

Animal Health and Welfare Board for England
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To: Minister of State for Agriculture and Food
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Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for England

1. On 3 April 2012, the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England considered a draft paper entitled 'Guiding principles for animal health and welfare policy and delivery in England' which its Strategy subgroup had developed on the basis of feedback from stakeholders at a workshop in February 2012 and input from NFU and AHDB-EBLEX observers. The paper sets out principles and outcomes and is intended to provide a basis against which to challenge development of animal health and welfare policy and its delivery in England.
2. The Board welcomed the draft paper and noted the importance of explaining to stakeholders exactly what it meant in terms of roles and responsibilities. The Board decided that it was vital to make real progress on controlling and eradicating bovine tuberculosis (bTB). The Board welcomed the concept of working with the sectors to develop a measurable action plan.
3. The Board proposed minor changes and agreed the draft as attached and decided to convene another stakeholder workshop in late May 2012 to discuss the draft paper and being to develop the action plan. This work will contribute to the proposed new action in the Defra Business Plan – 'Publish the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for England by December 2012'.
4. The Board recommends that you note the draft paper and the proposed stakeholder workshop.

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

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE POLICY AND DELIVERY IN ENGLAND

For the first time, independent people with relevant knowledge and skills; together with Government officials are, through The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England, making direct recommendations to Ministers on animal health and welfare. Public health must be protected from animal related threats (such as disease, food contaminants and anti-microbial resistance) and animal welfare must be assured. There is also a need to manage overall risk, and costs of animal disease to industry, taxpayers and the wider economy.

We must make sure that investment in disease prevention and management is effective and delivers value for money. Roles and responsibilities for animal health and welfare must be agreed, understood, transparent and acted upon by all, including animal keepers, Government and others.

These guiding principles have been prepared in consultation with the Board, animal keepers, those involved in food production, those who provide support to companion and competition animals and other interested parties. This document clearly sets out the principles we must apply and the outcomes we will jointly achieve, committing us all to specific actions, but retains essential flexibility for new challenges to be met as progress is made.

Purpose

In developing and delivering animal health and welfare policies in England we must be guided by a clear statement of purpose which will guide our actions and decision making.

The purpose of acting on animal health and welfare is to:

- *support sustainable food production and the competitiveness of the livestock industry;*
- *protect public health from animal related threats; and*
- *promote good welfare for all kept animals.*

Principles

Through the work of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England, we will be guided by the following principles:-

1. Roles and responsibilities of animal keepers and Government agreed and a fair balance of costs achieved.
2. Animal keepers to develop greater self-reliance and Government to provide strategic support where needed.
3. Actions are transparent, evidence based and achieve maximum value for money.
4. Encourage innovation and adoption of alternative approaches.
5. Government, animal keepers and relevant bodies working together to ensure that legal obligations on animal health and welfare are effectively achieved.

6. Risk based and targeted inspections; rewarding greater professionalism and higher standards from animal keepers.

Outcomes

Through the application of these principles we will achieve the following outcomes:-

1. The risks of incursions of exotic diseases should be reduced; but when they occur they must be quickly eradicated. Endemic diseases must be tackled, brought under control and eradicated where appropriate.
2. Best practice on disease prevention and animal welfare embedded across all sectors. Good animal health and welfare of all kept animals which in turn can improve the competitiveness of livestock keepers and benefits the wider industry and society.
3. Bovine Tb to be eradicated in England.
4. Sustained consumer confidence in food we produce from livestock.

Specific actions

[These should be developed and managed in partnership and where appropriate owned by individual sectors (Sector Councils?) who will set out how they will deliver these objectives. Non-Executive Board Members will need to engage with relevant (to their portfolios) sector councils and stakeholders to help them develop their Action Plans.

Government will also need to set out how it can/will review existing policies in light of the new Action Plan]