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**To:**                           **1. Minister of State**                           **2. Secretary of State**

**Date:**                           **12 September 2012**

## **BOVINE TB: PROPOSED CHANGES TO CATTLE MOVEMENT CONTROLS**

1. On 11 September 2012, the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England considered a recommendation from the TB Eradication Advisory Group (TBEAG) in support of four proposed changes to cattle movement controls for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in England.
2. The Board recommends that you agree the proposed changes.

### **Background**

3. EU law requires the UK to have an accelerated Eradication Plan for bTB. In order to benefit from EU co-financing (€31.2m allocated to the UK for 2012) the UK is required to submit for the European Commission's approval, the final version of its Eradication Plan for 2013 by 15 September 2012.
4. In July 2012, Ministers agreed the Board's recommendation that Defra should seek the European Commission's agreement to the Plan in the most cost effective and proportionate way possible. Specifically Defra should seek agreement to the 2013 Plan on two key issues: (i) a new approach to bTB testing in England; and (ii) further tightening of TB movement controls in England where we are not yet complying with EU law. Ministers also agreed the Board's recommendation that Defra should carry out an informal consultation with key stakeholders on the tightening of movement controls
5. TBEAG had the opportunity to review the stakeholders' responses and, whilst accepting that a further tightening of cattle movement controls is unwelcome, agreed that it is necessary to bring the UK Eradication Plan towards full compliance with EU law and to assure EU co-financing for the 2013 Plan. The Board also agreed, noting that Defra's priority in negotiations with the Commission should also be to ensure that whatever it does makes sense from a domestic disease control and policy perspective.
6. TBEAG and the Board emphasised the need for careful communication of the rationale for the proposed changes focussing on the disease control benefits, and for further discussion with stakeholders on how the impact (e.g. of tighter rules on restocking and of the phasing out of Approved Quarantine Units) can be mitigated. Defra noted that it was developing a communications strategy and that it would continue working with the industry to mitigate the impacts on businesses.

**Michael Seals, Chair of Animal Health and Welfare Board for England**