

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

7 August 2007

Dear Secretary of State,

I am pleased to enclose the HSE report into potential breaches of biosecurity at the Pirbright site. This report provides a summary of the findings of our investigation so far, and the team are also providing detailed briefing to Professor Spratt's team to help them take their investigation forward.

We will make a further report of our own. I have also been asked to offer a view, based on the findings of the investigation so far, on the potential risks associated with operations involving live pathogens at Pirbright and any precautions which might be sensible.

My assessment is that there is no reason to prevent the Institute for Animal Health from operating providing that all the usual biosecurity protocols are followed rigorously.

The situation regarding Merial is less clear cut, and I would advise that further work be done before any operations involving live pathogens are restarted. As the report indicates there are doubts about the integrity of the drainage system, including pipe work which leads to the final effluent treatment plant. My team has instigated a set of tests in relation to the possibility that any pathogens have contaminated the site via this route. We expect the results of this work tomorrow, and I would recommend that these results are

evaluated before Merial restart operations involving live pathogens. Even if the tests are negative we may recommend a suitable ongoing monitoring regime.

Yours sincerely

DR PAUL LOGAN
PIRBRIGHT LEAD INVESTIGATOR