

APPENDIX E – report on consultation carried out in 2009

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Introduction

1. In line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics we welcome comments from users on how well this publication meets their needs, and we will consider any suggestions for improving it in future years. Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, good practice includes publishing information about users' experiences of the format and timing of reports, and assessing the cost burden on data suppliers (which should not be excessive) relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

2. As part of the 2008 publication we sought views, evidence and comments from users on potential changes to the publication format and contents. In particular, we indicated that we welcomed comments and evidence on the following specific points:

- (i) for each table (including online Supplementary tables and Time Series tables) how often do users make use of it, how is the table information used and for what purpose, and for each of the online-only tables what would the impact be if the table were not published, or if the publication frequency were reduced to triennial (every three years)*
- (ii) for each section of the Commentary, how often do users make use of it, how is the information used and for what purpose, and what would be the impact if the section were no longer published?*
- (iii) In what format should tables be published? In particular views are invited on (a) making all tables other than the general tables (Tables 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5) available online only and (b) providing online tables in Excel format rather than in pdf format*

We indicated that specific examples of usage of the material were particularly welcome, as well as suggestions for improvements to the existing presentation, and views on how useful particular sections of the current publication are.

Conducting the consultation exercise

3. Feedback was requested via the consultation document (copy below and at the link <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/spanimalsconsult.pdf>) which was posted alongside the publication of the 2008 publication and also on the Home Office consultations page (see <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065544/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/haveyoursay/closed-consultations/2008-cons-closed1/index1ddb.html?version=16>).

4. Information about the consultation was also provided to a range of stakeholders and to project license holders. Details of the consultation were also included in the statistical news

release accompanying the statistics

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065544/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/haveyoursay/closed-consultations/2008-cons-closed1/index1ddb.html?version=16>

5. One response was provided by telephone and the details summarised and confirmed by email exchange. Other responses were forwarded either from the Home Office's Public Enquiry Unit or via ASPD.

Key findings and future actions

6. Responses indicated use of the tables, the commentary and the summary 'Main points' section. The summary and the commentary were recognised as useful and there were requests for more detailed analysis of the data as well as increased information on specific subsets of the data and more detailed versions of existing tables.

7. Additionally a number of helpful points were made and consequently the 2009 publication includes publication of underlying tables in both Excel and pdf formats, as well as some other presentational improvements for example greater highlighting of the definition of a procedure used for the purpose of the statistics. A couple of areas commented on more than once as areas for potential improvement were

- data on severity of procedures carried out
- a greater breakdown/explanation of the data relating to the outcome of breeding procedures

8. Due to the relatively small number of responses it is difficult to know how representative they were of the publication's readership. Along with limited resources, and data availability and confidentiality considerations, a number of the substantive additions to the content are not currently possible. It would also be unnecessarily burdensome on data suppliers to make changes to the data collection ahead of any other potential resulting from the Revision of EC Directive 86-609. Equally no content has been deleted from the current edition, and a number of formatting and presentational points have been improved. However the responses received will be retained and considered for the future.

Summary of responses

9. As part of the publication of the 2008 edition of Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals a consultation was conducted seeking

views, evidence and comments from users on potential changes to the publication format and contents. In particular, we would welcome comments and evidence on the following specific points:

(i) for each table (including online Supplementary tables and Time Series tables) how often do users make use of it, how is the table information used and for what purpose, and for each of the online-only tables what would the impact be if the table were not published, or if the publication frequency were reduced to triennial (every three years)

Two responses indicated use made of a wide range of the existing tables (one response providing detail relating to individual tables), and benefits of retaining the Time Series online tables. Both indicated scope for reducing production or frequency of other online tables. Other respondents did not comment on individual table use in detail but noted that there are transparency benefits to continuing to publish the tables

“If the report was abridged or not updated each year, it would create the impression that regulation of research is not transparent”

(ii) for each section of the Commentary, how often do users make use of it, how is the information used and for what purpose, and what would be the impact if the section were no longer published?

The Commentary was recognised by respondents as useful as well as the summary of main points that precedes it

“we find that the list of main points that precedes the commentary is very useful and sufficient for highlighting the main changes that have occurred. However, we do recognise that the commentary is extremely useful for identifying trends and for a more immediate overview of the current animal usage trends in the UK for those that do not perform their own analysis”

“...finds the commentary and graphs useful, but \diamond considers that it would be easier to digest if presented in a more condensed way with more accompanying analysis e.g on the reason why particular numbers have gone up or down.”

“I use the commentary for background material for teaching regarding animal research (see point above). However, the commentary is not as critical as the statistics, but it is useful in that it highlights new trends”

(iii) In what format should tables be published? In particular views are invited on (a) making all tables other than the general tables (Tables 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5) available online only and (b) providing online tables in Excel format rather than in pdf format

Comments indicated that publication of tables in Excel in addition to pdf would be beneficial. There was a mix of views regarding making tables available online.

“In our opinion the online tables should be published both in pdf and Excel format. Excel files would be extremely useful for analysis, as this is how we sort and utilise the statistics. A searchable pdf version is more useful for display and printing purposes.

If any of the Tables needed to be deleted we would suggest that Tables 4, 5 and the time series tables 20-27 are perhaps the most expendable. However, in the interests of transparency and public accountability a better option may be to make them available via the on-line resource rather than be deleted all together. “

“Having hard-copies of the core tables 1-5 is preferable for <> as these are used most frequently. Publishing tables 6+ online only would be acceptable. Providing online tables in Excel as well as PDF format would be an advance, as spreadsheets enable easier analysis of data and the production of graphs.”

“putting in different formats [Excel instead of pdf] would be controversial or problematic for the journalists”

“pdf format greatly preferred”

“Publication of the statistics in PDF format inhibits re-analysis of the data. For instance, when I present Figure 1 (trend in animal use over years), I have to use a bitmapped image of the graph, but having the data in Excel format (or tab-delimited format) would allow me to create my own graph. In fact, the most transparent action would be to publish the raw data from returns stripped of any information that would identify individual institutions or researchers.”

Specific examples of usage of the material will be particularly welcome, as will suggestions for improvements to the existing presentation, and views on how useful particular sections of the current publication are

A range of helpful detailed comments were made on formatting and presentation. There were also a range of suggestions for improvements, notably for greater analysis, and for the collection and publication of additional information not currently collected, and for changes to current classifications. Areas identified by more than one respondent included the presentation/interpretation of information on breeding (to produce GM and HM animals), and on severity.

Annex 1 – copy of consultation document

Consultation on the annual statistical publication *Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain*

Background

1. Section 21(7) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 requires that the Secretary of State publish and lay before Parliament each year information about the use of protected animals in experimental or other scientific procedures during the previous calendar year in Great Britain (publication of Northern Ireland statistics is a separate exercise under devolved arrangements). Copies are placed in the House Libraries.

2. The annual publication *Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain* is produced within the National Statistics work programme and as such is subject to the UK Statistics Authority's *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, under the Statistics and Registration Act 2007. Although the statistics must be laid before Parliament annually as proscribed under the 1986 legislation, there is potential scope for changes to formats and to the detailed content, subject to the available resources, and balancing the needs of users against the burden on respondents and on providers which must be proportionate.

Scope of the consultation

3. This consultation seeks views, evidence and comments from users on potential changes to the publication format and contents. In particular, we would welcome comments and evidence on the following specific points:

- (i) for each table (including online Supplementary tables and Time Series tables) how often do users make use of it, how is the table information used and for what purpose, and for each of the online-only tables what would the impact be if the table were not published, or if the publication frequency were reduced to triennial (every three years)
- (ii) for each section of the Commentary, how often do users make use of it, how is the information used and for what purpose, and what would be the impact if the section were no longer published?
- (iii) In what format should tables be published? In particular views are invited on (a) making all tables other than the general tables (Tables 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5) available online only and (b) providing online tables in Excel format rather than in pdf format

Specific examples of usage of the material will be particularly welcome, as will suggestions for improvements to the existing presentation, and views on how useful particular sections of the current publication are.

Consultation process

Responses to this consultation should be sent to the address below (post or e-mail) by 31 October. 2009. The responses will then be analysed in order to inform the publication development. We plan to publish a summary of responses to the consultation and decisions made, in due course.

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