



Dear Stakeholder,

Independent review to develop future surveillance model for England and Wales

I am writing to inform you of the creation of a new and independent group to advise on a future delivery model for surveillance in England and Wales. The Advisory Group is chaired by Dirk Pfeiffer, Professor of Veterinary Epidemiology at the Royal Veterinary College, and includes experts from government, the veterinary profession, livestock farming and a commercial laboratory.

The provision of effective veterinary surveillance is a high priority for AHVLA and the Group has been created in order to help ensure that we fully consider the views of stakeholders in developing our future surveillance delivery model.

AHVLA is seeking to identify ways to undertake surveillance both more effectively and at an affordable cost. Work in this area has been in progress since 2010, but the merger between the former Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) has created new opportunities to review how surveillance can best be delivered. The new surveillance delivery model will aim to address imbalances in the current service where provision sometimes outstrips demand. The Advisory Group is also expected to recommend how improved methods and better integration of different surveillance data streams potentially involving several stakeholders can result in more efficient and effective surveillance.

Surveillance has historically been based on in-depth investigation of disease incidents with an emphasis on post-mortem examinations carried out at AHVLA's regional laboratories. This activity is a key element in the government's risk-based approach to the management of animal disease related threats.

The current model, although successful in identifying diseases in the past, can be improved upon. A recent internal AHVLA report¹ identified possible options for achieving better surveillance at the same or lower cost by, for example, adopting risk-based approaches and

¹ Available at: http://vla.defra.gov.uk/science/sci_surv_model.htm



working more closely in partnership with veterinarians and their farmer clients, as well as utilizing other surveillance data sources.

AHVLA is also conducting an [online survey](#) (until end of January 2012) aimed at veterinary practitioners and livestock keepers. The survey will seek individual opinions on the inputs, mechanisms, outputs and value of surveillance in England and Wales. The Advisory Group has been involved in the design of the questionnaire and will consider the results of the survey during this review process.

The review is expected to be completed by early March 2012, following which recommendations on a way forward will be made.

Further details, including of the composition of the Advisory Group and its terms of reference, and the online survey are published on our website at: http://vla.defra.gov.uk/science/sci_surv_model.htm. I urge all those with an interest in veterinary surveillance to contribute their views.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Hall

Veterinary Director

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