

DEFRA LAUNCHES TRAINING PACKAGE TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES

Defra today unveiled a comprehensive training package, aimed at all those engaged in the humane culling of animals, ranging from a notifiable disease outbreak to a roadside emergency. The package consists of a video, "Getting it Right - First Time, Every Time", interactive CD-ROM, which includes a case study, and a training manual.

Defra commissioned independent film company, Countrywise Communications, to undertake the filming, which took place during the FMD outbreak. The Department appointed Charles Mason, Technical Director of the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) as consultant on the production and script of the video.

Mr. Mason said: "The availability of this video and CD-ROM package should ensure that, in the event of any future outbreaks of notifiable disease, veterinary surgeons, slaughter teams and support staff will be well-prepared from the outset.

"The HSA recommends "Getting it Right - First Time, Every Time" as essential viewing for all Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Officers," he added. The 100-minute video is divided into training sessions to allow the target audience to watch the relevant section, such as animal handling or captive bolt maintenance. The CD contains a case study of a disease outbreak with question and answer sections to be completed by the trainee. It covers all aspects of emergency and disease control situations, from the initial risk assessment and health and safety issues, through animal handling, biosecurity, culling to final disposal of carcasses.

In the event of a future outbreak of FMD, the option of using emergency vaccination would be considered from the start but it would still be necessary to slaughter infected animals and those suspected of being infected.

Animal Welfare Minister Elliot Morley said the Government was committed to improving all aspects of animal welfare. "We have learnt many lessons from recent disease outbreaks and are determined to build on the lessons learned."

Notes for editors

1. Out of necessity, some footage contains scenes of animal slaughter that may be disturbing for some people. The pack will form the basis for a comprehensive and consistent training programme for all staff involved in controlling outbreaks of disease or dealing with future emergency situations.

2. It will be sent out widely including; Defra Animal Health Offices, the State Veterinary Service, the RCVS, the EU Commission and to current and acceding EU member states. Further information can be obtained from:

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