



Environment and Rural Affairs Department

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All Interested Parties on the Attached List

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Your ref:
Our ref:

18 March 2002

Dear Sir/Madam

ANIMAL HEALTH AND BIOSECURITY: PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S INTERESTS

We would be grateful for your comments on the enclosed draft Code of Recommendations on Biosecurity which alerts farmers and other owners of farm animals to their legal obligations and suggests precautions they can take against bacterial and viral infections that adversely affect animals. By following the advice in the Code, the risks of animal disease(s) occurring and the risk of disease spreading are reduced.

In using the word biosecurity we mean ways in which farmers, other owners of farm animals, and people who generally live, work, visit and enjoy the countryside can significantly reduce the risk of spreading disease(s) in animals. **The draft Code is in 3 parts: Part 1 is for Farmers and other Owners of Farm Animals; Part 2 is for Recreational Users of Farm Land; and Part 3 is for Utility Workers. Comments are sought by Friday, 7 June 2002.**

Background

Animal diseases seem to be spreading more quickly and more widely than ever before. It takes time, money and enormous effort to eradicate these diseases. Some, for example Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever, present a permanent threat. The risk of introducing disease has significantly increased in recent years because people in general are travelling more and trading networks are complex. We need everyone's help in trying to avoid a repeat of recent animal diseases that have had such a huge impact on individuals' and animals' lives. The draft Code on which we are consulting is aimed not just at the range of the better known animal diseases but also the less well known, for example Johne's Disease.

Mr Ross Finnie, Minister for Environment and Rural Development, has publicly stated the Executive's strategy to reduce the risk of further disease outbreaks. The Executive is working with industry and other interests on approaches to minimising the risk of such instances by focussing on:



- Reducing the number of animal movements from one market to another;
- Having livestock movement controls whilst disease remains a risk;
- Improving controls on imports; and
- Reinforcing the importance of biosecurity. Issuing this draft Code of Recommendations on Biosecurity is a step in that direction.

Legal position on Code and Timing

There are some elements of the draft Code which are already underpinned by law - see the section "Your legal obligations". The Executive intends to make this Code under section 3 of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 whereby Ministers, after consultation, may issue "Codes of recommendations for the welfare of livestock". Disease prevention can be an animal welfare matter within Part 1 of the 1968 Act. After this consultation exercise, the Scottish Parliament will be invited to agree the Code's contents before it comes into effect.

How you can help us

At the end of the draft Code you will find a response form in 3 sections that mirror the 3 parts of the document. Ideally we are seeking comments on the respective parts, but this is not essential. We are keen to receive comments on, for example, the detailed aspects of biosecurity and on how best the Executive can ensure that the biosecurity message can be promoted over time and to the many interests involved.

Other information

Copies of this consultation letter and draft Code have been put on the Scottish Executive website. The address is: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>. If you are aware of any organisations or individuals who might be interested in seeing this letter but have inadvertently been left off the circulation list, please contact Karly McGill (see below) who will arrange for a copy to be sent to them.

We intend to make available, at the end of the consultation process, copies of all the comments received. It will be assumed that your reply can be made publicly available in this way unless you indicate clearly that you wish all or part of it to be excluded from this arrangement.

Please send your comments to Miss Karly McGill, Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Animal Health Branch, Room 356, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh, EH14 1TY (e-mail: Karly.mcgill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) **by no later than Friday, 7 June 2002**. If you have any questions relating to this consultation exercise, please contact Karly at this address, or telephone her on 0131-244-3707.

Yours faithfully

J LODGE
Animal Health Branch