

Welsh Assembly Government consultation on:
Animal Health and Welfare Strategy – Welsh Assembly Government
Action Plan 2005-2006

Response on behalf of:

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We are in general, in agreement with the proposals outlined in the Action Plan for 2005-2006. However, there are three issues that we would like to raise in relation to the document:

1. The need for data collection on current livestock disease levels in Wales;
2. Minimising administrative replication amongst those farmers all ready undertaking health planning either for organic certification or quality assurance schemes.
3. The need to include an action point on control of parasites (internal and external) in Wales.

These issues have also recently been raised at the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Steering Committee meeting.

1. Nowhere in the document is mention made of the need for research into current levels of livestock disease in Wales – this would include endemic diseases such as foot rot, parasite infections, mastitis infection levels etc. as well as the notifiable diseases. This baseline is required so that a complete cost benefit analysis of the Action Plan and Animal Health and Welfare Strategy can be undertaken, and so that sensible national targets can be set for improvements in animal health and welfare. These work needs to undertaken in the early stages of the implementation of the Strategy.
2. In the development of a generic health plan for Wales (pg 21 of Action Plan), it is important to remember that organic farmers in the UK (and also farmers who are members of particular quality assurance programmes) are all ready required to complete animal health plans as a requirement of certification. As long as these existing health plans meet the minimum requirements of the WAG, any new health planning requirements should not replicate the requirements of the organic certification (or quality assurance bodies), as this will unfairly increase the administrative burden on those farmers all ready undertaking health planning. Work will need to be undertaken in the development of generic and sector specific

health plans to identify areas of commonality and potentially discrepancy with existing health planning requirements.

3. In light of increasing resistance of livestock parasites to Anthelmintics, it is becoming a matter of some urgency to develop a strategy for sustainable parasite control in Wales. This needs a co-ordinated approach and the Welsh Assembly Government, through the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy is in a prime position to lead this action. Unless a sustainable strategy for parasite control is developed for Wales, there could be significant health, welfare and economic impacts on particularly our sheep and beef production systems as resistance to Anthelmintics continues to build. Areas for development through an action plan include increased research into the scale of the problem in Wales and alternative methods for control, an overall reduction in anthelmintic use and where it is used, development and use of best practice guideline to reduce further resistance.