

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE STATE VETERINARY SERVICE AND THE SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY**

1. This MOU describes the roles of the State Veterinary Service (SVS) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in dealing with notifiable disease outbreaks, in particular the burial of animal carcasses and the use of disinfectants.

### **Introduction**

2. In Scotland, the SVS exercises the Scottish Executive's statutory responsibilities for responding to outbreaks of notifiable disease in farm animals (Appendix 1). The SVS maintains national and local contingency plans for disease outbreaks.

3. SEPA is a non-departmental public body, with statutory responsibility for the protection of the environment in Scotland and is accountable to the Scottish Executive.

### **Areas of Common Interest**

4. The SVS is the lead agency within Great Britain responsible for animal health matters, including notifiable disease outbreaks. The control of notifiable disease involves the slaughter and burial, or incineration, of carcasses on-farms, together with disinfection of buildings and equipment.

5. SEPA's interests are to ensure that the necessary precautions are taken to prevent environmental pollution. In particular, SEPA seeks to ensure that the risks of polluting groundwater from disinfectant use and carcass burial are minimised. Under the Groundwater Regulations 1998 (which transpose the EC Groundwater Directive (80/68/EEC), SEPA is required to prevent the direct or indirect discharge of certain dangerous substances (List I) to groundwater and to avoid pollution resulting from the direct or indirect discharge of List II substances. "Biocides and their derivatives" ie. disinfectants, are classified as List II substances. Ammonia, which is produced as a result of the decomposition of animal carcasses, is also classified as a List II substance.

### **Co-ordination**

6. There will be a Co-ordinating Group at policy level formed by the Veterinary Unit at Pentland House and agreed representation from the SEPA Head Office Water and Waste Policy Teams, based in Stirling. Meetings will be arranged by the Veterinary Unit at Pentland House, as required.

7. The Co-ordinating Group will co-ordinate operational guidance for both SVS and SEPA staff where disinfection of farm buildings would be necessary, following a notifiable disease outbreak. It will also advise on strategies available for disinfectant containment under a range of different circumstances connected with notifiable disease outbreaks.

8. The Co-ordinating Group will meet, as required:

a) to resolve any operational issues referred to the Group and to identify, consider and resolve any problems arising from the practical application of statutory provisions and responsibilities by SVS and SEPA staff;

- b) to consider operational implications of policy decisions;
- c) to identify subjects on which supplementary MOU should be prepared;
- d) to make recommendations for changes to the Memorandum as necessary; and
- e) to discuss other matters of common interest.

9. At an operational level, Divisional Veterinary Managers (DVMs) will liaise with regional representatives of SEPA, notifying them expeditiously of notifiable disease outbreaks and inviting their participation in contingency planning exercises.

10. SEPA will respond urgently to requests from SVS and make rapid assessments of the implications on farm, in respect of carcase burial and disinfectant containment. SEPA will also provide groundwater vulnerability maps to DVMs, at an appropriate scale, where available.

11. Both organisations will cascade any modifications in working practices agreed by the Co-ordinating Group.

## **Enforcement**

12. SEPA and SVS will reflect the Co-ordinating Group's decisions in the instructions to their own field staff. Without prejudice to the right of either SEPA or the SVS to exercise fully its own discretion, in deciding whether or not to refer any matter, within the areas of common interest, to a Procurator Fiscal for possible prosecution, either party shall consult the other party on any such matter before any such decision is taken.

## **Monitoring of New Developments**

13. SEPA and SVS should keep each other informed at the earliest stage of new developments which are likely to be of mutual interest. The aim is to ensure the appropriate operational response in the light of new developments.

## **Disclosure of Information**

14. The SVS and SEPA are open about their activities as part of their commitment to the Citizens Charter and Open Government. Release of information in relation to the notifiable disease control measures will be co-ordinated by the State Veterinary Service and the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department. Requests for the exchange of information by either of the two organisations will routinely be met, subject to any statutory prohibition.

Signed: ..... ....

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

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State Veterinary Service

Date: .....

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