

HUMAN ANIMAL INFECTIONS AND RISK SURVEILLANCE GROUP

5 December 2012, Teleconference

Present

Dilys Morgan (Chair)	HPA Colindale	Cameron Stewart	AHVLA
Mandy Walsh	HPA Colindale	Linda Smith	AHVLA
David Brown	HPA Colindale	Sheila Voas	Scottish Gvmt
Cat O'Connor	HPA Colindale	Robert Smith	PH Wales
Hilary Kirkbride	HPA Colindale	Steve Wyllie	Defra
Jolyon Medlock	HPA Porton	Sophie Rollinson	FSA
Andrew Frost	AHVLA(P)	Michael Devine	NI
Charlotte Featherstone	AHVLA	Paddy McGuckian	DARD(NI)
Paul Hutchinson	AHVLA	Maree Barnett	DH

Apologies

Lesley Larkin (AHVLA[P]), Andy Hall (NEPNEI), Paul Duff (AHVLA), Dominic Mellor (HPS), Arjen Brouwer (Office of the CVO Wales)

1. Introduction

2. Review of minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting on 31st October were agreed with minor amendments.

3. Action points and matters arising from last meeting

- *Risk assessment process*: final version has been circulated
- Hantavirus risk assessment: HPA followed up with AHVLA and Port Health and established that there are legal and systematic controls in place at Ports of Entry which incorporate rodent controls. All international vessels have to comply with the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 2007, and must be recertified (Ship Sanitation Certificate) every 6 months. Amongst other things, this certification looks for evidence of rodent infestation and checks that rat guards are in place on all ropes while docked. These provisions replace de-ratting certificates (which confirmed that ships were free of rats) under the previous International Health Regulations (1969). Airports may take live animal consignments transported in 'animal carriers' but rodent 'stowaways' are unlikely.

4. Review of October 2012 Emerging Infections Summary

The contents of the Emerging Infections summary were noted without further comment.

5. Brucella canis

Scotland had followed up with the research group. This established that samples from 72 dogs were all negative on blood culture. An unknown number of tissue samples had also been processed. These additional results have been presented as a poster within the University and a copy of the poster is awaited (**ACTION HPS**). The work is not being published imminently. The HPA had discussed with experts at the AHVLA Brucella reference laboratory and they confirmed that there is no laboratory evidence of disease amongst samples from ~2,500 resident dogs submitted annually for either export or diagnostic testing. HPA had circulated a draft statement for agreement by the group. A number of experts have agreed that there are methodological concerns with the Glasgow study. The statement will be revised in light of the new information presented today. **ACTION HPA**

6. Toxocara vitulorum

To support discussions over the past 3 years on the public health risk from *Toxocara vitulorum*, updates had been requested on animal diagnoses. There have been no confirmed cases in Scotland (and previous suspected cases in 2008 had not been confirmed). AHVLA reported 4 incidents in 2012; 2 in Wales and 2 in England. One incident was in a bison calf from a farm which had previously had a positive calf in 2010. This brings the total to 12 incidents on 10 premises since 2005. A first draft risk assessment will be attempted and disease experts contacted. **ACTION HPA**

7. Hydatid disease in the UK

- There was further discussion of the findings of the abattoir study including the finding that hydatidosis was present in cattle outside the traditional areas of Wales.. It was noted that the study had not provided definitive diagnoses in the cattle, and that it was not possible to extrapolate findings in cattle to sheep. A serological test would provide a much clearer picture of the current pattern of animal disease than the non-specific examination of carcasses for cysts. If there was a reliable serological test then samples collected during the annual sheep and goat survey could be tested. **ACTION: AHVLA to investigate testing.**
- Although a small number of animals from England were found to have hydatid cysts, the group agreed that this did not represent a significant risk to the human population. It is not known if this is a new issue, but indigenous human cases remain rare and only found in people residing in the Wales or Welsh border areas. However, any increase in cases resulting from changes in animal prevalence may take years to manifest given the prolonged incubation period. **ACTION: HPA & PHW to discuss with Peter Chiodini at the Parasitology Reference Laboratory and follow up other sources of ascertaining human cases.**
- Local authorities are aware of the situation in Wales, and ensure that sheep carcasses are disposed of appropriately.
- Routine worming of farm dogs, especially those on sheep/cattle farms, takes place in Scotland as demanded by Scottish quality assurance schemes.
- NI reported that hydatid disease is not an issue and cysts are not reported in meat inspections. The NI livestock quality assurance schemes also require dog worming.
- There are a number of different QAS operating in England. All farmers should be aware of the SCOPS (sustainable control of parasites in sheep) guidance on general parasite controls.
- It was agreed that, as good practice, dog deworming and the enforcement of the bioproducts disposal legislation should be emphasised in all parts of UK. Awareness should be raised through Animal Health Inspectors of the local Authorities. **ACTION: AHVLA.** PHW will share education materials used in the Wales campaigns to facilitate this. **ACTION: PHW.**
- It was noted that much of the UK expertise lies within the Cestode Zoonoses Research Laboratory headed by Professor Philip Craig at the University of Salford.
- **ACTION: HPA to draft a statement for agreement**

8. Discussion of animal/human incidents

- **AHVLA** reported the detection of a novel lyssavirus in a Schreibers bat in Spain. This bat is not found in the UK. The new virus was more related to Ikoma lyssavirus than any other lyssavirus, and has been provisionally named Lleida bat lyssavirus. It has been inferred from sequence data that current rabies vaccines will not confer protective immunity against this virus. **ACTION HPA to further discuss these assertions with AHVLA experts.**
- HPA Porton reported that *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* ticks had been found on a dog which had travelled to Thailand. It was cleared on arrival by the Animal Reception Centre and then found to be infested. AHVLA suggested that raising awareness of the tick recording scheme and encouraging submission of ticks would be useful.
- HPA Porton also reported that FERA had approached them regarding highly neurotoxic non-native species of hornet. The HPA Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) is best placed to advise on the human health risk. Further discussion is planned between FERA, HPA Porton and HPA CRCE.
- AHVLA reported that illegal puppy importations from mainland Europe are increasing, and have an associated possible rabies risk. Such puppies are often too young to have been appropriately vaccinated. To date in 2012, the Corporation of London has made more than 60 seizures creating a burden on LA quarantine facilities. Various ports are used, and puppies are then sold via car boot sales and in motorway service stations after being advertised on the internet. The Veterinary Risk Group has raised this as a concern and the CVOs have discussed. More public awareness is required. The group agreed to continue to monitor the situation.

9. Website updates

No relevant website updates were reported.

10. **AOB**

- AHVLA(P) stated that comments had been received on the draft annual advice on lambing , and that a final version would be published before Christmas. **ACTION: AHVLA(P) and HPA to discuss coordination of web publishing.**
- HPA will circulate a draft of the HAIRS annual report (2011-2012) in the New Year. **ACTION: HPA**

11. **Dates of future meetings:**

Monday January 7th, 10.30am (TC)

Face to face meeting Thursday 7th February 2013 at FSA