



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Animal Health and Welfare Board for England Annual Report 2017

April 2018



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## Introduction from Lord Gardiner of Kimble

I am pleased to introduce the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England's 2017 Annual Report. 2017 was a very busy year for Defra not least as we continue our preparations for EU Exit. It has also been a year that has seen successful responses to the detection of Bluetongue and Avian Influenza, both of which could have had a devastating effect on animal and poultry keepers. The Defra funded advisory scheme to help farmers whose herds are at risk of bovine TB to access expert help on protecting their animals was launched. The department made important contributions to the anti-microbial resistance strategy. Proposals were developed to crack down on puppies being reared in unhealthy circumstances and animal abusers could now face up to five years in prison. Important updates have been made to animal welfare codes for meat chickens, equines, dogs and cats. It was also announced that sentience of animals will continue to be recognised and protections strengthened when we leave the EU; and plans were announced that CCTV will be mandatory in all slaughterhouses in England.

These are, of course, just a few of the achievements of which we can be proud. I am particularly grateful to the Board members for their input, sharing knowledge and expertise in facilitating discussions with industry on a range of issues, including future farming and the development of the livestock information programme.

I extend special recognition and thanks to Professor Nigel Gibbens for his highly valued contribution to the department and the public service as he retires as the Government's Chief Veterinary Officer after 10 years in the role. Nigel is succeeded by Christine Middlemiss. I offer Christine a warm welcome as she returns to Defra after serving as the CVO for New South Wales, Australia since August 2016.

At the time of publishing this report we are in the middle of a public consultation on future farming policy - *Health and Harmony: The future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a green Brexit*. The consultation sets out the policy framework for agriculture after the UK leaves the EU. I would encourage contributions to this consultation. The full consultation is available on line <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>

The AHWBE continues to be the principal departmental source of strategic animal health and welfare advice to ministers. They play an essential role bringing industry insight and expertise into government and communicating government aims with all animal-keepers. I

look forward to working with the AHWBE, in the coming year in advancing animal health and welfare.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, and Lords Minister**



## Introduction from Michael Seals, Chair of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Welcome to the latest Annual Report for the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.

Events in government, not least the May 2017 General Election and 2016's EU referendum, have prompted us to revisit and refresh the Board's role. I am delighted that Ministers have agreed a new mandate and work plan for the Board.

The Board has an important role to play going forward, not least in acting as a conduit between government, industry and the animal keeping sectors. We continue to act as a source of support, advice and constructive challenge to Defra, working collaboratively with policy teams to aid the development of policies that will enhance productivity alongside animal health and welfare in the future.

We have worked hard behind the scenes to build and sustain stakeholder networks, further developing an ethos of partnership working between government and industry. In doing so, we laid strong foundations for the significant challenges ahead as the UK plans its exit from the EU. The Board's work plan 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. In 2017, we refreshed the non-executive membership of the Board to ensure we are well placed to help deliver that work plan.

Looking forward, there is a real and exciting opportunity to influence the direction of future animal health and welfare policy, with particular focus on anti-microbial resistance, biosecurity, surveillance and the livestock information programme. In 2017, we conducted an initial round of discussions with the major species sector animal health and welfare groups to discuss priorities, barriers to action and scope for improvements. This has led the Board to conclude that the opportunity for continuous improvement of animal health can be achieved across all sectors. To facilitate this the Board has made a recommendation to Ministers on the need to consider transitional funding to support industry in realising the government's goal of maintaining the high level of welfare that currently exists and in responding to EU Exit. Further information can be found here [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ahwbe-recommendation-to-allocate-funds-for-animal-health-and-welfare](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ahwbe-recommendation-to-allocate-funds-for-animal-health-and-welfare)

It is critical we now build on this initial engagement to ensure all those with an interest are contributing to the significant task ahead. I cannot stress enough how important a constructive and two-way dialogue will be in securing the best possible outcomes for

industry and government. I very much look forward to working on the identified priorities in the year to come.

I would also like to thank my departing Board members, Mike Clark and Richard Davis whose contribution to the Board has been immense. I welcome the new members who have joined the Board in 2017.

For the first time in many years we have a real opportunity to shape our future. Partnership will be the key and a commitment to continuous improvement. Our aim as a Board in the year ahead is to lay the foundations for future success.

**Michael Seals**

# About the Board

## Mandate

The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) will support UK EU exit and post-exit strategic policy objectives by providing support, 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:

- articulating clearly 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/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 (e.g. in relation to laboratory capability, surveillance and co-ordination).

### **Specific areas of focus:**

- Support and develop policy evolution in the context of EU Exit.
- Maintain and develop sector council and industry communications, in the context of EU exit.
- Support the department to incentivise best practice in endemic disease control and in reducing Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).
- 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, starting with Livestock ID and movement.
- 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**

Board membership currently consists of four executive members and six non-executive members.

In 2017, following the departure of Richard Davis and Mike Clark, the Board recruited three new members - Gwyn Jones, Jonathan Statham and Daniel Parker. They were selected for their collective breadth of industry knowledge, experience and influence, as well as their impressive individual capabilities within their specialist sector. Their appointments strengthen the existing membership and ensures the Board has a wide reach across the industry sectors for the challenges ahead.

## **Non-Executive members**

### **Michael Seals MBE, Chair**

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 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.

## **Yvonne Ball**

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**

Claire has been the chief Executive of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home since 2010. She has spent 27 years working in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Her specialist areas include dogs, cats and equines. Claire is the Chair of the Association of Dogs & Cats Homes (ADCH) - the membership body representing over 130 large and small animal charities UK-wide. She is a founder member and sits on the steering board of the Canine & Feline Sector Group (CFSG) and is 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**

Stewart is a past Board member of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and currently sits 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.

## **Tim Morris**

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**

After teaching and running the beef and sheep units at Moulton College of Agriculture in Northamptonshire, 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 (2004-2010) and Vice President (2010-2012). He is past member of

several national and international committees/boards, predominantly linked to the dairy sector.

Gwyn 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 bench-marking across all sectors. He is also 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.

### **Jonathan Statham**

Jonathan studied veterinary medicine at Cambridge, subsequently working in both general and specialist cattle practice in North Yorkshire. He is CEO of RAFT Solutions Ltd, a company delivering innovative research, advanced breeding and training solutions supporting food sustainability and is a Partner of Bishopton Veterinary Group. Jonathan is Past President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) and Yorkshire Veterinary Society. He has served on various representative and industry groups, including the GB Cattle Health and Welfare Group, Veterinary Policy Group of the British Veterinary Association and was a director of Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS). He is an examiner at Liverpool University, member of Nottingham Dairy Innovation Forum and serves on the Veterinary Products Committee of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, having previously served on the Veterinary Residues Committee. He holds the RCVS Diploma in Cattle Health & Production and is a RCVS Recognised Specialist in in Cattle Health & Production.

### **Daniel Parker**

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/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/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.

## Executive members

### **Nigel Gibbens**

Professor Nigel Gibbens is the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer. He was appointed in May 2008 following previous experience in the State Veterinary Service and in policy roles on international trade, TSE research, surveillance and controls, animal welfare and international relations co-ordination for Defra's Food and Farming Group. Prior to joining the UK government service in 1990, Nigel worked in private practice in his early career and in Government veterinary services in Belize and Yemen.

Nigel retired from the Civil Service at the end of February 2018 after nearly 10 years in the post. We'll be catching up with Nigel over the coming months to reflect on his decade as Head of Profession for the Government Veterinary Service.

### **Graeme Cooke**

Graeme was appointed Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer for the UK in 2017. His responsibilities include supporting the Government on animal health and welfare issues, appropriate advice to Ministers, strategic planning and leading the Defra response to outbreaks of exotic animal disease and other threats, including public health. He works closely with all UK administrations, negotiating on behalf of the UK Government with the EU and internationally. He also previously worked in Defra from 2001-2007, with responsibilities including international trade and equine health.

### **John Bourne**

John became the Director for Animal and Plant Health in February 2017. John returned to Defra from the Department for Transport where he had been working on the High Speed 2 (HS2) project, having previously been the Defra Project Director for the Thames Tideway Tunnel until 2015. Before that, he held various roles in Defra relating to the livestock sector and animal welfare, having joined from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office where he specialised in the Middle East and spent some years in the region. He is also a qualified veterinary surgeon.

### **Chris Hadkiss**

Chris Hadkiss has been 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 is responsible for the delivery of the agency's services and is the accounting officer for the budget.

Each non-executive member is responsible for engaging with a defined portfolio of internal and external stakeholders (table 1).

**Table 1. Non-Executive Director Board Member Portfolios**

<b>Tim Morris</b>	<b>Stewart Houston</b>	<b>Claire Horton</b>	<b>Yvonne Ball</b>	<b>Daniel Parker</b>	<b>Jonathan Statham</b>	<b>Gwyn Jones</b>
Equine	Pigs	Companion Animals	Aquaculture	Poultry	Sheep	Bovine
Goats Camelids	FSA		Exotics			
Comms	Sector Councils	Comms				
Livestock Information Programme	Livestock Information Programme		Legal	Vet	Vet	
	AMR			Surveillance	Surveillance	AMR Surveillance
Trade and Regulation	Trade and Regulation			Trade and Regulation	Trade and Regulation	Trade and Regulation
Post Brexit Planning and Delivery						
Welfare						
Enforcement						

## Looking Forward

On 1 March 2018, Christine Middlemiss joined Defra as the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO). Christine was previously 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 is returning 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.

## Summary of Board activity

The Board have engaged on a number of wide ranging issues over the course of the year as outlined below. Notable highlights include **EU Exit**, including post-Brexit arrangements, as well as working with Defra teams to develop **future farming** policy and the **livestock information programme**.

### EU Exit

In April 2017, a discussion took place to gather the Board's views on the best way to engage with stakeholders on EU exit issues. The Board followed this up by engaging with sector councils for their input. In October, the EU Exit team updated the Board on its work, preparing for EU exit and beyond. This was split into three themes – legislate (ensuring legislation works post-Brexit); negotiate; and build.

In July the Board was given an overview on the then impending Withdrawal Bill and devolution. The Bill repeals the EU Communities Act and the supremacy of the European Court of Justice. It was explained that its main aim is to preserve existing EU related law, for citizens and businesses, on the day the UK leaves the EU.

The Board offered to provide help to develop a programme of stakeholder engagement.

### The Future of food, farming and the environment

At the July meeting the Board participated in a workshop session designed to collect its views to help shape the animal health and welfare aspects of future farming policy.

The Board's views were gathered on where they'd like (and not like) the industry to be 20 years from now; the issues that need to be tackled to achieve those goals; the rationale for intervention and barriers to action.

The policy teams met individual Board members in sub-groups over the following weeks and discussed policy ideas in more detail. The Board followed this by facilitating meetings with the pig, cattle, poultry and sheep sector health and welfare groups. Industry views were collated on what are the key disease challenges for each sector, how to improve health and encourage industry to take action and how to strengthen industry capability for non-regulatory health issues. The feedback from the meetings has fed into the policy development.

In December the Board recommended that Defra Ministers consider allocating funds in future for a transitional period to support the livestock industry in improving the health and welfare of the nations' farmed animals. It was on the basis that it will help the industry achieve greater competitiveness and productivity, an enhanced national reputation to meet



the future trade environment, and deliver wider public benefits such as lower antimicrobial use and improved biosecurity.

Ministers have undertaken to take the Board's views into account when considering how agriculture funding can best be used to secure a better future for UK agriculture and the environment.

## **Disease Outbreak Capability**

In April APHA presented the new animal disease outbreak response model which was put into action during the recent avian influenza outbreak in early 2017. It is designed to provide a more flexible, scalable and resilient disease response, enabling more remote working and less movement of people. The Board welcomed the feedback that the live response highlighted that existing contacts were used to good effect and the business as usual activities were able to continue alongside the response work.

## **Avian Influenza Update**

The Board was updated on the 2016/17 avian influenza H5N8 outbreak and the subsequent housing order, prevention zone and poultry gathering ban in place. The Board praised the work of Defra in its handling of the disease outbreak.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

## **Effective stunning of poultry**

The British Veterinary Association presented its concerns to the Board, in January, on the need to set parameters for the stunning of poultry in the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015, and proposed that legislation be amended to reflect its concerns.

After discussion, the Board felt on balance that there was not a need for legislative changes. The Board noted that the EU Regulation 1099/2009 set down the parameters for stunning of poultry, and whilst those stunning before religious slaughter did not have to follow those parameters, they did have to ensure the stun was effective. The Official Veterinarians can stop the process if they have evidence that there is avoidable pain or suffering being caused to an animal. The Board felt the existing legislation enables the vet to act with the information available.

## **Revision of Welfare Codes under the Animal Welfare Act**

The Board has been actively involved throughout the year in discussions on revising the statutory welfare codes. The statutory codes provide guidance to producers and animal keepers on how to comply with relevant animal welfare legislation. They can be used as evidence in court and are used by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to support compliance and enforcement activity.

Some codes precede the Animal Welfare Act and are outdated, and it was recognised that other more recent codes made under this Act would also benefit from review. Updated codes relating to farm animals can incorporate the latest veterinary and husbandry advice to help and encourage producers to improve and modernise their practices and raise their standards of implementation. In relation to companion animals the codes are directed towards animal owners and handlers, and updated codes can again provide the latest advice on how to provide for animals' welfare needs.

The Board was pleased to encourage engagement with each sector and with their support the welfare codes for meat chickens, equines, and dogs and cats, were updated and laid before Parliament. Codes for meat chickens came into force on 26 March 2018, and the rest on 6 April 2018. Public consultations have also taken place in relation to updated codes for Pigs and for Laying Hens.

## **Revision of Animal Activities Licensing**

The Board has been involved throughout the year in the revision of animal activities licensing where the scope of the existing regulation has become inadequate for current business models. The board has been very involved with supporting the extensive and detailed sector-led input into the revisions, and encouraging new thinking on scope and modern enforcement.

The Board was gratified with how sectors so actively contributed to the draft legislation and collaborated. The government committed to bring forward this legislation in 2018.

## **Reducing dog attacks on livestock**

For many years there have been reports of dog attacks on livestock, especially sheep. In part driven by the use of social media, there have been increasing concerns about the scale and impact of these attacks. The Board actively initiated and led Defra's engagement with the Police, 'Sheepwatch', wider stakeholders and Parliamentarians.

This work revealed a significant and unrecognised national problem with 15,000 sheep at year being attacked, led to an enquiry and substantive report by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), features on the BBC Countryfile programme and the Six O'clock news, and to a report from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

The primary issue is irresponsible dog ownership, where the Canine and Feline Sector Group is now progressing work on research and solutions. There are also Police, farmer reporting and legislative deficiencies as detailed in the APGAW and NPCC reports. Recommendations included that Defra support specific updates to relevant legislation such as an updated definition of 'livestock'. The government considers that changes to the

definition of “livestock” in the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 might be achieved through a Private Members Bill.

## **Local Authority Enforcement**

The Board discussed enforcement of national animal health and welfare legislation at the January meeting. The challenges faced by Local Authorities were acknowledged. The Chair updated the Board on his recent visit to DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) to discuss how animal health and welfare enforcement is carried out in Northern Ireland.

This was followed by a presentation in April from Steph Young (Staffs CC, and National Animal Health & Welfare Panel) and Donna Sidwell (Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers) on the National Trading Standards (NTS) Intelligence Operating Model. The Model provides an intelligence framework to support local authorities and help regional trading standards groups and the NTS Teams to deal with regional and national enforcement needs.

The Board expressed enthusiasm for 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. Defra is currently progressing this with the NTS Intelligence Team to produce a report based on areas of concern with the support of the project steering group and Michael Seals on behalf of the Board.

## **Livestock Information Programme**

In January the Board discussed the analysis and stakeholder engagement from the livestock information programme. It included information on the wide and detailed stakeholder meeting across all the sectors, which were held in December 2016 at Stoneleigh. The Board offered constructive, challenging and innovative approaches which were widely supported.

A clear direction on roles, a robust digital approach, and partnership beyond the core government functions was emerging and being further developed with stakeholders. The Board welcomed this approach and continued its strong support of this way of working with stakeholders.

In April the Board discussed a range of policy ambitions that could potentially be delivered through the livestock information programme, including:

- Implementation of Bovine Electronic ID (Bovine EID), and the holding register derogation for cattle keepers; the elimination of paper records for pigs and sheep; removal of paper cattle passports and changes to the way cattle movements are reported.

- Competent authority to issue horse passports, and the 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 and for pre-notifying a record change through the database in parallel to the legal requirement to notify to a Passport Issuing Organisation
- Pigs and piglets to be allowed to move to shows and back (to same premises) - with their Sow and identified with temp paint marks; allow sheep & goats to move to holdings within a keeper's business to be batch recorded on the system.
- Electronic on farm holding registers for sheep, goats and pig keepers to be available on the online system.
- Remove recording requirement on keepers moving animals through a gathering point.
- Notify e-reporting animal keepers when their recording figures don't tally with the number of animals with EID tags scanned at the destination or gathering point.
- Accessibility of the database(s) to more enforcement agencies on a real time basis; better lifetime movement reporting of an animal with an EID chip - including if moving across borders within the UK.
- Abattoirs - facility to report carcass feedback - for any animal with an official electronic identifier; and collection of Food Chain Information (FCI) for any animals going to an abattoir.

At the July meeting the Board was updated on the progress of the Bovine EID adoption strategy which is part of the livestock information programme.

The Department is developing with industry what a new set of traceability rules with digital at their heart would look like. If implemented these would support EU Exit and global trade with a traceability system that would help us open up other markets around the world.

Moving to digital and EID for cattle has the potential to drive a major efficiency gain for both Defra and industry - an enabler for a revolution to precision livestock farming.

- The Board discussed potential implementation requirements and options. These included an agreed EID numbering protocol across the UK; BSI standards for EID identifiers; a new Ear Tag Allocation Database System; a new EID number for every animal; every animal to be fitted with an EID identifier, either new instead of the visual only tags or in addition to them; and readers that translate the animal ID from an ear tag to the traceability database.
- The Board encouraged the programme to explore incentives to adopting EID, including aligning tagging with testing, and saw its role as communicating the benefits of bovine EID more widely.

Board members helped broker agreement on key issues where there were differences in approach between sectors and between industry and government. Board members also acted as a sounding board, listening to ideas and concept and advising on an approach.

## **Animal Health Surveillance**

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

This was followed by discussions at the July and October meetings on the review of AHSGB which is up for renewal in March 2018, where the board highlighted the importance of having the right structure, skill base, membership and scope for development.

The Board discussed the benefits of strong surveillance interlinks between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the effective and robust surveillance models in other countries across Europe.

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

## **Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)**

The Board acted as a sounding board for the direction of travel with the AMR implementation plan and the inclusion of infectious disease control. It was content with the proposed approach, agreeing with the split of work between core Defra and VMD.

In April 2017, the Board heard a presentation on the AMR implementation plan and its projects, noting the following overarching objectives:

- Antibiotic use reduction targets as a means to reducing resistance and establish sector-specific targets.
- Antibiotic stewardship, including potential restrictions 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 the 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 government and internationally.

In October, the Board was updated on progress of the current five year action plan, and plans for a revised/new AMR strategy plan which is due for publication late 2018. The international drive to lower the use of antibiotics continues, and the EU published an updated action plan in June 2017.

The Board was informed of the national level key achievements including the published UK Strategy commitments, a reduction in antibiotic sales in animals, backed up by evidence of a drop in usage rates, and the productive and collaborative engagement between government and industry sectors. The board was updated on the target taskforce collaboration between the industry and the government which has since published the Sector Specific Targets report in parallel with the VMD surveillance report (VARSS).

Further discussion was had on ambitions for the next strategy and communication plan. The Board provided the AMR team at the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) with its views on the key priorities for the strategy. They will be discussed throughout the drafting process and the Board is expected to have the opportunity to comment further on future AMR ambitions.

## **Animal Health & Welfare Research and Development**

In April the Board was given a presentation on the animal health and welfare research programme which explained that the vision is for a department that supports its activities using evidence; to drive innovation and to inform, implement and evaluate policy.

The Board welcomed the overarching goal that by 2020 the HMG strategy should 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;
- 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.

## **Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Animal Health and Welfare Projects**

In April the Board made a formal request to the Rural Development Programme for England Animal Health and Welfare (RDPE) team to include Porcine Reproductive Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS) in the RDPE animal health and welfare project, as a priority issue that needs to be addressed. It offered to work with officials to develop the project.

The Board was updated on its progress at the October meeting, along with other Countryside Productivity projects, including the Bovine TB Advisory Service which was launched in October 2017. The Bovine Viral Diarrhoea project (BVD) was being finalised and the intention was to publish a revised tender later in the year. The Board sought assurances that the BVD project would be tendered as soon as possible. The tender was published in January 2018.

Industry has put together a working group with a knowledge base that could work with Defra in partnership design and include a PRRS RDPE business case.

Board members continued to challenge and support the routes to delivery of both of these programs looking for viability and value for money.

The Board has championed relationships across the UK and initiated a twice yearly meeting of equivalent representatives from the Devolved Administrations, to share information on developments and build where possible joint approaches to the issues of the day.

### **The Board also received updates on a range of topics including:**

- The remit and work of the Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG)
- Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)

## **Published Board meeting notes**

Published Board meeting notes, incorporating the information above can be found at:

January Board meeting note:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/603260/ahw-be-meeting-note-jan2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603260/ahw-be-meeting-note-jan2017.pdf)

April Board meeting note:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/634806/ahw-be-meeting-note-20170411.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634806/ahw-be-meeting-note-20170411.pdf)

July Board meeting note:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/648226/ahw-be-meeting-july2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648226/ahw-be-meeting-july2017.pdf)

October Board meeting note:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/669333/ahw-be-20171017-meeting-note.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669333/ahw-be-20171017-meeting-note.pdf)

## Non-Executive Director Engagements

### Tim Morris

During the year, Tim:

- Maintained close contact with the equine sector and participated in Equine Sector Council meetings, facilitated the sector's interactions with Defra and produced a paper for the Minister on future opportunities for Equine Health and Welfare;
- Met several times with the Defra Equine Team on Brexit impact on equine movement and identification and the Central Equine Database, in addition to working extensively across the equine sector on Brexit related trade issues;
- Attended national meetings with National Equine Forum, World Horse Welfare and the British Horse Society to represent the Board;
- Engaged extensively with the Equine and wider Pet Industry on animal activities licensing and presented the Pet Industry Federation (PIF) annual industry awards, and assisted a number of Commoners Councils on equine matters throughout the year;
- Maintained close contact with the sheep sector and participated in Sheep Health and Welfare Group meetings and facilitated the sector's interactions with Defra. Led Defra's work on dog attacks on livestock, with Police, 'Sheepwatch', wider stakeholders and Parliamentarians);
- Advised the All Party Group on Animal Welfare (APGAW) on animal welfare issues, with Claire Horton;
- Represented Defra at the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Rural Crime strategy review;
- Participated in a number of events related to the UK leaving the EU with the British Veterinary Association, the Poultry Industry, and the National Office for Animal Health;



- Met the Defra ID team to review overall ID strategy, met the deputy CVO, and attended a considerable number of the Livestock Improvement Programme meetings, in coordination with Stewart Houston;
- Participated in the Defra review of the Antimicrobial Resistance strategy, met Compassion in World Farming (with Michael Seals), and updated stakeholders on Board activities by producing regular email newsletters.

## **Yvonne Ball**

In the ornamental fish sector, Yvonne:

- Produced draft 'Care Sheets' providing guidelines for fish-keepers and is seeking feedback and endorsement from key organisations. A stakeholders meeting was held on 26 July to support this initiative.
- Reviewed the Animal Establishments Regulations (AER) to ensure hobby breeders are not inadvertently captured within the definition of 'commercial'.
- Engaged in the development of Minimum Licence Conditions for the AER. Set up a Brexit working group to pull together their ideas over the coming months. They provided initial views on Brexit issues, including a recommendation that Defra link up effectively with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Trade Facilitation Expert Panel and Business Reference Panel (a panel which brings together a wide range of government departments and business interests to look at a range of issues, including Brexit).
- Expressed concern about proposals for 'positive lists' of species that can be kept or traded (on the grounds of welfare, conservation, illegal trade and others) and suggest that the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Organisation stakeholders do all they can to educate people about the welfare needs of the animals they trade and keep.
- Met with the head of HMRC's National Clearance Hub (NCH) – the body that clears imports for release – following complaints that the introduction of a new IT-based telephone system has led to very long delays in checking the status of consignments. This has potential welfare implications for the fish that end up sitting in boxes on the tarmac for longer than necessary. HMRC are working to address the delays and the HMRC Board is aware.
- With Stewart Houston, attended a meeting with FSA Chief Executive to discuss issues in relation to welfare at the time of slaughter. Follow up conversation with FSA vet to discuss options for the future.

- Attended the inaugural Ornamental Fish stakeholder's meeting to discuss general issues and post Brexit requirements. Paper produced and circulated. Unanimous agreement from stakeholders that the meeting was successful and should become a regular event.
- Attended British Trout Association (BTA) workshop and AGM to discuss general issues and post Brexit requirements. The workshop included a presentation from an insurance company who are developing new products and sought industry guidance in relation to the likely take up of products to cover disease outbreak, loss of stock, loss of trade and for secondary cleaning and disinfectant. Engaged with BTA in relation to their project on fish transport and welfare at time of slaughter.

## **Stewart Houston**

During the year, Stewart:

- Worked with the livestock information programme Traceability Design User Group to agree critical success factors and new terms of reference. Further meetings will focus on lessons learned from other sectors who have attempted changes to ID and traceability.
- Engaged with the N8 Universities Workshop, and a range of stakeholders, on AMR. Outcomes included five partnership work programmes; including penside tests, anti-microbial alternatives, risk assessment to human health, animal health and wellbeing targets and knowledge transfer including advice to producers.
- Met Defra's RDPE team, and industry, to discuss the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) scheme and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS), and produced a paper for the Defra RDPE and Productivity teams linking PRRS reduction to the RDPE animal health and welfare projects. Also met with Scottish industry regarding PRRS.
- Worked with the Pig Core Group discussing issues including African Swine Fever, the UK feral wild boar population. Reviewed the core groups noting that the foot and mouth disease (FMD) group morphed into a Livestock Group after including Blue Tongue etc. with the pig representative as an invitee only. Given the risk that the pig sector poses in the event of an FMD incursion, the sector requested a more formal inclusion.
- Discussed animal welfare at slaughter with Jason Feeney, CEO of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Yvonne Ball.
- Attended the AHWBE Sub Group meetings for welfare and three sessions looking at animal health future farming.

Stewart attended the Fellows of the Royal Agricultural Societies (FRAGS) Future of Livestock Event and the National Pig Awards Trainee of the Year Interviews, in addition to completing eight pig farm visits in his role as chair of the National Pig Awards judging panel. He also attended the Animal Welfare Research Network, the Pig Health and Welfare Council (PHWC) Surveillance Sub Group meeting which, among other business, included discussions on a PRRS RDPE paper, and a meeting with the pig sector and Defra focusing on future farming policy and practice. Stewart attended the Pigs 2022 Conference, to see a new programme looking at making vaccination more effective, and use of phage's to replace anti-microbials, and represented the Board at the Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG).

### **Michael Clark (Board member from 2014-2017)**

During the year Michael:

- Attended the Poultry Vet Study Group of the EU held in Malmo, Sweden. The member state poultry vets reviewed their endemic poultry disease caseload for the previous six months.
- Attended the June British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA) committee meeting and summer meeting. The committee meeting focused on Anti-Microbial Resistance and Brexit. The summer meeting had speakers from industry, government and practice covering the topic, "Coping in a Reduced Antibiotic Landscape"
- Attended the Poultry Health and Welfare Group meeting at Stoneleigh in July.
- Attended the Nottingham Vet School Graduation and had discussions on new graduate over/under supply into practice, veterinary wellbeing and remuneration.
- Presented to the NFU turkey group on Avian Influenza with an emphasis placed on enhanced biosecurity.
- Attended the World Veterinary Poultry Association Conference in Edinburgh. The big themes were avian influenza research, vaccine technology (especially *in ovo*), AMR & immunosuppressive endemic diseases.
- Attended the British Free Range Egg Producers Conference in Birmingham. Discussions included the production systems will could fill the void if retailers stick to a 2025 ban of enriched cages, and English free range producers on the High Risk Area policy for Avian Influenza.

## Claire Horton

Over the year Claire:

- Worked with the Canine & Feline Sector Group (CFSG) to support DEFRA in the development of the new Licensing Regulations. Guidance is being written by an expert panel and sub-groups comprised of members from industry, welfare and veterinary bodies.
- With Tim Morris was invited to sit on a new APGAW Advisory Board to assist and advise MPs. The group will take a more strategic approach to addressing the bigger welfare issues.
- Liaised with Petplan to discuss negative press regarding insufficient checks on breeders before providing them with free insurance to pass on to new owners with puppies sold. On behalf of the sector Claire wrote to Petplan directly requesting information on what checks were in place before registering praetors on the database. Claire received assurance from Petplan that they were fully reviewing their procedures. Petplan agreed to meet with CFSG and the expert panel and share data on the breeding sale and claim numbers.
- Produced a Battersea Dogs and Cats Home report *Microchipping Where It Matters Most - One Year On*. The report surveys 53 Local Authorities across the UK, asking them to monitor each of the strays that they took in throughout the month of April 2017. The findings showed that microchipping and reunite rates have both significantly improved compared to 2016 (when Battersea ran a similar survey).
- As chairman of Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) and CEO of Battersea Claire worked with the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) and London Funders (handling the logistics of the aid distribution), in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire, giving cats and dogs temporary shelter until they could be reunited with their owners who remain in temporary accommodation.
- Claire discussed future national emergencies with DEC where a major companion animal response may be required, (following the arson attack at Manchester Dogs Home in 2014 that killed 150 dogs and injured dozens more, ADCH developed a national crisis response protocol that can mobilise a rapid response anywhere within the British Isles 24/7, including media and comms teams, welfare and veterinary teams and volunteer resources in the event of a major catastrophe affecting companion animals). ADCH have now been added to the national register for such incidents held by DEC.

## AHWBE Visit to Weybridge



The Animal Health and Welfare Board, led by Michael Seals, visited Weybridge on 18 May to visit the facility, meet scientists and talk about working better together.

The Board took a tour of some of the laboratories, beginning with the avian influenza laboratory with the Head of Avian Virology and Mammalian Influenza. They discussed the role of APHA as a national and international reference laboratory during the recent outbreak. They visited the pathology facilities with the Head of Pathology and Senior Veterinary Pathologist to discuss the team's work. This included a visit to the histopathology facility and a discussion of the work carried out in the livestock facilities.

They finally met the Serology Operations and International Trade Laboratory Manager to discuss the laboratory testing that is carried out. We discussed existing statutory testing in support of international trade and observed the contingency exercise which was in progress to demonstrate that the teams and labs can work at high containment as required during a blue tongue or FMD outbreak.

Following the visit, Michael Seals said: "The AHWBE visit to Weybridge allowed us to see excellence at work. The Board was impressed not only by the site itself, the diversity of activity and professionalism of the staff, but the high esteem that the international community hold Weybridge in, is supported by your being a reference laboratory in many differing areas. I'd also like to thank Chris and the staff for their time in showing us your facility."

# Annex A: Animal Health and Welfare Board for England Work Plan 2017-18

This work plan seeks to identify more specifically where the Board will focus its attention over the coming year. It remains a living document that will be reviewed and updated in keeping with the changing policy environment and needs of Defra. The Board will work closely with the secretariat and policy/delivery teams to achieve this.

Objective	Activity
<p><b>1. To act as a sounding board/constructive challenge to policy and delivery teams in the formulation and delivery of policy – supporting evolution in the context of EU exit.</b></p> <p>[Priority areas: Antimicrobial Resistance, Biosecurity, Surveillance (inc. review of the Surveillance Governance Board), Livestock Information Programme]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Quarterly 1:1's with policy/delivery teams. Ad-hoc advice/discussions and providing constructive challenge as required, within members portfolios.</li> <li>b) Identify and explore options for post day 1 improvements/simplification of regulation to reduce unnecessary burdens, working with policy/delivery teams.</li> <li>c) Provide strategic direction on the UK's input into Smarter Rules for Safer Food (new EU regime for official controls and animal health) ensuring that UK influence is focused on maintaining and enhancing biosecurity at the border and within country, and testing implementation strategies to ensure opportunities for using this package as a vehicle for change in the lead up to EU exit and beyond are fully explored.</li> <li>d) Contribute to annual audit of the effectiveness of animal disease contingency plans.</li> <li>e) Contribute to post-outbreak lessons learned exercises, as required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To facilitate two-way engagement and communication with stakeholders (particularly using networks to target stakeholders that are more difficult to reach or have strong/opposing views), during the formulation and</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Revisit and refresh the strategic communications plan, identifying the critical/key stakeholders and stakeholder groups (e.g. farmed species health and welfare groups, key stakeholder meetings/events and stakeholders more difficult to reach or have strong/opposing views) across all members portfolios.</li> <li>b) Targeted stakeholder engagement activity in line with the strategic comms plan and also as agreed with policy/delivery teams, to meet identified needs. This includes working with APHA to support the following areas:</li> </ul>

<p><b>delivery of policy.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ encouraging industry to adopt/embrace digital transformation;</li> <li>○ helping improve the standard of sampling submission by private vets/others.</li> </ul> <p>c) Bi-annual Sector Council Chairs meetings.</p> <p>d) Actively use networks to identify and help promote latest innovations, research opportunities and best practice within industry (where appropriate). Aid knowledge exchange between government and industry (in the theme of improving farming productivity), helping to inform future policy and research priorities.</p> <p>e) Gather and feedback intelligence to relevant policy teams/senior officials (via Secretariat and liaison meetings) on key issues/concerns within industry, including reactions to government proposals/policy, and highlight examples of best practice/successful policy in OMS's.</p>
<p><b>3. To advise Ministers on implementation of animal health and welfare proposals within the new agri-environment policy.</b></p>	<p>a) Support and advice for animal health and welfare projects under the current round of the Rural Development Programme for England, and helping to support work to consider the approach post-2019.</p> <p>b) Sub-group meetings with policy leads to identify and discuss the key issues to inform the development of future farming policy from an animal health and welfare perspective.</p> <p>c) Lead stakeholder engagement through the sector led health and welfare groups to identify and discuss the key issues to inform the development of future farming policy from an animal health and welfare perspective.</p> <p>d) Dedicated challenge/discussion sessions at Board meetings, along with discussion on progress and next steps.</p> <p>e) Recommendations to Ministers (as appropriate) and work to identify/articulate the role of the AHWBE in helping to deliver the new agri-environment policy for Animal Health and Welfare.</p>
<p><b>4. To work collaboratively with FAWC and TBEAG to align work plans; maintaining a</b></p>	<p>a) Work with policy teams to identify and prioritise policy questions, thereby contributing to FAWC work plans. Subsequently aiding FAWC's evidence gathering, considering and providing an early view on the deliverability/potential</p>

<p><b>dialogue to share information and discuss issues of common interest.</b></p>	<p>industry reactions to FAWC outputs.</p> <p>b) Tri-annual meeting of three Chairs and Secretariats. Ongoing dialogue of AHWBE/FAWC/TBEAG Chairs, as need arises.</p> <p>c) Information sharing/communication by Secretariats.</p>
<p><b>5. To maintain a dialogue with counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in order to discuss common issues, share best practice and feed back into policy/delivery teams to aid joining up across UK.</b></p>	<p>a) Bi-annual four Chairs meeting with feedback to Defra/agencies on key issues.</p> <p>b) Ongoing information sharing/communication with counterparts in Devolved Governments.</p>
<p><b><u>Capability Building</u></b></p> <p><b>6. To help build the pipeline for the future AHWBE non-exec membership.</b></p>	<p>a) Identify (with input from industry) and mentor potential candidate – all AHWBE non-execs.</p>



# Annex B: A-Z of issues discussed at Board meetings

Animal Licensing

Animal Welfare Codes

Anti-Microbial Resistance

Avian Influenza

British Veterinary Association presentation

Cattle Health and Welfare Group presentation

Disease Outbreak Capability

EU Exit

Future Farming Policy

Livestock Information Programme

Local Authority Enforcement

Research and Development

RDPE animal health and welfare project

Surveillance

Withdrawal Bill and Devolution