

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP)

Summary of the 87th meeting

The ACDP held its 87th meeting on 2nd October 2007. The main agenda items discussed were:

ACDP Annual Report 2006

The Annual Report for 2006 has now been published on the ACDP website at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/acdp/index.htm>

Update on Rabies

Defra reported that there had been no major progress on this issue since the last meeting. The European Commission's views are awaited and Members will be informed of developments at the next meeting. The following website provides information on this ongoing issue:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm

West Nile Virus: Letter from Dr Roland Salmon

A letter to the Chair from the Welsh Assembly Government assessor, Dr Roland Salmon, regarding discussions on West Nile Virus (WNV at the 85th meeting) had been circulated to Members. Dr Salmon had not been present for the discussions at that meeting. The Chair had previously discussed the issues raised with Dr Salmon and had agreed to hold a meeting with the relevant parties in the near future.

Seasonal influenza vaccination for poultry workers

DH reported that the 2007/2008 vaccination programme had been announced on 28th September 2007 and will run from the 1st November 2007 to April 2008. It is hoped that the early announcement this year will encourage greater uptake.

Steering Group for revision of the ACDP guidance on blood-borne viruses

The virology and health and safety legislation sections had already been circulated to the steering group for comments, and it was anticipated that the control measures and annexes would be circulated for comments by the end of the year. ACDP members will be asked to produce a final draft guidance by Spring 2008.

TSE Working Group

The TSE Working Group has met once since the June ACDP meeting, on the 5th September 2007. Full details of the work of the TSE Working Group have been provided in the Secretariat report:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/acdp/070607/acdp86p4.pdf>

Revision of the 1996 ACDP Guidance Management & Control of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers

The first meeting of the ACDP VHF Diagnostics subgroup was held on the 26th June 2007. The meeting considered the proposed two risk category system and its implication for diagnostics of Hazard Group 4 viruses in the laboratory, and transportation of patient specimens. It is anticipated that the drafting of the revised guidance will resume by the end of the year.

Foot and Mouth Outbreak at the Pirbright site

HSE's final report into the investigation of biosecurity at the Pirbright site was published on the HSE website on 7 September 2007:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/news/archive/07aug/finalreport.pdf>

Government Office for Science – Department of Health Science Review

Members were updated on the work of the Science Review team in the Government Office for Science. The department is starting a review of the quality, management and use of both natural and social science in the Department of Health. ACDP had been invited to give its views on DH's use of science, and were asked to send their comments to the HPA ACDP Secretariat by the 31st October 2007.

Results of serological testing following H5N1 and H7N2 avian influenza outbreak in England and Wales

HPA, Defra and the NPHS Wales provided an update to members on the two avian influenza incidents, H7N2 and H5N1 which had occurred this year in England and Wales.

The full report of the H7N2 outbreak, prepared by NPHS Wales, had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. The NPHS Wales is currently awaiting the results of the serological testing of 60 individuals, and ACDP members asked to receive a report of the H7N2 serology results as soon as finalised.

Update from the TSE Working Group

The Chair of the TSE Working Group updated members on the work of the Group with particular reference to an annex to their infection control guidance, Annex J – pre-surgery assessment for surgery and endoscopy. A briefing paper on this was provided to members prior to the meeting, outlining the proposed revision of this annex by the Working Group. ACDP agreed with the proposed new content of Annex J. The ACDP TSE Working Group will redraft Annex J and bring it back to ACDP for approval in due course.

Q fever serology studies in Northern Ireland

A representative from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust presented the results from their studies on Q fever in humans and in animals in Northern Ireland. The results of the study are currently unpublished.

Prevalence of Q fever in cattle in Great Britain

Defra updated members on the prevalence of Q fever in cattle in Great Britain (GB). There was a comment that previous instances of Q fever have been associated with gaseous waste release from animal and animal product incinerators and waste from leaky vehicles used to transport infected animals or carcasses. Defra responded that improved standards for animal carcass transport vehicles and for incinerators meant that these issues have now been addressed.

Status of vaccination against Q fever

The Secretariat had provided members with a background paper on the use of vaccination against Q fever globally and in the UK. There is currently no vaccine licensed for use in the UK; however, a vaccine, Q vax, is licensed for use in certain risk groups in Australia. Members agreed that this issue should be referred to JCVI for views on the efficiency and effectiveness data for Q vax and its potential use in the UK for certain occupational risk groups, either routinely or under outbreak circumstances.

Research findings and guidance on isolation facilities

Members were updated on the results of research commissioned by Department of Health's Estate and Facilities Division, and carried out at the Building Services Research and Information Association (BISRA), into the performances of isolation facilities. Further results are awaited and it was agreed that ACDP would review the results as soon as they become available and make recommendations for isolation room provision and design.

Re-categorisation of Sterne strain of *Baillus anthracis*

Members agreed that the degree of attenuation of the *B. anthracis* 'Sterne' strain was such to permit its handling at lower containment than for non-attenuated strains. However the most appropriate control measures (e.g. microbiological safety cabinets) need to be based on an appropriate risk assessment of the activity being undertaken and include effective means of inactivating effluent/waste. Members agreed that other attenuated strains (e.g. Pasteur) should be considered at a future meeting.