

Terms of Reference for Species Expert Groups

Introduction

There are currently six Species Expert Groups, led by APHA, responsible for cattle, small ruminants, pigs, avian, miscellaneous & exotic farmed species and wildlife respectively. The Wildlife Expert Group also leads the GB Wildlife Disease Surveillance Partnership.

The purpose of these Terms of Reference (ToR) is to define the high level objectives to be met by Species Expert Group activities, which support Defra's and the Welsh and Scottish Governments' strategy and objectives for safeguarding animal health and welfare, and supporting food and farming in Great Britain. The work of the SEGs also builds on the reasons for government intervention as originally stated in the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain¹, namely:

- Protecting human health.
- Protecting and promoting the welfare of animals.
- Protecting the interests of the wider economy, environment and society.
- Promoting International trade.

These Species Expert Group ToRs will be reviewed annually.

OBJECTIVES

1. Detection, investigation and characterisation of new and re-emerging animal related threats in Great Britain

- Design and direct scanning surveillance activities to detect, investigate and characterise potential animal-related new and re-emerging threats (NRTs) and changes in endemic disease patterns and trends.
- Proactive identification, evaluation, development and integration of suitable new sources of relevant surveillance information and data from within and outside APHA to improve surveillance coverage and representativeness.
- Expert integration and interpretation of relevant surveillance information, data and findings, resulting in actionable intelligence.
- Timely provision of evidence-based insights and intelligence in a form useful to government policy customers, the livestock industry/sectors, farmers and vets in practice to enable decision-making and action.

¹ [Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain](#) (2004)

- Consultancy on identified hazards, diseases, threats and risks to customers and stakeholders as appropriate.
- Proactive work with veterinary industry and/or sector bodies to assist them in designing and implementing industry-funded disease surveillance or control schemes (including work that may be charged by APHA to industry), as well as scanning surveillance activities that may be developed and performed in partnership

2. Provision of species-based expertise to other APHA and Defra/Welsh/Scottish Government work areas

This includes provision of expertise to (but is not limited to):

- Notifiable disease emergency response and contingency planning activities.
- Targeted surveillance activities.
- Disease control/eradication programmes.
- Research programmes and activities.
- International Trade.
- Animal welfare.

3. Development of veterinary scanning surveillance and knowledge exchange networks

- a) Establish and maintain a strategic network of internal and external contacts and working relationships, including with livestock industry/sectors, the veterinary profession, SAC-CVS, government customers in GB, non-APHA surveillance partners, BVA species divisions and groups, academia, other relevant government and non-government stakeholders and overseas institutes and organisations.
- b) Provide a conduit to integrate APHA research and veterinary surveillance programmes in concert with the APHA Science Strategy Group/Lead Scientists. Develop systematic engagement with others involved in surveillance within and outside APHA as appropriate. Identify and make recommendations for new areas of disease research and diagnostic test development relevant to surveillance within APHA, and in collaboration with others.

4. Maintenance and development of expertise

Assist in the development and maintenance of relevant species-specific, veterinary and scientific expertise within and outside APHA, including succession planning. Maximise the utilisation of relevant skills for scanning surveillance and NRT investigation and characterisation (including, but not limited to, veterinary investigation, laboratory testing, pathology/histopathology epidemiology, biomathematics and modelling, risk analysis, data science/systems and other scientific disciplines) across APHA.

SEG MEMBERSHIP

The membership of each Species Expert Group (SEG) will be flexible, based on the requirements and strategic priorities and goals of each group, and may comprise:

(a) **Core SEG members:** SEG Chair and deputy (APHA vets), and other APHA members of staff with extensive veterinary and scientific knowledge of the particular species.

(b) **SEG members:** Other APHA members of staff, SAC-CVS vets and scientists, and other non-APHA members as appropriate. These may include partners from: private veterinary practice, non-APHA surveillance partners, livestock industry/sector bodies, specialist veterinary groups, academia, other parts of government/agencies, overseas organisations/institutes, other stakeholder groups. All SEGs will have external representation from the veterinary profession and/or livestock industry.

(c) **Associate SEG members:** Other staff from within or external to APHA and SAC-CVS invited to the SEGs as necessary to provide relevant input on particular problems.

Date of next ToR review: April 2018