FINAL

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS PATHOGENS

The ACDP held its 89th meeting on 10th June 2008. The main agenda items discussed were:

Seasonal influenza vaccination programme for poultry workers

The current findings from the 2007/2008 Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme for Poultry Workers in England, which ran from 1st November 2007 to 31st March 2008, were presented to Members. PCTs were asked to submit data on activity and immunisation uptake on this programme via the Health Protection Informatics Website (HPI), and by the end of the programme a high proportion of PCTs had returned uptake data. However, uptake of vaccination amongst eligible poultry workers was low. PCTs indicated that many poultry workers either declined the offer of an immunisation, did not attend their appointment or were lost to follow up.

Pet Travel Scheme

Since the last ACDP meeting, a significant development for the UK rabies policy has been the granting of an extension to the period for transitional arrangements to those countries originally granted them for additional pet import controls. Thus the UK's current Pet Travel Scheme arrangements (post vaccination blood testing, followed by a pre-entry waiting period, and certified pre-entry tick and tapeworm treatments within the time periods specified) will not change until after the 30th June 2010. This extension also applies to Sweden, Ireland, Malta and Finland.

The need to secure the UK controls beyond 2009/10 remains, and a case for retaining our controls is currently being prepared by Defra and DH. The HPA has prepared the public health evidence for the retention of these controls.

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

Following an action plan meeting between HSE, DH and HPA, the updated proposed publication date of the guidance is June 2009. Some parts of the revised guidance will be brought to the next meeting of ACDP in October.

Re-categorisation of *Bacillus anthracis* Pasteur Strain

At a previous meeting, Members advised that, given the level of attenuation, work with *Bacillus anthracis* 'Sterne' strain could be undertaken at COSHH containment level 2, supported by a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. HSE provided Members with further evidence on the level of attenuation of *B. anthracis* 'Pasteur' strain in this meeting's Secretariat report, to enable them to advise on appropriate containment. The Pasteur strain, like the Sterne strain, could be worked with at COSHH Containment level 2, subject to a risk assessment. However, Defra are currently also considering their SAPO containment requirements for both Sterne and Pasteur strains, and HSE are awaiting this decision.

Callaghan Review and new regulatory framework for all animal and human pathogens

Since the Callaghan Review reported in December 2007, implementation of the three phases has begun. Phase 1 – the formalising of HSE support of SAPO inspections of

all Category 3 and 4 premises following the safety alert – was successfully completed in January 2008. The report of the outcomes of these inspections is currently being considered by Ministers. Phase 2 – the changes to the SAPO regulations to designate HSE as inspection and lead enforcement body involved close working between HSE and Defra. The SAPO regulations were revised and new Regulations came into force on the 28th April 2008. The revised regulations set out amended powers for HSE inspectors to issue improvement and prohibition notices, powers of entry and requirements for licence holders to comply with the notices and to co-operate with inspections. Defra remains the licensing authority for SAPO until the end of Phase 3 when HSE, in line with the introduction of the single regulatory framework, will become the sole licensing, inspection and enforcement body for work with animal pathogens.

Phase 3, which, it is hoped, will be formally implemented at the end of March 2010, involves six identified work streams. One of these work streams is the production of a common set of containment measures to support the new single regulatory framework. ACDP have been tasked with this, for completion by the end of January 2009. In preparation for Phase 3, representatives from HSE and Defra wrote to the Chairman on 27th May 2008 asking him to consider undertaking this work, acknowledging its challenging nature, and setting out Terms of Reference for a Working Group, including the expected expertise of the membership.

Categorisation of *Neisseria meningitidis* B

The "Approved List of biological agents" categorises *Neisseria meningitidis* strains as Hazard Group 2 pathogens. From time to time ACDP, in consultation with other experts, are asked to review the list, in particular considering evidence for the addition of new agents and reviewing the evidence for the classification of agents already listed. Members were asked to consider the suitability of the current categorisation for *Neisseria meningitidis* strains, in particular, serogroup B. HPA and HSE presented papers on this issue.

Members agreed that re-categorisation to a hazard group 3 was not appropriate. It was felt that the risk could be adequately controlled by using a Microbiological Safety Cabinet for aerosol generating procedures. It was agreed that additional guidance on these procedures and protocols should be formulated and added to the ACDP containment guidance.

Results of serological testing following H7N2 avian influenza outbreak in England and Wales in 2007

A draft report from the HPA on the management of this 2007 H7N2 avian influenza incident was presented to Members.

According to past outbreaks of H7 globally, human antibody response to H7 infections has been found to be unpredictable and often difficult to detect. There have been several situations where virus has been recovered from individuals but there has been no demonstrable seropositivity. Conversely some outbreaks have reported over 50% of those exposed exhibiting a serological response, without clinical illness. This unpredictability in serological response is independent of the type of test used. Investigation of the H7N2 outbreak in Wales did not provide any additional serological information.

Members agreed that, due to the relative paucity of data globally on the kinetics of H7 antibody response, as many paired samples as possible should be collected during an outbreak, so that an agreed antibody response for H7 could be elucidated.

Update on TSE management

The Chairman of the ACDP TSE Working Group attended the meeting to present a paper on TSE management. The paper was written by the ACDP HPA secretariat, with oversight from the ACDP TSE Working Group, and gave an overview of recent developments in policy and guidance for CJD and vCJD due to the possibility of secondary transmission, outlined the advisory committees and other bodies relevant to TSEs, and included a discussion of future developments and issues that Members should be aware of.

ACDP Blood-borne virus guidance

Changes had been made to the draft ACDP blood borne virus guidance, and a new introduction new (currently Part 0) and revised Part 4 were presented to Members.

The revised guidance will be submitted for public consultation over the summer, and a final draft will be presented to the ACDP meeting in October.

Secretariat
August 2008