Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Note of meeting on Tuesday 11 April 2017

Attendees

Chaired by: Michael Seals
Members: Yvonne Ball
                      Mike Clark
                      Graeme Cooke
                      Nigel Gibbens
                      Chris Hadkiss
                      Claire Horton
                      Stewart Houston
                      Tim Morris

1. Meeting Opens

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting. Apologies were received from John Bourne and Richard Davis. The minutes and note of the January Board meeting were agreed in correspondence and have been published. There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Local Authority Enforcement – Steph Young (National Animal Health & Welfare Panel) & Donna Sidwell (Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers)

2.1 Steph Young (Staffs CC, and National Animal Health & Welfare Panel) and Donna Sidwell (Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers) presented the National Trading Standards (NTS) Intelligence Operating Model (IOM) which provides an intelligence framework to support local authorities and to help regional trading standards groups and the NTS Teams to deal with regional and national enforcement needs.

2.2 The model promotes the importance of collecting and recording each piece of information to build the overall intelligence picture and ensures a structured approach to decision making, allocation of resources and partnership working.

2.5 The Board expressed enthusiasm at the model and its potential for fusing intelligence into a management decision making tool. The Board also acknowledged the
benefits of a Threat Assessment being produced as a way of identifying key strategic threats based on intelligence and horizon scanning problems.

3. EU Exit

3.1 A discussion took place to gather the Board’s views on the best way to engage with stakeholders on EU exit issues.

4. Disease Outbreak Capability

4.1 APHA presented the new animal disease outbreak response model which was tested for real during the recent avian influenza outbreak. It is designed to provide a more flexible, scalable and resilient disease response, enabling more remote working and less movement of people.

4.2 The live response highlighted that existing contracts were used to good effect and the business as usual activities were able to continue alongside the response work.

5. Animal Health Surveillance

5.1 The Board was given an overview of animal health surveillance network, including progress of the Animal Health Surveillance Governance Board (AHSGB) and reviews of veterinary scanning surveillance in England and Wales.

5.2 The independent Surveillance Advisory Group (2012) review and ‘Surveillance 2014’ (S2014) resulted in the development of a new surveillance model, placing greater emphasis on shared responsibility and partnership working between government, universities, vets in practice and the livestock industries. This includes partnerships between APHA and non-APHA providers for post-mortem examination (PME) services and sources of animal health information and data.

5.3 The Chair of the AHSGB highlighted following issues on behalf of the independent AHSGB members:

- The need for more veterinary scanning surveillance manpower as they are currently severely overstretched, which is unsustainable.

- PME/investigation centres have decreased in England and Wales as a result of S2014 and this needs to be balanced by the increased digital or electronic collection of information from other sources.

- The AHSGB is aiming to deliver measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) and these are in development.

- Some livestock sector councils are ahead of others with their data collection and utilisation.

- There is a need to look at ways of further building intelligence and use of developing technology (eg data mining would be useful).
• The Defra-led review of the AHSGB has been completed and the findings are expected to be published at the end of April.

• A challenge for surveillance is how we continue to engage with intelligence networks outside our borders.

• It is vital to avoid duplication, and that is where AHWBE can help by helping to ensure that use of Government and industry funding is focussed.

• There are frustrations that it is hard to engage with certain players because there is useful data out there that could be integrated, but that the merging and use of different datasets is proving a barrier.

• The importance of surveillance in terms of the changes with Brexit and the maintenance of trade and the sustainability, safety and security of livestock production in the UK.

5.4 The APHA Surveillance Intelligence Unit (SIU) plays a leading role in developing and managing integrated veterinary scanning activities and evaluates the effectiveness of the surveillance system.

5.5 The Surveillance 2014 change programme and subsequent review and modifications has resulted in all farms in England and Wales having access to the surveillance service network – before it was approximately half of farms.

5.6 The AHWBE acknowledged and welcomed the benefits of partnership working in the surveillance programme to date and for the future.

6. AMR

6.1 The Board heard a presentation on the AMR implementation plan and its projects. It noted the overarching objectives which include:

• Antibiotic use reduction targets as a means to reducing resistance and establish sector-specific targets.
• Antibiotic stewardship, including restrictions (potentially bans) on use in animals of critically important antibiotics for humans.
• Improved surveillance – use and resistance, animal and environment.
• Prevention of disease, including use of vaccines/alternatives to antibiotics and biosecurity.
• Protection of environment against manufacturing effluent pollution.
• Research to further understanding of emergence and transmission of AMR, including in the environment.
• International action to protect the UK from the threat of AMR arising elsewhere and to maintain UK status as an international leader on AMR.
• Promotion of a ‘one health’ approach to AMR across HMG and internationally.
6.2 The Board noted the overarching objectives and stated the importance of considering available integrated schemes for the 2018 action plan.

7. Animal Health & Welfare R&D

7.1 The Board discussed the animal health and welfare research programme and department’s vision that supports its activities using evidence, to drive innovation and to inform, implement and evaluate policy.

7.2 The Board welcomed the vision for the strategy for the UK by 2020 to have created and harnessed new knowledge and technology that will transform the ability to:

- systematically predict, detect and understand key UK animal and plant health problems and emerging threats in real time;
- direct sophisticated and rapid responses to prevent and mitigate impacts, thereby increasing effectiveness and efficiency within our agri-environment and wider ecosystems and landscapes.
- In parallel, it will have created the optimal environment for developing and trialling new interventions, stimulating inward investment and the development of new products and services by SMEs and large national and multinational companies.

8. Livestock Information Project

8.1 The Board discussed a range of policy ambitions that could be delivered through the livestock information programme. It noted the suggestions for:

- the elimination of paper records for pigs and sheep,
- removal of paper cattle passports and changes to the way cattle movements are reported, Implementation of the holding register derogation for cattle keepers
- Implementation of Bovine EID
- Competent Authority to issue horse passports
- Elimination of paper passports for equine identification with identification and food chain status recorded electronically.
- Public access to Central Equine Database for checking that a horse is correctly identified (chip checker) and for pre-notifying a record change through the database (public interface) in parallel to the legal requirement to notify to a Passport Issuing Organisation
- Accessibility of the database[s] to more enforcement agencies on a real time basis
- Pigs - Piglets - allow to move to shows / back (to same premises) - with their Sow - identified with temp paint marks
- Abattoirs - facility to report carcass feedback - for any animal with an official electronic identifier
• Sheep & Goats - allow moves to holdings within a keeper's business to be batch recorded on the system.
• Electronic on farm Holding Registers - Sheep/Goats/Pigs - (keepers) to be available online - on the system
• Remove recording requirement on keepers moving animals through a gathering point.
• Tolerance - notify e-reporting keepers when the number of animals they'd notified they sent - did not tally with the number of animals with EID tags scanned at the destination / gathering point
• Better lifetime movement reporting of an animal with an EID chip - including if moving across borders within the UK
• Collection of Food Chain Information (FCI) for any animals going to an abattoir.

9. RDPE Animal Health and Welfare Project and the bTB Advisory Service Project

9.1 The Board was updated on the progress of the RDPE Animal Health & Welfare Project and bTB Advisory Service project. It made a formal request to include Porcine Reproductive Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) in the project and looked forward to working with officials as the project progresses.

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 The next full Board meeting is on 11 July 2017.