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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS

Secretariat Report for the 88th meeting of the ACDP, and matters arising from the 87th meeting

1. This paper includes reports on progress made with matters arising from the last meeting, reports from ACDP Working Groups and other relevant advisory committees as well as other items of interest to members.

Matters arising from the 87th meeting

Meeting on West Nile Virus serology

2. Following Dr Salmon's letter to the Chair at the October 2007 ACDP meeting, it was agreed that a meeting should be held between the relevant parties to discuss West Nile Virus serology, particularly in relation to the farm worker cohort sera. This meeting is scheduled for the 1st February 2008, and the Chairman will be officiating at the meeting.

Q fever outbreak in South Wales in 2002

3. Dr Salmon has provided the following reference:

> Van Woerden HC, Mason BW, Nehaul LK, Smith R, Salmon RL, Healy B, Valappil M, Westmoreland D, de Martin S, Evans MR, Lloyd G, Hamilton-Kirkwood M, Williams NS. Q Fever outbreak in industrial setting.
> **Emerging Infectious Diseases 2004;10:1282-9.**

Status of vaccination against Q fever

4. HSE wrote to Professor Andrew Hall, Chair of the JCVI, on 11th December asking for advice on the efficacy and safety of the Q fever vaccine (Q-vax) currently used in Australia for vaccination of high risk exposure groups. In his reply, Prof Hall said that the matter would be raised at the next meeting of JCVI on February 13th.

Update on rabies

5. A number of developments have occurred since the October 2007 ACDP meeting regarding the UK rabies policy review.

6. As noted at the last meeting, views of the Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, including the CMO, and the wider stakeholder community were obtained. The Minister considered these views and agreed that UK import controls on pet dogs and cats were no longer proportionate to the risk of rabies entering the UK. Noted concerns about rabies situation in some parts of EU and certain third countries but recognised improvements in EU rabies situation overall.

7. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinions (including summaries) on rabies and tick and tapeworm treatment were published in early 2007. See links below.
(i) rabies:-
(http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/Scientific_Opinion/ahaw_op_ej436_rabies_en.pdf)

Precis of summary: Vaccination against rabies, using an authorised vaccine administered according to manufacturers' recommendations, should remain the key requirement for movement of pets between Member States. If further risk reduction is required, there should be a waiting period following primo-vaccination and the length of time should reflect the risk reduction. The risk of having a certain proportion of vaccinated pets that may not be fully protected can be reduced further by serological testing or by administering a second vaccination.
(ii) tick treatment:-
(http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178620771045.htm)

Precis of summary: A risk assessment for tick introduction into UK, Ireland and Malta could not be conducted due to a lack of sufficient data and systematic survey information. Evaluation of the effectiveness of treatment to prevent infestation by ticks requires prior knowledge about the distribution of ticks in those countries. Opinion indicates a lack of sufficient evidence on epidemiological situation on those countries to refute or accept the justification for the controls applied by those countries.
(iii) tapeworm treatment:-
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178620772901.htm

Precis of summary: From the current treatment protocols used by UK, Ireland, Malta, Finland and Sweden, it was concluded that the probability of re-infection in the country of origin and viable egg elimination on the importing country is reduced to a negligible level when a suitable treatment with praziquantel is given between 24 and 48 hours prior to departure.

8. The European Commission was due to publish its report and proposals by February 2007 on a revised Community pet movement regime to take effect from July 2008. This report was finally published on 8 October 2007
(see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0578:FIN:EN:PDF)

The report does not contain specific proposals or recommendations regarding a change in the Community pet movement regime but contains a number of options for further consideration by the Commission.

9. At the same time, the Commission published a proposal for a draft Regulation to extend the transitional arrangements applicable to the UK, Sweden, Ireland, Malta and Finland until 31 August 2009 (see. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0572:FIN:EN:PDF)

This is due to the delay in the publication of the Commission report and to allow the Commission time to consider and take forward the conclusions of that report. We have supported this extension. It will mean that any changes to the Community pet movement regime will not apply until 1 September 2009.

10. The Commission has indicated informally that a draft proposal for a revised pet movement regime would be submitted to the European Parliament and Council in

summer 2008. We are now in the early stages of discussion and negotiation with the Commission and other Member States on how a revised pet movement regime may be shaped.

11. In May 2007, Defra officials met Commission counterparts. There were indications then that the Commission is not persuaded about the need to maintain tick and tapeworm treatment controls. Defra may need to provide further evidence and develop very persuasive arguments for use in future negotiations, and expects to seek help from health colleagues in this area.

12. The Commission is also looking to rule out a differential approach on rabies controls between Member States, i.e. it is likely to seek harmonisation of rules across the Community in one shape or another.

Reports from ACDP Working Groups

TSE Working Group

13. The TSE Working Group has met once since the October ACDP meeting, on the 5th December 2007. Many of the issues discussed at the meeting are ongoing, and thus ACDP members have been updated on these previously.

Surveillance of occupational exposure to TSEs

14. The issue of whether a surveillance system for occupational exposure to TSEs should be introduced is under review. At their last meeting, the Working Group was asked to consider a briefing paper prepared by the HPA on this issue, and they agreed to revisit this at their next meeting, following discussion at the CJD Incidents Panel in January 2008.

Ophthalmology subgroup

15. The ophthalmology subgroup met on the 19th November 2007, under the Chairmanship of Mr Ian Pearce, a consultant ophthalmologist and member of the CJD Incidents Panel. The meeting went extremely well, and members have now been assigned to topic groups to review and discuss various issues for presentation at the next meeting on the 7th April 2008.

Annex J – pre-surgery assessment

16. The update of this document is almost complete, and will be circulated to ACDP members by email in due course for approval.

Annex D – Transport of TSE infected material

17. The update of this document is in progress, and input has been received from colleagues at the Department for Transport, Defra and the National CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh.

Annex F – Decontamination of endoscopes

18. This document has been updated by endoscopy colleagues, and will be reviewed at the next meeting of the TSE Working Group on the 21st February.

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

19. Some members of the Clinical Management subgroup attended an air isolator exercise at RAF Lyneham on the 1st November to observe the procedures and conditions for evacuating a patient, and the equipment used.

20. The Secretariat is now moving forward with organising a transport subgroup meeting to be held early in 2008, involving representatives from the ambulance service, A&E, HSIDUs, public health and Northern Ireland, to discuss outstanding transportation issues.

21. Drafting of the laboratory diagnostic section has begun, with the view of aligning the variety of diagnostic tests with the revised patient categorisation algorithm i.e. which tests and where they should be undertaken. Drafting of this part of the guidance will continue over the next couple of months.

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

22. A draft of the revised guidance will be considered at the ACDP meeting.

Other Matters

23. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has produced a fact sheet entitled 'Expert forecast on emerging biological risks related to occupational safety and health'. Members can download the report from the link below.

http://osha.europa.eu/publications/factsheets/68/full_publication_en.pdf

24. Publication of the new Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees

A new Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees has been published by the Government Office for Science. Members are asked to familiarise themselves with this new Code of Practice, particularly the sections relevant to committee members and their roles and responsibilities.

http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/file42780.pdf

Secretariat
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