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To: Minister of State for Agriculture and Food
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Publication of Summary of Responses to the AHWBE 'Call for views on strengthening our TB eradication programme and new ways of working'

Issue

1. Publication of the Summary of Responses to the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England's informal stakeholder engagement on bovine TB - 'A call for your views on strengthening our TB eradication programme and new ways of working'

Recommendation

2. The Board recommends publishing the Summary of Responses on its website, together with verbatim reports from the four regional workshops. This will ensure transparency and foster continued dialogue with the industry on bovine TB.

Background

3. The Board led an informal stakeholder engagement on bovine TB from 10 September to 19 October 2012. The aim was to establish a dialogue with a wide range of industry, veterinary and other stakeholders on several strategic issues including different approaches to tackling TB, delivery of TB testing, reactor removal and compensation, advice and support, and insurance. The engagement was clearly described as the start of a process to gather evidence to inform future advice to Ministers. The engagement included a 6-week period for written submissions, four regional workshops, and an online forum hosted by Farmers Weekly.
4. On 11 December 2012, the Board considered the draft Summary of Responses. It welcomed the Summary and recommended publishing it on its website together with the verbatim reports from the four regional workshops.
5. The key messages from the engagement are:
 - Support for improving the efficacy and quality of TB testing of cattle.
 - Support for targeted action on the edge of the endemic area to stop the disease spreading.
 - Support for risk-based measures including movement controls and trading
 - Mixed views on seeking Officially TB Free Status for regions of England.

- Support from most farmers and vets for badger controls.
- Support for cattle vaccine development.
- Potential wider use of lay TB testers to reduce costs.
- Disadvantages and advantages of making farmers pay for TB testing.
- Importance of ensuring the quality of TB testing in any new delivery model.
- Agreement that TB reactor removal should be quicker and farmers should have more control over it.
- Concerns about reducing compensation for TB reactors.
- Support for incentives and more education to improve bio-security
- Support for the role of local vets in providing support and advice.
- Concerns about the availability or limitations of insurance.

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