



VetCommunique



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Animal Health Committee Meeting 01, 8-10 April 2003

Welcome to this edition of the Animal Health Committee (AHC) newsletter. AHC was formed by Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) in October 2002 and replaces Veterinary Committee.

The first face-to-face meeting of AHC will be held on 8-10 April in Orange, NSW and will provide an opportunity for members to discuss complex issues in depth and to hear reports from various committees and working groups.

The face-to-face meetings are attended by the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the States, the Northern Territory and New Zealand, the Commonwealth CVO and a representative from Biosecurity Australia, CSIRO and Animal Health Australia.

KEY AGENDA ITEMS

Animal Health Committee (AHC)

AHC was formed following a PISC review of its supporting committee structure in October 2002.

Under the new arrangements, AHC has carriage of a number of key areas, including endemic diseases, domestic quarantine, veterinary public health, animal welfare and emergency disease planning and preparedness.

A six-month work plan was prepared at the end of 2002. At its April meeting, AHC will develop a work plan to the end of 2004.

FMD Policy Forum Outcomes

A government—industry FMD/BSE Policy Forum was held on 17-18 February, 2003. AHC, with support from Animal Health Australia and AFFA, convened the Forum to take stock of progress on the emergency preparedness activities that have been undertaken in response to FMD and BSE.

Forum Delegates considered progress to date, agreed on national policies and recommended future action. PISC has endorsed the recommendations of the Forum and at the AHC meeting in April an action plan will be developed to facilitate their implementation.

Johne's Disease (JD)

At the April meeting, AHC will meet with representatives from the national sheep and cattle industry and NSW industry representatives to discuss OJD and BJD.

Members will also hear reports from OJD and BJD Technical Advisory Groups including one on surveillance for BJD zone maintenance.

AHC continues to be committed to liaise and consult with industry in an effort to develop effective national policy on their needs.

Animal Health Australia

Animal Health Australia will report to AHC on the new Company Strategic Plan, progress with TFAP2 and the BJD national approach.

Animal Welfare

As AHC now carries responsibility for animal welfare, AHC will receive a report from the Animal Welfare Working Group and will discuss its Terms of Reference and work plan.

Veterinary Public Health

AHC members will be informed of plans to hold an industry-government meeting in mid-2003 to consider the development of a national *Salmonella enteritidis* monitoring and surveillance program.

AFFA will present an update on avian influenza.

Antimicrobial Resistance

The PISC Task Force on JETACAR was established in 2001 to facilitate agricultural sector input to the implementation of the Government response to the JETACAR recommendations.

AHC will receive a progress report from the Task Force. The Taskforce will soon be asked to comment on the draft national strategy and action plan for antimicrobial resistance surveillance, prior to it being released for public consultation.



Animal Health Committee: What is it?

Animal Health Committee (AHC) is a sub-committee of the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC).

Its prime purpose is to provide scientific and technical advice on animal health and welfare issues to PISC. In so doing, it contributes to national policy development on these issues. AHC conducts its business in close conjunction with Animal Health Australia, providing technical and policy advice and consulting over program development.

The membership of AHC comprises the Chief Veterinary Officers of the Commonwealth, States, Territories and New Zealand. There are representatives from CSIRO and Biosecurity Australia on the Committee and Animal Health Australia has observer status. The position of Chair of the Committee is rotated annually.

AHC considers issues and reaches decisions by means of out-of-session papers, teleconferences and face-to-face meetings. Teleconferences are held approximately every 6-8 weeks and the face-to-face meetings are held twice a year, usually in April and October.

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