



Department
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Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Annual report: 2013/2014

May 2014

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Introduction from George Eustice MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

I'm delighted to introduce the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England's 2014 Annual Report. The year just past has been an important one for the Board with its chance to reflect on its first two years, assisted by the independent evaluation of the Board. It is clear that its ways of working have evolved as time has gone on, which is as it should be, and I'm sure the Board will continue to develop and strengthen in the years ahead. The Board remains unique in Whitehall in that it brings together external appointees and senior civil servants to work jointly on strategic policy questions. We greatly value the Board's input and advice to us on all strategic animal health and welfare matters. Their advice has included a range of issues from the high profile work on the TB Strategy to lower profile but no less important work on, for example, disease in camelids or animal welfare codes.

It is now more important than ever to provide excellent value for money to the taxpayer. Our challenge is to improve how those involved in animal keeping or the production of food and other products from animals work together in generating innovative solutions in relation to disease prevention and control, animal welfare and other related issues. The Board has proved adept at facilitating that kind of innovative thinking.

As I told the NFU earlier in the year, this Government backs the business of British farming; together we are growing the rural economy. An important part of that is preventing animal disease, since the economic effects of serious outbreaks can be severe. Farmers and other animal keepers play a vital role in assisting prevention; reporting diseases when they occur; and stopping them from spreading. Good animal health and welfare is central to our livestock industry and also to the enjoyment of all forms of animal keeping. The public knows that too – correspondence about animal welfare dominates my postbag as a Minister. With that level of commitment throughout our industry and society I am confident that we can all work together to ensure the best possible conditions for the raising of our animals. I'd like to thank the Board for its work to date on this and to wish it well for the year ahead.



George Eustice MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Farming, Food and Marine Environment

Overview from Michael Seals MBE, Chairman of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

The AHWBE was established to help bring government and industry closer together and, using our collective expertise to tackle the policy challenges this important sector generates. This year our performance has been evaluated by Brook Lyndhurst, an external body, and the report of that evaluation has just been published. The Board will learn lessons from this and continue to develop open government within Animal Health and Welfare (AH&W) policy.

Our way of working over the year has changed as we learned lessons partly from our own experience and partly as a result of the evaluation. For example, we now have fewer Board meetings but more intensive discussion, whilst our non-executive membership has become better embedded with Defra's policy teams. Challenge through the Board is now firmly a part of the policy-making agenda within Defra. At the same time we have sought to improve communications through: direct email, the many visits non-executive members have made to external organisations, and the two-way flow of information between animal keepers and related businesses and government that has been established.

The change is internal as well as external and our experience is that the Defra teams have accepted the change and challenge that we bring and have worked with us to develop a constructive working partnership alongside the non-executive members of the Board.

Unsurprisingly, public sector finance is an issue that dominates the Board, Defra and government as a whole. In order to demonstrate the pressures we have consciously sought to draw attention to the financial picture. The Board has an Evidence and Finance Sub Group and regular financial reports are made to the Board.

Within Defra, AH&W is a Ministerial priority but we should not underestimate the scale of the challenges ahead. With a reduced departmental budget this year, and therefore also within AH&W, added to the significant public sector spending review in 2015, we can expect further cuts. For those who are sceptical about these challenges, 30% of AHVLA staff have left in recent years and buildings have been emptied and sold. The cuts are real and have been implemented. But you reach a point where further savings cannot be made without cuts to services. The Board's role in this landscape is to find new ways of working and ensure essential services are delivered.

This report offers a number of case studies of the activity of the Board over the year. Yet again TB has dominated the year, not only in spending terms but in policy making and the development and announcement of a comprehensive strategy for the eradication of TB. Here I must pay a tribute to the Board's sub group, TBEAG, chaired by John Cross. With contributions from many key stakeholders, that group has worked closely with the Defra TB team to develop the strategy; its report for the year is justifiably found below amongst our highlights. The strategy itself outlines a pathway of action, it will be worked up into a deliverable business plan over the year ahead and again offers the opportunity to industry to participate.

Other areas of Board activity are too numerous to list here but may be found in the Annexes at the back of this report. Highlights include the work on disease compensation, reform of farm animal welfare codes, and on disease outbreak preparedness.

In looking at last year's priorities there has been progress on each of the four: the TB Strategy has been published and now we move to deliver the changes. The compensation review is underway, as is a continued dialogue internally and externally on the new EU AH&W Law. In the context of the Macdonald farming regulation task force report, the Board has recommended a comprehensive update of livestock data management.

In the year ahead our twin priorities will be collaboration, partnership and shared contribution across all parties, and continued building of good working relationships across sectors.

Finally, throughout this year I have been ably supported by our Board members, non-executive and executive alike to whom I would like to place on record my thanks for their work on the Board alongside our support team.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Seals". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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

About the Board

Introduction

The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) met for the first time in November 2011. It was established to bring external experience and perspective into the heart of the decision-making process. The Board's remit contrasts strongly with the traditional Whitehall model, bringing together independent non-executives with relevant knowledge and skills, and senior government officials under the independent chairmanship of Michael Seals to become the principal source of Departmental advice to Defra Ministers on all strategic animal health and welfare policy matters relating to kept animals (excluding the welfare of zoo and circus animals) in England.

The Board's Terms of Reference are publicly available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ahwbe-terms-of-reference> and remain unchanged. Feedback from colleagues in industry shows, however, that the Board's role needs to be better communicated. What follows is an attempt to set out that role as effectively as possible.

The Board's Remit and Role

The Board is a principal source of Departmental advice to Defra Ministers on all strategic health and welfare matters relating to all kept animals in England. The Board's authority derives from Defra Ministers and it works within the policy framework they set.

The Board's chief responsibilities are:

- Developing strategic policy and budget priorities within the vision and parameters laid out by Defra Ministers;
- Leading and building partnership working between government and industry, working towards shared responsibility for cost and the delivery of services;
- Building capability, capacity and engagement in the sectors of industry allowing them to engage in policy development and service delivery.

In addition, the Board may assess:

- the risk of threats from animal disease and how to manage these;
- surveillance and research priorities

- the implementation of policy, and value for money achieved by the relevant Defra agencies and other delivery organisations;
- the effectiveness and proportionality of the regulatory framework;
- the operational plans of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency in relation to animal health and welfare in England and the delivery of those plans;
- the contingency plans for dealing with new disease outbreaks and for reviewing these plans on an annual basis (or as circumstances require). These should provide for speedy and effective day-to-day management by officials in the event of the outbreak.

The Board agrees and publishes high level recommendations to Ministers, which Ministers expect to accept in most cases. The Board's work preparing recommendations cannot be published as it is exploratory or confidential, but the Board seeks to communicate its areas of focus and issues under discussion.

Working in Defra

The AHWBE works closely with the officials covering animal health, welfare and disease policy in Defra. Its members build relations with policy officials and make themselves available for informal discussion as well as formal consideration of papers.

The full Board meets eight times a year, unless dictated otherwise by business need, but much of the most important Board work is done in smaller task and finish groups with Defra policy teams between meetings; sub groups are able to agree time critical issues amongst themselves or by correspondence, again as dictated by business need. The Board is served by a secretariat based in Defra. The secretariat will seek to drive down costs and generate efficiencies in running the Board, wherever possible.

Membership

There are four executive members (Defra's animal health and welfare policy Directors, the Chief Veterinary Officer and the Chief Executive for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency) and six non-executive members. Each non-executive member is responsible for engaging with a defined portfolio of internal and external stakeholders (table 1).

Non-Executive members

Michael Seals MBE, Chairman

Michael Seals farms 250 acres of arable crops with a pedigree South Devon herd in South Derbyshire. He is Chairman of the National Fallen Stock Company. Michael has previously been a trustee of the British Horse Society, sat on the National Farmers Union (NFU) Council and was Chairman of the NFU National Food Standards Committee.

Richard Davis

Richard Davis farms 104 hectares in North Bedfordshire; recently the farm policy and type of cows being farmed has been dramatically altered. The farm has 210 crossbred cows giving 5,500 litres of milk per year from a forage-based diet.

Richard is a Farmer-Director of First Milk Ltd and chaired the First Milk Sustainability Group for 6 years. He is committed to improving dairy cow health and welfare and is a Privy Council Lay Member at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and is on the Board of Assured Food Standards. Richard chaired the Red Tractor Dairy Farm Assurance Scheme for 6 years and was vice chairman of AHDB DairyCo for 5 years.

Stewart Houston

Stewart Houston is Chairman of the British Pig Executive (BPEX), Board Member of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, and has been Chairman of the National Pig Association. He has been a pig producer in North Yorkshire since 1970, is Managing Director of Microware Pig Systems Ltd, and has had high-level jobs in the National Farmers Union. Stewart is a Non-Executive Director of the Scottish Rural College (formerly the Scottish Agricultural College) and has been awarded a CBE and a David Black Award for his sustained contribution to the British pig industry.

Tim Morris

Professor Tim Morris is a science and welfare advisor to a number of organisations; involved in thoroughbred racing and breeding, other equine organisations, and commercial organisations related to animal care and use. 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.

Stuart Roberts

Stuart Roberts farms 500 hectares in Hertfordshire and Kent. The farms consist of organic cereal and suckler beef enterprises. Stuart also works part time for the UK's biggest beef processor, ABP UK. He is the former Chief Executive of the British Meat Processors Association and prior to that spent eight years in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, where he was involved with many aspects of livestock and animal health policy. Stuart has a degree in Agriculture and Business and is a Nuffield Farming Scholar. He is also a Board Member of Assured Food Standards, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Butchers.

Jonathan Rushton

Jonathan Rushton is an agricultural economist who specialises in the economics of animal health and livestock production – an interest that grew from living and working on the family dairy farm. He is involved in research in the UK and Europe, and has extensive international experience of livestock production and the control of animal diseases in South America, Africa, Nepal and South East Asia. During the response to the global avian influenza outbreak in 2006 he worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and he continues to provide advice to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)/FAO/World Bank Working Group on the global control of foot and mouth disease. He is currently a senior lecturer and researcher in animal health economics at the Royal Veterinary College, and a member of the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health.

Mark Tufnell

Mark Tufnell runs a family farm in the Cotswolds. He studied veterinary science and land economy at Cambridge and then qualified as a Chartered Accountant and Tax Advisor. Mark has a post graduate diploma in Advanced Agricultural Business Management from the Royal Agricultural College. He chairs several groups including the Agriculture and Land Use National Committee of the CLA (Country Land & Business Association) and the Audit & Risk Committee of the Three Counties Agricultural Society. He is a former Cabinet Member for the Environment and Communities at Cotswold District Council and was previously a Secretary of State nominee on the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

Executive members

Nigel Gibbens

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.

Chris Hadkiss

Chris Hadkiss was appointed Chief Executive of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) in January 2013. Prior to this, he was Executive Director in charge of Operations at the Forensic Science Service. Chris started his career with the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory, working on a wide range of criminal investigations for both UK Police and foreign governments. During his career, he was heavily involved in the creation of the National DNA database. He also spent time working as the Advisor on Forensic Science at the Central Finance and Policy Group of the Home Office and then as an independent forensic consultant.

Lee McDonough

Lee McDonough is the Defra Director for Animal Health & Welfare (Disease Control) Directorate and her remit covers animal welfare; bovine TB; disease response capability; animal movements and ID and corporate customer for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency. Lee is a career civil servant, and has worked in a number of policy areas before joining Animal Health and Welfare including nuclear safety and environmental radioactivity policy, food safety and marine policy.

Alick Simmons

Alick Simmons is the UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer. He was appointed to Defra in 2007 and has number of policy responsibilities including zoonoses controls, aquaculture health, surveillance, research and risk assessment. In 2012, he became Director for Plant Health.

Apart from a spell in private practice in the UK early in his career, Alick has spent most of his career involved in livestock disease control, animal welfare and food safety at a national level. From 2004 – 2007 he was the Food Standards Agency's Veterinary Director. Previously, he has held a variety of policy, advisory and operational positions in the UK and overseas involving the control of animal diseases with public health and economic significance.

Table 1 Board Member Portfolios

	Michael Seals (Chair)	Stewart Houston	Richard Davis	Stuart Roberts	Tim Morris	Jonathan Rushton	Mark Tufnell
External Stakeholders	Farming associations	Pigs and poultry (incl. farmed game birds)	Dairy, beef and sheep		Equidae (e.g. horses and donkeys)	Exporters and importers	Other farmed animals (incl. goats, camelids and aquaculture)
	Other government departments, devolved administrations and local authorities	Animal welfare organisations	Feed industry and animal by-products industry	Livestock auctioneers	Companion, zoo and exotic animals	Food industry	Veterinary profession
		Sector Councils	Farm Assurance & Levy Boards			Consumer organisations	Insurance sector
Cross Cutting Areas	Media	Animal welfare	Evidence, research and development				Public health (incl. The Department of Health)
		EU Animal Health Law	Livestock identification and traceability	Communications lead	Endemic disease programme development and sustainable livestock farming		
Defra	Defra Ministers	Animal disease surveillance and novel diseases	Livestock identification and movement controls		Animal disease surveillance and novel diseases	Global trade	Zoonoses (incl. Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies)
	Chief Veterinary Officer and Defra Chief Scientist	Animal welfare (incl. FAWC)	Animal by-products, farm animal exotic diseases, contingency planning	Bovine tuberculosis (incl. TBEAG)	Companion animal exotic diseases, contingency planning	Sustainable livestock farming	
	AHWBE Secretariat		Bovine tuberculosis (incl. TBEAG)				
Defra Agencies	Chief Executive Officer AHVLA	AHVLA	AHVLA and RPA/BCMS		AHVLA and VMD	AHVLA and FERA	AHVLA and CEFAS

Highlights of the year

The Board has conducted its business through a range of channels, including its formal monthly Board meetings, bilateral and multilateral direct engagement with a variety of people and organisations, and by working alongside policy teams. What follows offers a flavour, rather than a comprehensive picture, of that work.

Working with Defra Policy Teams & Other Interested Parties

Case Study 1: TB Policy

The Issue

Defra consulted between July and September 2013 on the draft strategy to achieve Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free Status in England. The AHWBE, alongside its sub-group, the TB Eradication Advisory Group helped to develop the draft strategy that set out, for the first time, clear targets and a timeframe to control and eradicate bovine TB in livestock and wildlife.

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together

An extensive range of consultation activities were planned to fully engage with the principle of open policy-making. AHWBE members were involved with Defra's launch events at livestock markets and ten stakeholder workshops held across the country. The aim was to have policy, veterinary, evidence and AHWBE representation in order to engage effectively with farmers, vets, land managers and wildlife groups on this important issue, and to encourage people to share their views and experiences with Government.

Impact/Achievement

AHWBE's involvement in the consultation stakeholder engagement helped to:

- Increase awareness of the consultation and draft strategy;
- Promote open policy making in the bovine TB and wider animal health and welfare areas; and
- Highlight the wide-ranging scope of the draft strategy through media coverage of the consultation launch.

Case Study 2: Exotic Disease – Compensation and Contingency plan

Compensation Review

The Issue

The Board has initiated a review, endorsed by Ministers, which aims to re-design compensation arrangements for animal keepers in the event of an exotic disease outbreak. The objectives include a clear and consistent policy and approach to valuation, and greater disease risk management by animal keepers.

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together

The Board has worked with policy officials to establish the following guiding principles:

- Achieves a fair outcome for an individual animal keeper, other animal keepers and taxpayers
- Incentivises compliance with control measures and facilitates effective implementation (prompt reporting, Cleaning & Disinfection)
- Incentivises animal keepers to take more disease risk management action
- Provides good value for money
- Is transparent, consistent and simple
- Meets Government, national and international obligations

Case Study 3: Exotic Disease Contingency Plan

The Issue

Annual review of the England contingency plan for exotic diseases of animals

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together

The policy team, AHVLA and Board members worked together on a different approach to this year's review involving direct discussion through a stakeholder workshop of issues faced in an outbreak, as well as more detailed comments on a revised text. The purpose of this was to emphasise and improve partnership working in an outbreak.

Impact/Achievement

The approach was well received. The revised plan now better reflects the shared responsibility between government, stakeholder organisations and anyone keeping an animal both before and during an outbreak. Cross cutting issues raised during the discussions are also being taken forward separately.

Case Study 4: Hot Branding of Semi-Feral Ponies

Issue

Development of a code of practice for the hot branding of semi-feral moorland ponies to help prevent poorly applied brands, and improve horse and pony welfare.

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together

Board and policy team worked closely together on development of the code. The drafting of the code was coordinated by Sandra Mansell of Native Ponies GB. Defra policy and veterinary advisors assisted with drafting, which had direct input from the Board. Welfare charities were also closely involved.

Impact/Achievement

Excellent cooperative work between policy officials, the moorland pony keepers and the Board ensured that a good quality, workable and practical Code of Practice was drafted, agreed, published and disseminated to the agreed timescale and with support of a wide range of interested parties.

Case Study 5: Setting up of the Canine and Feline Sector Group

Issue

How to ensure that a view from the wide ranging sector of canine and feline representative bodies is properly coordinated and fed through to the Board

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together

The Board and Defra policy team worked closely together on the establishment of the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG). The Group has elected a chair, and held a number of meetings. It has contributed advice to the development of Defra's Practitioners' Manual on the use of the anti-social behaviour measures to tackle irresponsible dog ownership. It is also developing a strategy document for 2014 and

beyond. The aim is to consider the strategic aims of: a) organisation of the sector b) health issues c) welfare considerations d) education.

Impact/Achievement

The CFSG is relatively new, but it has already made a positive impact with its comments on the Anti-Social Behaviour Practitioners' Manual, and providing coordination of views in a wide sector.

Case Study 6: Veterinary Delivery Partnership Project

AHVLA is seeking to modernise its relationship with private veterinarians in order to create a better balance between the needs of disease control, farmed livestock and veterinary businesses and the taxpayer. This builds on consultation undertaken in 2011 and 2012, which helped shape the delivery options under consideration.

The Veterinary Delivery Partnership Programme will award contracts to Delivery Partners in geographic lots to supply a flexible package of veterinary services. This will include tuberculin testing for TB in cattle, other government-funded services, such as brucellosis testing, and potentially other new areas of work, such as that piloted by the Welsh Government's *Cymorth TB* project. In doing so the opportunity to enhance quality controls and to market-test the price paid by taxpayers for such services will be taken in England and Wales.

This will be supported by a new approach for training and appointing individual vets to perform statutory work. In future training will be delivered by a commercial supplier who will provide a complete system of training, revalidation and administration but not authorisation. The cost of training will fall either to the individual or their employer in recognition of the business benefits accrued, but this will be offset by a considerable increase in the quality of service provided, which will be more accessible and consistent and, in-line with professional best practice, will allow revalidation. It will also improve the level of support provided to individual vets and their employers by adopting best practice for clinical governance and contribute to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It is anticipated that this training will be introduced in a phased roll-out throughout this year.

The target for implementation of new VDP arrangements is early 2015. There has already been prior consultation with potential suppliers, in accordance with best procurement practice. A solution has been sought that meets the current and foreseeable needs of England and Wales. The new relationship will:

- Better ensure the quality of testing being undertaken for disease.
- Be able to demonstrate value for money for the taxpayer and is compliant with the requirements of public procurement.
- Better supports private veterinarians working in an official capacity, including better access to quality training.
- Allows the veterinary profession to better support their farming clients and in doing so creates business opportunities.
- Is sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes in any future approach to disease control.

From the outset of the project, AHWBE has had representation, through Richard Davis, as a formal member of the Project Board and he has played an active role in the governance of the project throughout. Through Richard the AHWBE has been engaged from an early stage, providing critical consideration early on to the options under review to ensure that the most appropriate option was selected by the VDP Project Board to take forward to the Minister. Richard has since had an influence in all the major decisions taken by the Project Board from the Government Business Case to the selection of the Official Veterinarian Training Provider and many critical points in between.

From the Project Team's perspective the involvement of the AHWBE has helped ground the work in knowledge based outside government drawing on input from a range of industry and other stakeholder colleagues.

Case Study 7: Surveillance 2014 Strategy

The issue

Several reports, including the independently chaired Surveillance Advisory Group had recommended improvements in the way veterinary scanning surveillance in England and Wales was carried out. The current system was becoming unaffordable following the reduction in budgets.

What we did

The AHVLA set up the Surveillance 2014 project to advise ministers in England and Wales on a more appropriate scanning surveillance system for the future. A public consultation was carried out with regional workshops and an on-line questionnaire.

An AHWBE member attended each of the regional workshops and provided valuable links to the wider livestock industry. Stewart Houston from AHWBE sat on the Surveillance 2014 project board and provided guidance, an external perspective and much wisdom and challenge. The AHWBE reviewed progress and documents for

submission to Defra ministers providing constructive criticism and guidance to ensure that the strategy was sufficiently ambitious that it could be sustained in the long term.

Impact/Achievement

The public consultation achieved wide input with 221 people from 119 organisations attending one of the ten workshops, 113 answering the on-line questions and 43 ad hoc written contributions. Ministerial approval for the new system was given in November 2013 and implementation is underway.

The benefits of the new system will be-

- Improved coverage and representativeness of the surveillance system enabling early detection of new and re-emerging animal related threats.
- A widening of the surveillance network, to include private practitioners, other providers such as universities and AHVLA facilities.
- Increased stakeholder engagement and intelligence exchange with surveillance being a shared responsibility.
- Developing and maintaining skill levels of all those working within the surveillance system.
- Improved affordability and increased sustainability of the system.

Case Study 8: Successor to Rural Development Programme for England – ensuring an efficient and effective animal health and welfare component

The Issue

There will be funding for action on AH&W in the new rural development programme which opens for business on 1 January 2015; but the available budget will be less than before. Livestock keepers and Government need to make the best use of the money, for example to pump-prime non-statutory disease control models that can be sustainably delivered in future by farmers working cooperatively. Livestock sector leaders wish to encourage better control of endemic diseases to improve business returns and animal welfare. National level co-ordinated action is required to make this effective. The challenge was to bring all this thinking together to develop Animal Health schemes that meet Government criteria and address Animal Health issues that impact on rural productivity.

What the Board and Policy team did and how they worked together with livestock sectors

Through a series of discussion papers the Board developed and published a draft strategy for support for endemic disease control to be considered in the next round of funding for sustainable industry-led control programmes. With a shared vision between the RDPE link board member (Stewart Houston) and the policy team of what specific outcomes were required, the policy team received support from Board members to convene a series of workshops. This brought together livestock sector council chairs, vet sector reps, levy body reps, co-ordinators of previous schemes, Defra policy teams with RDP interest, and AHVLA species experts together to hear views on previous schemes, consider future schemes and explore what good disease control looks like. Attendees bought into the shared outcome of a common understanding of what a “good” RDP scheme could look like, and agreed to work collaboratively, listening and sharing.

A Defra policy adviser said:

“The ability of the AHWBE to challenge both industry and policy from an understanding of both perspectives was helpful in developing a successful discussion environment. Stewart Houston’s drive and determination has made this happen.”

Impact/Achievement

i) influence and support to the RDP policy team developing criteria for future schemes ii) co-ordination and co-operation within species sectors to work together to build and own potential solutions iii) experience and best practice sharing between species sectors. iv) ownership of a common objective by policy and industry v) the prospect of improved national endemic disease control leading to better farm and industry productivity and resilience vi) positive benefit realisation of RDP budget spend.

A Defra policy adviser said:

“I couldn’t have achieved this without the Board supporting the premise that endemic disease control funded through RDPE was a good thing – there was not the policy appetite alone for this to happen.

The benefit will be that this is a true piece of collaborative shared work across policy, the Board and industry, which (through some organisation by me and Board colleagues) will deliver with wider benefit for taxpayers. It has neither been policy

trying to get industry to do something or industry lobbying government, it has been shared working.”

Case Study 9: EU Animal Health and Welfare Law

The issue

The European Commission published proposals for a new EU Animal Health Regulation on 6 May 2013. The proposed Regulation will redesign the entire European legal framework for animal health, repealing more than forty existing Regulations and Directives, some of which date as far back as 1964. The Defra policy team has been responsible for developing a UK negotiating strategy aimed at achieving a text which is flexible, proportionate, risk-based and works well for all those involved in animal health in the UK.

What the Board and the policy team have done together

The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England has engaged strongly with the development of the proposed EU Animal Health Regulation. They've received regular updates from the policy team, both orally and in writing, and have made some comments. The Board will begin taking on much broader responsibilities once the base Regulation is agreed and consideration begins of how it is to be implemented.

Impact/Achievement

The policy team have continued to raise industry awareness of the proposed new regulation and identified opportunities for improvement in current animal health rules as well as working through possible practical implications for different sectors. This in turn is informing development of UK negotiating positions ahead of the next stage of negotiations.

Looking to the year ahead

As is clear from the case studies above, close partnership working between government and industry is at the heart of what the Board seeks to achieve. The year ahead presents both opportunities and challenges. For example, on TB control; as **Meurig Raymond, the new President of the NFU said:**

“The members of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England have worked hard to scrutinise government work on animal health, especially the direction of the TB Eradication Programme. Representatives have regularly attended our national and regional farmer boards to engage with the industry. As the recent

announcements on TB have shown, the work of the board is far from being complete if we are to have a balanced TB Eradication Strategy.”

The AHWBE very much looks forward to working with colleagues from across industry sectors in the year ahead.

Report of the Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group

Purpose

The Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group for England (TBEAG) is an expert sub-group advising the AHWBE and Defra Ministers on the development of a long term strategy for eradicating bovine TB and its implementation.

It takes an active role in communicating such matters to stakeholders, engaging regularly with the farming industry, veterinary profession and others.

Details of the group's members and highlight reports of meetings are published on the.GOV.UK website.

Highlights of the year

A high priority for TBEAG was working on the TB Eradication Strategy for England. Throughout the year it provided advice to the Defra team tasked with putting the strategy together. Published in April 2014, the strategy is an important and comprehensive document which, for the first time, sets out a route-map for eradicating bovine TB in England. The group is under no illusions as to the challenges ahead, but feels that eradicating this devastating disease from England is a target worth working for and has no doubt that it is achievable.

TBEAG has advised on a wide range of matters. The following are just a few examples:

- To reduce the risk of TB spread between cattle herds sharing the same grazing land the pre-movement testing exemption for cattle moving from annually tested herds to/from common land was removed from the TB (England) Order in April 2014. However, in response to concerns about private vets' capacity to complete the 'new' pre-movement tests before cattle moved to summer grazing this year TBEAG's recommendation that implementation be deferred until July 2014 was accepted by Defra;
- The group agreed the introduction of a more proportionate approach to TB surveillance testing in Approved Finishing Units (AFUs). Ante mortem testing of cattle held in housed and bio-secure AFUs is now only rarely required. This policy change reduced government and industry costs without compromising disease control;
- Voluntary measures to support the risk based trading of cattle were introduced in November 2013 – sellers of cattle are now encouraged to provide the TB testing history for their herd at the point of sale. This is an important step in

getting to a position where cattle keepers have the information they need to better protect their herd from TB.

More generally TBEAG has championed an evidence-based approach to policy making. They are kept fully briefed on current TB issues and are closely engaged at all stages of policy development. The group also takes a keen interest in research (ongoing and possible new projects) including: approaches to cattle testing; diagnostic testing of badgers; badger and cattle vaccine developments and the genetic resistance of cattle to TB.

TBEAG members have been active in engaging with Defra's stakeholders on an individual level, attending and speaking at events connected with the strategy.

The year ahead – 2014/15

We expect 2014/15 to be just as busy for TBEAG. The group believes that if we are to eradicate TB there needs to be a much closer partnership between industry and government – to that end they will be looking carefully at how the livestock industry can become more closely involved in the decision making process.

Included within the new TB strategy is an action plan setting out additional controls that may be developed and introduced in the different TB risk areas. TBEAG will be working with officials and others to start fleshing out these options.

More immediate and specific activities on which the group will focus include:

- The practice of allowing TB affected holdings to be partially de-restricted will stop from the end of September 2014. This policy change will impact some TB affected cattle farming businesses quite hard, so TBEAG will continue to consider how those impacts might be mitigated;
- Giving cattle keepers more and sharper information so that they are better equipped to protect their herds. Building on the launch last November of risk based trading TBEAG will press Defra to deliver against its commitment to share TB breakdown location information with cattle keepers;
- Consultation this summer on the introduction of additional TB controls for non-bovine species.

Evaluation of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

The AHWBE's Terms of Reference require that its performance is evaluated two years into its existence. The Board was established in 2011 and, as a consequence, Brook Lyndhurst (an independent consultant) was commissioned to conduct the evaluation. The study was qualitative, being based on interviews and input from a very wide range of interested parties. The evaluation was intended to assess the effectiveness of the Board in:

- building trust with the industry;
- improving Defra policy-making through enhanced stakeholder engagement; and
- encouraging animal keepers to take greater responsibility for animal health and welfare issues.

The full report was published on 12 May 2014 and is available on Defra's Research and Development webpage

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=Non e&ProjectID=18444&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=DO0129&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>

The evaluation found much that was good in the Board's first two years but also things that could be improved, as is only to be expected with a new type of structure. Key findings from the evaluation report include:

1. Interviewees agreed that the presence of external members on the Board represented a positive step to building links between livestock keepers and government and that trust in the Board had generally increased over time among those who had worked closely with Board members.
2. A more strategic approach could have improved the Board's communication and engagement activity with stakeholders.
3. There was a mismatch between what the Board is expected to do and achieve (e.g. based on its terms of reference) and its resources and capacity.
4. The Board's objectives and the nature and extent of its authority were not always clear to research participants.

The report's draft findings were available to the Board in advance of publication and therefore it has been possible to respond to these comments and suggestions already. In particular:

Point 1: the Board is committed to building on what it has done well so far to continue to build trust and a partnership approach between government and industry (as detailed in the “highlights of the year” section above).

Point 2: the Board has put a great deal of energy and commitment into engagement (see Annex E below), but will continue to refine and the communications strategy developed during the year, to ensure it is communicating in the most effective way.

Point 3: moving from four strategic priorities for 2013 to one overarching priority – partnership working – for 2014 will help focus the Board’s limited resources on the most important areas.

Point 4: the 2014 Annual General Meeting and this report have included an explicit explanation of the Board’s role and the extent of its authority to make these as clear as possible.

The evaluation of the Board has been a valuable opportunity to take stock of what the Board does well, and what can be improved, but it is a stage in a process and not the end, and the Board will endeavour to continue to evolve and improve over time.

Annex A: Summary of issues discussed during the year

Theme	Issues Discussed
Animal Welfare Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of practice on Hot Branding of semi feral ponies. • Reform of farm animal welfare codes – response from consultation
Disease Control Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHVLA managing disease outbreak model: progress and the effect of preparedness • Animal and Plant Health in the UK: An assessment of future national capability • Annual review of Defra’s Contingency Plan • Biosecurity update • Endemic disease • Exotic disease compensation • TB Eradication Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TB in Camelids ○ TB Progress reports
Working with External Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHVLA Veterinary Delivery Partnership Model • Surveillance 2014 Core groups • Exercise Walnut • Exotic Disease Core Group Review • Rural Development Programme for England • Animal Health and Welfare Services in GB post 2015 • Balance of Competencies Review • Red Tape Challenge
Finance and Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Finance and Evidence • Spending Review and AHVLA Business model • Defra AH&W budget AHVLA Business Plan Overview • Animal Health and Welfare Evidence Priorities and budget. • bTB scientific developments • Charging projects and update on export health certificates (COLIN) • Update on Evidence and Investment Strategy
AHWBE Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGM and Annual Report • Engagement Strategy • Forward Work Programme

Annex B: Presentations to the Board received from external interested parties

- **Anthelmintic Resistance:** Presentation from Lesley Stubbins, Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) and Jacqui Matthews from the Moredun Research Institute. Species covered focused on cattle, sheep and horses.
- **Horse industry - Equine Sector Council:** Presentation by Jeanette Allen on the Equine Health and Welfare Strategy and issues currently impacting the industry.
- **One Health – “What it means and why it is important”** Department of Health and Public Health England officials presentation on the common aim of protecting public health and containing animal related threats.
- **Peredur Hughes, Chair of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Steering Group Wales (AHWSSG)** Presentation on the background and role of the AHWSSG.
- **Companion Animal Sector Groups:** presentation on the Companion Animal Sector led by Peter Scott, Chair of the Companion Animals Sector Council (CASC)
- **North West Livestock Programme South West Healthy Livestock Initiative (SWHLI):** Presentations on these RDPE funded animal health and welfare schemes.
- **Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA).** John Fitzgerald, RUMA’s General Secretary, provided some background on RUMA’s history, role and purpose.
- **How developing and emerging technologies can assist in the areas of animal health diagnostics.** Presentation from Loree Gourlay, Tim Robinson, Paul Debenham and Dr Derek Craston of LGC Ltd.
- **What we might learn from what the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) does.** Presentation from the Scottish Agricultural College (now the Scottish Rural College) which specialises in leading innovation and sustainable development in agriculture, land and the rural sector.

Annex C: Organisations Invited to the 2014 AGM

- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (Chair)
- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (EBLEX)
- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (Dairyco)
- Assured Food Standards
- Blue Cross
- Bristol Veterinary School
- British Alpaca Society
- British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA)
- British Cattle Veterinary Association
- British Egg Industry Council
- British Horse Industry Confederation
- British Llama Society
- British Retail Consortium
- British Trout Association
- British Veterinary Association
- Cambridge Veterinary School
- Canine and Feline Sector Group
- Cattle Health and Welfare Council
- Companion Animal Sector Council
- Country Land and Business Association
- DARD (Northern Ireland)
- Department of Health
- Dogs Trust
- Equine Sector Council
- Farm Animal Welfare Committee
- Farmers Weekly
- Food Standards Agency
- Glasgow Veterinary School
- Goat Veterinary Society
- Harper Adams
- Horse Trust
- Institute of Government
- Livestock Auctioneers Association
- Liverpool Veterinary School
- National Beef Association
- National Farmers Union
- National Farmers Union (Chief Poultry Adviser)
- National Pig Association
- National Sheep Association

- Ornamental Fish
- Pig Health and Welfare Council
- Pirbright Institute
- Poultry Health and Welfare Group
- RSPCA
- Rosemary Radcliffe
- Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester
- Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
- Royal Veterinary College, London
- Scottish Government
- Sheep Health and Welfare Council
- Tenant Farmers Association
- University of Nottingham
- University of Reading
- University of Surrey
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Welsh Government
- Which

Annex D: Finance Information

Defra has four clear priorities:

- Growing the rural economy
- Improving the environment
- Safeguarding animal health
- Safeguarding plant health

Running through all four of these priorities is the Government's commitment to boosting growth. Defra has a clear plan for delivering economic growth which will deliver results by 2015, including cutting red tape to save businesses more than £1bn over the next 5 years.

Defra and its network continue to restructure and change to deliver savings and improve the way we work.

It is clear that we will continue to operate in a climate of tough economic conditions and lower public spending for longer. We will need to continue to be rigorous in assessing where our interventions can make the biggest difference and how we can deliver outcomes innovatively and at lower cost.

Animal health and safeguarding animals against disease is critical to the market for British meat and animal products and is a priority for the Department.

Spending decreased in 2011-12 as a result of Animal Health merging with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency to form the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA). This budget position will be reviewed during the 2014–15 business planning exercise.

Defra's financial reporting cycle is such that the Annual Report for 2013-14 will be published on the government website .GOV.UK shortly after the AHWBE's Annual Report is published. The AHWBE secretariat will circulate the 2013-14 Defra Annual Report to those interested as soon as it is published, including AGM attendees.

Annex E: Board Member Engagement Activity Apr 2013-Mar 2014

The table below lists activity chronologically and is intended to give an indication rather than a complete picture of the Board's work.

Month and year	Organisation (and purpose/subject of meeting where appropriate)
April 13	RSPCA meeting
April 13	CLA meeting
April 13	University of Leicester: Farm Animals, Ethics and Public Policy Seminar
April 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
April 13	National Equine Welfare Council
April 13	British Veterinary Association
April 13	Royal Society bTB Evidence workshop
April 13	AHWBE meeting with Sector Council reps
April 13	BVD Stakeholder Group
May 13	National Office for Animal Health Annual Dinner
May 13	British Veterinary Association Reception
May 13	dairy and broiler farm visit
May 13	Dairy Science Forum Industry Strategy Seminar
May 13	Equine Sector meeting on passports
May 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
May 13	Equine Health and Welfare Strategy Group
May 13	Department of Health meeting on zoonoses and AHWBE
May 13	BIAZA Zoo meeting Disease classification systems
May 13	RSPCA
June 13	Meeting with Bob Bansback: update on work of Harper Adams and AHWBE
June 13	NPA Producer group
June 13	The Horse Trust reopening
June 13	Wildlife Disease Partnership meeting on Surveillance
June 13	NFU Council
June 13	NADIS Apps / Farmer Webinars: risk assessment model
June 13	Strategic Regulatory Scrutiny Panel
June 13	Animal Health Trust / Equine Coalition: Review co-ordination of equine disease management
June 13	Equine Health and Welfare Strategy Group
June 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
June 13	Cattle Health and Welfare Group
June 13	Game Farmers Association farm visit
July 13	Attending farmers' meeting on anthelmintic resistance

Month and year	Organisation (and purpose/subject of meeting where appropriate)
July 13	National Farmers Union
July 13	AHWBE meeting with Sector Council reps
July 13	Exeter Livestock Market bTB workshop
July 13	BVD Stakeholder Group Meeting
July 13	TB Strategy launch
July 13	NFU Midlands meeting
July 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
July 13	NFU presentation on TB Strategy
July 13	NGO bTB Evidence workshop
July 13	TB Workshop
July 13	NFU TB Strategy meeting
Aug 13	Newcastle Consensus Meeting: safe and humane use of gaseous euthanasia agents
Aug 13	Dartmoor Commoners meeting: Hot Branding of ponies
Aug 13	NFU bTB Strategy consultation meeting
Aug 13	FAWC Welfare Stewardship
Aug 13	NOAH communication on issues such as a/b resistance
Sept 13	VDPP Supplier day
Sept 13	RPA Meeting with Mark Grimshaw
Sept 13	TB local consultation
Sept 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
Sept 13	BVD attending Stakeholder Group Meeting
Sept 13	TB Diagnostics
Sept 13	Meeting with Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP and the Cavalier Campaign on dog breeding
Sept 13	AHDB Improved Animal Database Meeting: Define attributes of national animal database
Sept 13	Richard Davis meeting Dairy industry
Sept 13	Four Chairs meetings (Chairs of DA equivalent groups to Board)
Sept 13	BVD Stakeholder meeting
Oct 13	Meeting new Assistant Private Secretary at Clarence House
Oct 13	Pig Health and Welfare Council presentaiton
Oct 13	NFU Council
Oct 13	BVD Congress and Presdential Dinner
Oct 13	Exmoor Pony Society: Hot Branding Code
Oct 13	Stafford Agricultural Valuers
Nov 13	BPEX Event David Black Award - Hosted by Lord Palmer
Nov 13	Antibiotic Awareness meeting
Nov 13	Poultry Health and Welfare Group
Nov 13	Workshop on farm animal welfare

Month and year	Organisation (and purpose/subject of meeting where appropriate)
Nov 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
Dec 13	BIAZA
Dec 13	Advisory Council for Dog Breeding
Dec 13	All Party Parliamentary Group on Horse Welfare
Dec 13	BVD Working Group
Dec 13	Contingency planning workshop exotic disease
Dec 13	BVA
Dec 13	Canine Feline Sector Group
Dec 13	NSA England Committee presentation
Dec 13	Equine Health and Welfare Strategy Group
Dec 13	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets stakeholder engagement
Dec 13	Camelid sector meeting
Jan 14	AHVLA stakeholder meeting on proposals for introducing new fees for services
Jan 14	NFU Council meeting
Jan 14	Red Tape Challenge Sounding Board meeting
Jan 14	Primates as Pets meeting with Neil Parich MP and BIAZA
Jan 14	Equine Sector: ragwort
Jan 14	Canine and Feline Sector Group
Jan 14	University of Nottingham meeting on science
Jan 14	Pig Health and Welfare Council
Jan 14	FMD/Blue Tongue Core Group
Jan 14	National Equine Forum planning meeting
Jan 14	Meeting with Manufacturers/BEVA/Defra Welfare vet to discuss new ID transponders
Feb 14	RDPE - Animal Health Workshop
Feb 14	Midlands Livestock Farmers speech
Feb 14	Parliamentary Group for animal welfare
Feb 14	NPA
Feb 14	RAS Awards
Feb 14	Cat Group meeting
Feb 14	AHVLA: charging
Feb 14	BVA
Feb 14	Defra ONE Business Evidence Initiative/EIS External Stakeholder Workshop
Feb 14	British Poultry Council
Feb 14	Dartmoor Commoners Council TB Consultation meeting
Feb 14	BVD scientific committee
Feb 14	Equine Sector: ragwort
Feb 14	Peter Jinman (FAWC)

Month and year	Organisation (and purpose/subject of meeting where appropriate)
Feb 14	AHVLA organised visit to Heathrow BIP
Feb 14	BVA dinner
Feb 14	NFU AGM
Mar 14	Equine Sector: Flygrazing
Mar 14	VDPP Board: NFU/Vets Stakeholder engagement
Mar 14	National Equine Forum
Mar 14	Companion animal sector: visiting two exotic animal breeding facilities with Reptile and Exotic Pet Trade Association and Companion Animal Sector Council.
Mar 14	BVD stakeholders meeting
Mar 14	National Beef Association
Mar 14	Livestock Auctioneers' Association Annual Dinner
Mar 14	Goats sector issues
Mar 14	Animal Health RDP Workshop
Mar 14	CVO Animal Health Trust visit
Mar 14	GO Science Animal & Plant Health Capability
Mar 14	All Party Group for the Horse meeting
Mar 14	Sector Councils
Mar 14	China Trade: equine exports
Mar 14	Pet Industry Federation Event, "Future of Reptile Keeping in the UK".
Mar 14	Native Ponies GB: Hot Branding Code Review

Annex F: 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 health and 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.