

Animal and Environment Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Delivery Group for Wales

Minutes of the meeting held at over Microsoft Teams on the 1st June 2020

Present at Meeting

Gavin Watkins (GW)	Ian Jones (IJ)
Paul Green (PG)	Robert Smith (RS)
Ifan Lloyd (IL)	Gareth Thomas (GT)
Catherine Cody (CC)	Wyn Evans (WE)
Christianne Glossop (CG)	Sian Timms (ST)
Ann Davies (AD)	Marc Alford-Evans (MAE) – Secretariat

Apologies

Eifiona Williams (EW)	Robin Howe (RH)
Estevao Simoes (ES)	Amelia Stevens (AS)
Eleri Davies (ED)	Marion Lyons (ML)

Agenda Item 1: Minutes and actions from the last meeting (GW)

1. Delivery Group members agreed to sign off the minutes from the last Delivery Group meeting via email. If no further comments were received within the next two weeks (15 June), the minutes would be considered as final.
2. ST gave an update on the outstanding actions logged from the previous meetings.

Agenda Item 2: Welsh Government Update (GW)

3. GW explained that Welsh Government (WG) priority has mainly been focused on COVID19 work. However this doesn't reduce the priority given to AMR. CC added that colleagues from Public Health Wales (PHW) have also been focused on COVID19. PHW are preparing to return to regular essential services post COVID19 restrictions.
4. GW mentioned Brexit work is continuing. OCVO members of staff are feeding into work on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards and regulations for future trade agreements. The UK Agriculture Bill is currently in the Lords and has had comments and feedback from the WG. GT asked how much engagement has there been between the UK Government and the WG with forming future trade agreement positions because trade affects devolved competencies? GW explained that the OCVO Trade and Transition team are liaising extensively with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in trade engagement meetings. He went on to say that DEFRA have responded to OCVO feedback on AMR position papers. CG agreed and explained that OCVO presented position papers on what the WG would like to

see as a result of a future trade agreement agreed with the EU and other future trading partners. Also, she clarified that DEFRA have been searching and accepting edits and suggestions from devolved administrations on their trade position papers including on AMR. PG added that the livestock and farming sector have been included and listened to in the process of forming trade negotiation positions for the negotiations. He said that AMR related issues are broader and relate to standards more generally. VMD are putting down a few markers to cooperate more broadly on trading relationships. WE commented that there was disappointment in the farming community over the UK Agriculture Bill. Farmers wanted the bill to make clear that all animal products should have the same welfare and health standards so that local farmers aren't undercut.

5. GW mentioned that the WG will be publishing a White Paper for the Wales Agriculture Bill later this year. WE added that it is desirable for the eventual Bill to have a good position on the standard of imports into Wales. GW reminded him that trade is a reserved matter and potential divergence on animal products will bring consequences. IL agreed with WE and mentioned medicine isn't devolved and asked how this would fit into legislation if it is a reserved matter? GW explained that production standards are devolved and therefore Welsh legislation is needed in this area.

Agenda Item 3: Roundtable Updates (All)

6. PG explained that the project to review veterinary medicines regulations has continued the engagement with the veterinary profession and is on track but resources have been redirected. Broader AMR work has been held up because of recruitment delays but a team is being put together. Parliament suspended work on the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill which will provide the necessary primary legislative powers on veterinary medicines. The Bill will be sent to the House of Lords soon and should receive royal assent in November. Pig sector data for 2019 has been published. Antimicrobial levels in the pig sector has plateaued. Sector should be commended for not increasing usage, given the situations they have faced. He added that this group should consider this issue. GW mentioned that the general principle isn't to drive antibiotic usage to zero, but that it is reduced to an acceptable level. When will we get to that low level? PG said he agreed but that it isn't 'done and dusted' in the pig sector.
7. AD informed the Delivery Group that the use of antibiotics has increased in the short term but not had an opportunity to look at tracing issues. AD is hoping that the use has reduced and is using homeopathic methods. She added that Telio Vets have been running training programmes for their customers over the summer. This has been cancelled due to the restrictions in place. They are being updated to include an online element but not everyone is comfortable with online training. Hopefully face to face training will be picked up in the autumn or postponed to next summer. She is surprised that lamb prices are still good and milk prices are stabilising. **ACTION** – Consider if funding to supporting these training initiatives will continue to be available in 2021.

8. WE informed the Delivery Group that the price of Welsh lamb has collapsed since March and prices have increased over the past few days. Agreed that there haven't been any significant issues with maintaining social distancing on farm or for veterinary visits. RS added that Farming Connect have discussions that have moved online. He is worried about how many farmers will be able to sign up to online training.
9. IJ explained that a significant impact of COVID19 was the inability to meet customers face to face. They are estimating a 25% drop in on-farm work, due to the current restrictions. In Jan-Feb they sent letters to their farmers on advice on using antibiotics which received a good response and, as a consequence, usage rates reduced by March. Due to restrictions farmers aren't able to come into the surgery, so they are being asked to pre order medication and have it delivered instead. Medicine can also be collected, observing the two meter distance. This has worked well and has allowed increased engagement between the farmer and vet. They are continuing to introduce the Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers project and will soon be going live, although there has been some delays. WE asked IJ how far behind with this work? IJ there are no non-compliances but they are about two months behind. Could start holding discussions remotely however one to one discussions are difficult and would prefer to do them face to face.
10. CG - we have been talking to our veterinary delivery partners and agrees with IJ, more can be done in a face to face meeting. However we don't know how long COVID19 restrictions will be in place. CG expressed thanks for IL and IJ input into these discussions. Everything that the AMR group are trying to achieve is built on the good working relationships with our vets across Wales – TB/BVD/Sheep Scab etc. and this all depends on our veterinary practices being there. The evidence base is important and we're trying to direct vets to all the support that's available, although we appreciate that some vets and veterinary practices are eligible for everything that is available, due to their specific circumstances and this is a big worry that we need to record here.
11. IJ said that a main area of concern is the pressure to use more antibiotics in this area to help birds lay larger eggs. This is driven by public demand and retailers. Driving production past a certain level increases the need to use antibiotics. GT suggested that this should be raised with the packers and supermarket producers IJ confirmed that he has approached both, but that there is a lack of support.
12. GT confirmed that a big worry on Anglesey is that there are two big practices on the isle. Big organisations, one being a corporate organisation, can focus on profit over animal welfare and may therefore drive the use of antibiotics. GW agreed and said it was a part of our aim as a delivery group. IJ said that they were the first practice to buy back a veterinary practice from a corporate organisation, so might be a sign of things changing in the future.
13. IL raised that BVA have discussed the COVID19 guidelines for self-isolation, which could potentially close veterinary practices if one person tests positive and the remaining staff have to self-isolate for 14 days. This is not unique to vets, but is a problem that could be easily resolved, possible through increased

testing. Practices are supporting each other, but this isn't always possible in rural areas. CG confirmed that we're feeding into the discussions on the Test Track and Trace system that is being used in Wales. CC confirmed that she would raise this point with health colleagues.

14. IL Cattle Stewardship Group minutes are available and will be forwarded for the secretariat to share after this meeting. A big success is the reduced in the use of critically important antibiotics. WE confirmed that he's happy to see a plateauing in the beef sector. There may be future considerations as there is no longer the culling of beef calves from dairy herds. **ACTION:** Consider statistics as they become available to identify how this may impact. IL will share an update after this meeting. **ACTION:** GW suggested having an update on the traceability of antibiotics at the next annual meeting in September. GW to check beef sector measure.

Agenda Item 4: Arwain Vet Cymru (RS)

15. RS explained that the RDP project is to train a network of veterinary antibiotic prescribing champions across Wales. This was supposed to be face to face training, support, and observational studies of the practices to see if they have implemented any changes. The face to face sessions have been postponed for the time being and a large amount of training will be moved to an online format. Hoping this will encourage participation and each practice in Wales has nominated a 'champion' to be in webinars from September. Gwen Rees is leading the project and has continued to hold interviews with practice staff involved with dispensing farm animal medicines. Gwen is hoping to have engaged with 25 practices by the end of summer 2021.

Agenda Item 5: RDP Update (GW)

16. GW explained that WG finances are being redirected due to COVID19. This will make it difficult to use RDP to fund AMR related work. AMR is still a top priority for the WG.

Agenda Item 6: EAAD/WAAW Suggestions (All)

17. GW asked if this can be carried over to the next meeting due to lack of time to discuss.

Agenda Item 7: Date of the Next Meeting (All)

18. The delivery group agreed to explore how to facilitate the next meeting but most signalled they would prefer an online meeting. Next meeting – 10th September 2020.

Agenda Item 8: AOB (All)

19. The progress review for 2019/20 will be circulated for consideration in July, with a view to formal sign-off during the September meeting. This was postponed due to the COVID19 response.