



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Publication of the Draft Animal Health Bill

Date: 01 February 2010

By: Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs

DEFRA last week published its draft Animal Health Bill.

The draft Bill sets out proposals for the implementation of the 'responsibility' elements of the Responsibility and Cost Sharing (RCS) agenda in England through the establishment of an arms-length organisation, to be named the Animal Health Organisation (AHO). The AHO would take responsibility for the development and delivery of animal health policy in England.

While primarily focused on establishing the RCS framework for England, certain elements of the draft Bill would have implications for Wales. Some of the provisions that impact on all parts of the UK aim to ensure co-operation to deliver effective disease management policies; including the arrangements for developing international animal health policy and representation in Europe.

There is provision within the draft Bill to put on a statutory footing for the first time the role of the Chief veterinary Officer (UK). The CVO (UK) is central to the UK's collective capability to prepare for, and respond to, the challenges of

managing animal health and I support the general principle of enshrining this role in legislation.

The draft Bill also includes proposals to simplify existing provisions on payments for animals slaughtered; vaccination; and sampling.

DEFRA has also announced its intention that the 'cost sharing' elements of the agenda will be pursued by HM Treasury in a future Finance Bill. Discussions on scope and application of any revenue generating mechanism are in their infancy, and officials aim to engage positively with both DEFRA and HM Treasury colleagues to ensure that any proposals affecting Wales take account the characteristics of our livestock industry.

My officials will continue to liaise closely with their DEFRA counterparts to understand how the proposed legislation may impact on the delivery of animal health and welfare policy in Wales and ensure that any issues raised are considered and fully resolved through pre-legislative scrutiny.

The DEFRA deadline for responses is Monday 19 April 2010.

Further information on the consultation can be found at

www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm77/7784/7784.asp