

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP)

Summary of the 84th ACDP meeting

The ACDP held its 84th meeting on 21 September 2006. The main agenda items discussed were:

ACDP Rabies and Exotic Disease Working Group

The working group had met for a second time to review veterinary risk assessments (VRAs) commissioned by Defra on rabies and other exotic diseases. The Group had written a letter to Defra to outline the Working Group's opinions and comments on the VRAs and the potential human risks associated with any changes to existing import control policy. This would be taken account of by Defra, in addition to other work streams such as a cost benefit analysis and public impact analysis, in Defra's final recommendations to be made to the Minister.

Steering Group for revision of the ACDP guidance on Blood-Borne Viruses

This group, chaired by Professor Will Irving, met for the first time in August to discuss revision of the 1996 ACDP guidance "**Protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace: HIV and hepatitis.**" Following this, HSE is currently taking forward the revision of the guidance based on the steering group's comments. If necessary, the steering group will meet again when a first draft is complete and it is intended that a first draft will be presented to the ACDP in summer 2007.

Assessment to be carried out before surgery and endoscopy to identify patients with, or at risk of, CJD

The guidance on pre-surgery assessment to identify patients with, or at risk of, CJD had been published in July as Annex J of the ACDP guidelines on "**TSEs: Safe working and the prevention of infection**", available on the [ACDP website](#)

ACDP Appointments

Members were informed that the current ACDP appointments exercise was underway. The 5 ACDP vacancies had been advertised at the start of September and nominations for 3 employee representatives had been requested. All candidates will go through the same selection process and interviews will be held in November.

Update on Avian Influenza

Members were given an update on various aspects of avian influenza (AI). This included an overview given by Defra on the outbreaks of H5N1 in Europe in 2005/2006,

based on the assessment published on the [Defra website](#). Also the committee considered the H7N3 outbreak in Norfolk earlier this year and the follow-up to this.

Swine flu and swine workers

Following a recommendation made by the ACDP, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recently considered whether swine workers should be vaccinated with the seasonal flu vaccine as a public health measure. The JCVI decided not to recommend routine use of the seasonal flu vaccine for pig workers.

ACDP members felt there was a lack of evidence on swine influenza virus infections circulating in the UK. Therefore, ACDP asked for the matter to be referred to the UK Zoonosis Group to consider the studies needed to determine the influenza viruses circulating in pigs in the UK. These studies could then inform serological surveys of swine workers at a later point in time.

Guidance on the use, testing and maintenance of laboratory and animal isolators for the containment of biological agents

HSE presented a second draft of the guidance on the use, testing and maintenance of laboratory and animal isolators for the containment of biological agents. The document has been circulated to the wider biological sciences community in spring 2006 and ACDP were content for HSE to publish the guidance, taking into account the consultation comments. This document will be web-based and will replace the 1985 ACDP publication of the same name.

ACDP Work Plan for 2006/2007

Members agreed their work plan for ACDP 2006/2007 (see annex 1). The ACDP TSE Working Group had produced a separate work plan for 2006/7, which has been cross-referenced in the ACDP plan.

Update on HPA-wide biological safety training programme

Members were informed about two newly designed courses for senior personnel, laboratory managers and laboratory workers that are intended to raise awareness and establish operational consistency for working in Containment Level 3 facilities.

Any Other Business

No other items were raised.

Secretariat

October 2006

ANNEX 1:

ACDP Work Plan for 2006/2007

1. To complete and update ACDP's 1996 BSE Occupational Guidance and publish on the ACDP website by Autumn 2006.
2. To complete and produce Guidance on Animal Isolators for small animals infected with Biological Agents and publish on ACDP website by Autumn 2006.
3. To complete the revision and update of the ACDP's 1996 Guidance: '**Management and Control of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers**' and publish on the ACDP website by Summer 2007.
4. To review and revise ACDP guidance dealing with Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs): '**Protection against blood-borne infections in the workplace: HIV and hepatitis 1996**' and look to issue revised guidance in the next Reporting Year.
5. To maintain oversight of developments related to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) and to drive forward delivery of the outputs of the ACDP TSE Working Group as given in the approved TSE Working Group's work plan for 2006/2007.
6. To review the recommended measures for pandemic influenza in relation to worker safety and public health.
7. To provide advice, where necessary, to the Department of Health/ Defra on the work of the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS).
8. To produce the electronic newsletter of the ACDP: the **Biological Agents Bulletin** in Autumn 2006.