakeholders to academic team informing future direction.

Attended GenTORE Resilience and Efficiency European cattle meetings in York January 2020. Virtual meetings including major conferences May and November 2020. Key issues of animal science linked with livestock food production covered. Purpose was to deliver the next phase of work from GenTORE EU Horizon 20-20 project-breeding for resilience and efficiency. Based on genomics and precision livestock farming (PLF) technologies. Outcomes included, Science collaborations and networking with European and global animal science community and stakeholders ahead of EU Exit. Programme of work through 2020 & 2021 established across transition.

Attended National Action Johnes Meeting virtually during 2020. Purpose was to input to an update of the control schemes being delivered to farmers, via dairy industry representatives and vets. Outcome was engaged widely with all attendees and built future links with animal health pathway.

Attended British Veterinary association (BVA) London Dinner Westminster Reception 4 February 2020. Purpose was to engage and discuss AHWBE issues with members of both lower and upper house and all attending. Outcome was to connect with key members attending and build dialogue for board issues.

Attended the SHAWG meetings mainly virtually throughout 2020 until subsumed into merged Ruminant Health and Welfare Group. Meetings included 24 Feb 2020, 17 March (AHDA), NSA 6 May, 17 June, 31 July, 29 September and October 2020. Purpose was to support AHWBE chair to develop Animal Health Pathway concept and input on all SHAWG matters on behalf of AHWBE. Outcome was engaged widely with all attendees and built future links with animal health pathway for sheep sector.

Attended British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) virtual meetings throughout 2020. Purpose was to support introduction of Animal Health Pathway concept across BCVA. Outcome was to set up effective engagement with key veterinary stakeholders and set out next steps with a long-term strategy. Meetings mainly virtual throughout 2020 reviewing UKRI landscape of AgriTech funding and Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund including Transforming Food Production programme.

Attended the Animal Science Research advisory board meetings. Purpose was to review current funding and landscape for UK funding for livestock and crop applied research. Outcome was to identify gaps in this landscape and potential synergies across sectors.

Attended the Welfare Outcomes Meetings and workshops mainly virtual. Purpose was to review potential welfare status of UK herds and assess potential support for enhancements. Outcomes were next steps regarding animal welfare policy development and industry engagement.

Peter Laurie

During 2022:

Equines

Peter had several meetings with the British Horse Council (BHC) to keep abreast of developments and issues within the equine sector. The BHC-led Defra Away Day at Badminton in May was an excellent opportunity to discuss both equine and companion animal issues with various Defra policy team members. He gave an update on the work of the board at the BHC Summer Meeting in June, emphasising the importance of equine issues, and highlighting plans to licence animal welfare establishments.

He also introduced a presentation on the development of a potential Equine Health and Welfare Pathway (of which he had several meetings during the year with the Defra Future Farming team). The meeting also provided an opportunity to hear from other stakeholders and Defra colleagues on a range of other equine issues, including equine ID; welfare in transport; future border operating model; electronic EHCs; veterinary issues and concerns; equine relinquishment; welfare enforcement.

Companion animals

At the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) on 29th April, Peter engaged in discussions focussed on the Group's current work to assess the impact of the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals Regulations (2018) and potential additional, business activities that could be subject to registration (if not licensing), such as dog walking and dog grooming. He encouraged the Group to ensure any proposals for new registration schemes are evidence based, not least to ensure the future evaluation of the effectiveness of such schemes can be objectively assessed.

He also met the CFSG Chair (Rob Quest) and Secretariat (Marissa Heath) to discuss current issues, including ways of working between the Group and policy teams. They also had discussions on concerns relating to increasing numbers of canine fertility clinics, a consideration of how CFSG will focus its review of the LAIA regulations and an overview of emerging themes and concerns.

Peter attended the Sector Council Chairs meetings in May where he gave a presentation on Defra's response to the Ukraine crisis and the management of companion animals accompanying refugees arriving in Britain. He sought views on the importation of companion animals and opportunities to improve the risk management of commercial imports.

He established an AHWBE Board working group to support the policy team in the development of the consultation on proposals to licence companion animal welfare establishments. The working group first met in July.

Peter chaired a meeting of the Greyhound Forum on 22nd April and provided feedback on the Greyhound Board of Great Britain's new welfare strategy. Subsequently, discussed its implementation with the board's chair Jeremy Cooper and how welfare charities might work with GBGB to progress strategic initiatives and secure vital additional funding from the betting industry. In addition, he met the Defra policy lead on greyhounds to discuss the Strategy and potential amendments to the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010.

He met with Defra officials to understand the work of the Small Animal Expert Group and its approach to risk assessment of emerging and zoonotic diseases. At the meeting he identified opportunities to improve communications between the Group and the companion animal sector, to help improve broader understanding of disease risks associated with the importation of dogs and cats, particularly from Eastern Europe.

Peter attended the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes annual conference in Birmingham, providing an opportunity to understand current impact of cost-of-living pressures on the companion animal rescue sector.

He chaired a meeting of the Greyhound Forum on 22 September, that established new working groups to take forward specific initiatives within the Greyhound Board of Great Britain's new welfare strategy.

Communications

Peter wrote and published board news bulletins to 150 contacts in May, September, and October and a special bulletin to publicise AHWBE autumn strategy.

Emma Slawinski

During 2022:

Emma attended the Seafood Futures Forum (the Power of Business as a Leader for Change) – a Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) organised event which focussed on sustainability, seafood and business, to better understand the drivers for reform in the sector.

Emma had several meetings with officials and stakeholders on a range of welfare issues. With retailers there were discussions on farm animal welfare issues, including their view of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway and labelling, and innovation ideas in aquaculture.

Discussions were had with the Defra labelling team for an update on progress and discussion of timeframes and consultation on approaches to welfare labelling for animal products.

Emma attended the second meeting of Welsh Government Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare - purpose was to understand and contribute to animal welfare priority setting in Wales, and to be able to bring this information back to the board to give context to our work in England.

There was a meeting with David Main, incoming Chair of Farm Animal Welfare Forum (which includes the University of Bristol's Animal Welfare and Behaviour Group, the British Veterinary Association, Compassion in World Farming, the Food Animal Initiative, the Royal Agricultural University, RSPCA, the Soil Association, and World Animal Protection) to review FAWF's strategy and priorities and discuss labelling and subsidies specifically.

Emma went to the RSPCA Newbrook centre to discuss the challenges of Ukrainian refugees' pets being housed there. They had a useful discussion on APHA support available to centres receiving animals for isolation or quarantine.

There were also meetings with animal welfare NGOs on their views of progress against the Animal Welfare Action plan, sporting animal welfare and aspirations for animal welfare improvement, with the purpose of feeding these insights into AHWBE strategy development.

Gwyn Jones

During 2022:

Gwyn had many meetings on the calf groups within industry and keep up the campaign to rear all dairy calves by the 1st of January 2023.

He created a small task and finish industry group to put together a working strategy for AHDB Medicine Hub. Met four times over six weeks. A strategy and report were drafted and agreed with industry. The aim is to put that strategy into play with AHDB and RUMA Agriculture involved.

As chair of the Defra BVD Eradication Group, Gwyn had conversations with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to learn best practice and continue the good progress on eradicating BVD in England.

With the Ruminant Health and Welfare group he has been working on updating the Dairy Cattle Welfare Strategy and writing the Beef and Sheep Welfare Strategies. The group published a Methane Report, produced by Nigel Miller (Chair) with Philip Skuce at Moredun Research Institute.

Gwyn worked on the Defra Pathway programme with the small and large grant schemes for dairy and beef cattle and put together a small group of experts to assist our farmer groups with animal housing. He organised farm visits to look at examples of good building investments on farm.

He was involved in discussions at the AHWBE meetings on the welfare issue of blunt force trauma and the need to make sure the equipment works, is safe, not too expensive, practical and actually does the job on new-born lambs and piglets.

Gwyn attended the Pathway Design Group, Payments by Results Group and Pathway Chairs meetings. He attended two Pathway Chairs away days to discuss and further develop co-design between government and industry.

He also raised the issue of rubber-ring castration of lambs in England and the need to make ensure regulation is clear and complete so that there is no danger of farmers inadvertently breaking the law.

In addition, he attended several teaching seminars to learn more about the various work of teams in Defra and what they do.

James Russell

In 2022 James attended the Veterinary Public Health Conference, listening and learning to the challenges faced around veterinary workforce and meeting all current Official Veterinarian demands.

He also attended meetings with Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), who brought him in as an independent expert about prophylactic treatments. It remains challenging to see how a blanket approach can be made for all sectors, with vertical treatment strategies used in some pig cases.

A recurrent theme has been veterinary retention, and further meetings with Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) took place towards the end of 2022. James has engaged informally with many people on this, but formally met with one of the major employers and listened to their concerns about the resilience of graduates and how that can be managed within their business, and with RCVS to talk through their approach to increasing flexibility in the veterinary workforce. James attended the National Sheep Fair and spoke about the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway to vets, producers and industry as well as other sheep group meetings.

November 2022 saw the return of an antimicrobial amnesty initiative, initially the preserve of the human medics in the midlands of England. Through veterinary contacts, and numerous meetings in this quarter, the veterinary sector has been represented in this initiative for the first time this year. This has involved client education on the dangers of misuse, and poor disposal of antibiotics, as well as an opportunity to return unused courses to veterinary practices who collaborated in the scheme. This is a great example of one health in action.

James also attended numerous meetings related to the Birmingham NHS trust antibiotic amnesty campaign. He influenced it to be opened out to be a national veterinary campaign to run through the month of November to encourage people to dispose of their antibiotics responsibly.

John Reed

John attended the Pig and Poultry Fair, in May, and gave presentation on the Pathway with a panel discussion. It was an opportunity to introduce the Pathway to the poultry industry.

He attended the May Sector Council Chairs meeting, the June Pathway awayday and the June AHWBE strategy meeting.

In July he went to the pig tail docking workshop to discuss latest views and updates on tail docking to inform Defra Payment by Results team over the consideration of including this for a PbR trial. John was at the Pig Tail Docking Workshop and Pig Core Group Meeting during July and Pig Health and Welfare Council Meeting in August. The main topics of conversation were the ongoing concerns of the risk of African Swine Fever incursion into Great Britain (acknowledging recent improvements in raising awareness at airports of dangers with non-commercial imports); and tail v non tail docking conversations (linked to Payment by Results) being had, leading to a non-tail docking working group. Defra information showing an 18% reduction in pig numbers, highlighting the very difficult time pig producers are still having.

In addition, he had numerous poultry meetings over the summer, the main topics being Avian Influenza and the impact of the current economic climate.

There were discussions with the welfare labelling team ahead of the public consultation proposed in Spring 2023. And he spent a considerable amount of time on the Animal Health and Welfare Grants/Payment by Results subgroup. Much has been learnt on how co-design, sector groups, and processes could be further strengthened.

There were ongoing discussions on Payment by Results with the two initial proposals on non-tail docking in pigs and Better Chicken Commitment for broilers, several Defra teach-in sessions which have been useful to understand the Defra work streams and contacts, and he joined the Pig Core Group and the Avian Influenza Core Group.

Charles Sercombe

During 2022 Charles engaged with numerous industry stakeholders and meetings to represent the board. A few of the key engagements were:

Sheep Antibiotic Guardian Group (SAGG)

Looking into key issues affecting antibiotic use in the sheep industry and a potential shortage of Iodine leading to concerns about the impact on the run up to lambing. Was involved in the Push the colostrum is Gold Campaign. Had a discussion around vaccine supply challenges which was raised by vets and farmers, especially footvax which helps to reduce antibiotic use at farm level.

RUMA Targets Task Force

Continue to work towards achieving the AHWBE Boards targets which include reporting to the efficient market hypothesis (EMH), increased use of vaccines and stopping prophylaxis use around lambing.

Sustainable Control of Parasites (SCOPS)

Formed a subgroup to look at the impact of anti-parasites on the environment, final draft of the statement to impact changes to Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) principles. 'For flocks sake' the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) funded project continues to make progress and is proving the concept of testing and treating in hot spot areas. Desperately trying to co-ordinate actions across the UK. SCOPS has been heavily involved in designing the drench test for the Pathway AHWR. Discussions ongoing about adding Anthelmintics to the medicine hub.

Ruminant Health and Welfare

Looking at welfare priorities and syndromes in the sheep sector. Several presentations about novel methods of tailing and castration that reduce pain levels to lambs.

National Farmers Union and National Sheep Association

Many varied and wide-ranging discussions but key areas of concern would have exports and border control posts, welfare in transport, welfare at slaughter, livestock identification, traceability and data storage, the electronic medicine hub, the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway,

APHA Surveillance Conference

Discussions around all areas and levels of surveillance, particular interest in checks at border control points and lessons learned from the avian influenza (AI) outbreak.

VMD – Rory Cooney

One to one meeting to discuss the vaccine supply issues faced by vets and farmers. Gained a greater understanding of the issues facing manufacturers post Brexit and the Covid pandemic. Reassured that VMD does everything in its power to keep products on the market.

Sheep Event – Malvern

Took time to network key Defra colleagues with various industry figures to help facilitate a better understanding of issues in the sheep sector.

Sheep Breeders Round Table

Instigated an industry debate about the impact of advanced breeding techniques on sheep welfare. Are we in danger of breeding sheep that are no longer 'fit for purpose'. Looking at genetic influences on animal welfare.

Sheep Postmortems and Surveillance

Several meetings' discussions with private and APHA vets to explore the issues in developing a nationwide postmortem service for farmers.

DIT Swiss Exchange

Represented the sheep industry and AHWBE on a Department for International Trade (DIT) sponsored exchange with Switzerland to explore the possibilities of co-operation and market access. I was particularly keen to interrogate their world leading animal welfare and evidence behind it. Hosted the Swiss delegation on our farm providing an insight into the UK sheep industry.

Tech Care Sheep Welfare Group

Four-year EU project looking at how technology can positively impact sheep welfare. Trying to develop early warning systems to indicate welfare issues using new technology.

Annex A: Animal Health and Welfare Board for England vision and strategy

Vision

Leading thinking on a new, inclusive cross-cutting 'One Health' balance that champions evidenced high standards of animal health, welfare and sustainable productivity across government and wider society.

Strategy [Tactics]

1. Support government development and signposting of a *sound evidence base* to measure and manage growth through balanced animal health, welfare and *sustainable productivity* within a wider 'One Health' approach for society over the next three to five years.
[Deliver a One Health approach -working effectively with medics to manage risks of AMR and Zoonotic disease; Launch and Deliver the AHandW Pathway for kept animals]
2. Support government to deliver a new cross-cutting agenda by *building connections* to achieve a resilient, innovative balance between animal health and welfare, the environment, human health and food security.
[Measure and manage Environment and Climate Change with Food security, A H and W]
3. Control or eradicate key endemic, exotic and zoonotic disease of kept animals
[Launch and Deliver the AHandW Pathway for kept animals]
4. Improve education/KE/Skills of all animal keepers/stakeholders.
[Work with D of Education and other organisations, to promote training on food security, health and welfare, including responsible pet ownership]
5. Promote the traceability and authentication of biosecure food and all kept animals in *international trade*.
[Listening to consumers and markets to foster global markets and manage trade risks at borders using EID and LIS]
6. Manage conflicts and threats to the vision of achieving the One Health and sustainability balance through Animal Health and Welfare through providing a *forum for leading consensus*.

Annex B: A to Z of issues discussed at board meetings from 2020 to 2022

- African Swine Fever
- Animal Health and Welfare Pathway
- Animal medicines availability and contingency planning around supply chain issues/resilience
- Animal Welfare
- Animal Welfare Labelling
- Annual Health and Welfare Review
- Anti-Microbial Resistance
- Avian Influenza
- Bacteriology and food safety
- Border Control Issues
- Borders and trade matters
- Bovine TB
- Companion animals
- Contingency Planning
- Electronic ID: Equine and Bovine
- Epidemiology/Risk Analysis/Modelling
- Equine ID consultation and pathway
- Equine vaccines and trade
- Evidence - project work
- Food security and supply chain resilience for farming
- Food Data Transparency Partnership
- Genetic Technologies
- Government's Food Strategy White Paper
- Greenhouse gases, Impact of – reducing feed additives
- Impact of current external global events
- Import Controls Infrastructure prevention and biosecurity at the border
- NOAH report on vaccinations
- Non-penetrative captive bolt device as a killing method for neonate piglets, lambs and kids
- One Health Strategy document
- Payment by Results
- Penalty notices, consultation for the secondary legislation and guidance
- Regulation and Enforcement
- Resource management
- Science capability for animal health (SCAH) programme

- Sentience Committee
- Veterinarian capacity and capability