

## **RESTRICTED - POLICY**

### **FINAL NOTE OF 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE CHEMICAL HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK SURVEILLANCE (CHaIRS) GROUP**

**DATE & TIME: 25 MARCH 2009 AT 2:00PM**

**VENUE: MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Chris Livesey (Chair)	(CL)	Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Jo Payne	(JP)	Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Alison Gleadle	(AG)	Food Standards Agency
John Caseley	(JC)	Food Standards Agency
Beth Dunn	(BD)	Food Standards Agency
Kara Thomas	(KT)	Food Standards Agency
Christina Baskaran	(CB)	Food Standards Agency
Chris Mowdesley	(CM)	Health and Safety Executive
Ovnair Sepai	(OS)	Health Protection Agency
Steve Wyllie	(SW)	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
David Harris	(DH)	Animal Health
Alison Gowers	(AG)	Environment Agency
Ian Pengelly	(IP)	Health and Safety Laboratory

#### **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

1. CL welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Martin Rose (Central Science Laboratory), David Webb (Veterinary Medicines Directorate), and Chris Pidgeon (Pesticide Safety Directorate).

#### **MATTERS ARISING**

2. JC provided a verbal update on matters arising from the last CHaIRS Group meeting, as follows:
  - At the last meeting, on 2 December, there was an action for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to discuss further with the Environment Agency (EA) what could be done to strengthen notification procedures between the two departments. FSA has not lost sight of this action and will over the coming weeks and months be revisiting the existing SLA<sup>2</sup> and discussing both internally and with the EA the most effective ways of ensuring that it is promptly notified of incidents of relevance to the Agency (i.e with potential food safety implications). There is no further action for the group on this issue.
  - Another action from the previous meeting was for Defra to put CHaIRS on the agenda of the next UK Zoonoses, Animal Diseases and Infections Group (UKZADI) meeting. SW confirmed that the next UKZADI meeting is being held on 14 May 2009 and that CHaIRS will be on the agenda. Members agreed that a paper briefing would be sufficient, however if there are any particular issues for discussion at future meetings then a representative from the CHaIRS group could

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<sup>1</sup> Teleconference held in the Incidents Room, Aviation House.

<sup>2</sup> Signed May 2007

attend. It was agreed that Papia Khanom (Defra) would be provided with briefing from FSA two weeks prior to the UKZADI meeting.

**Action: Beth Dunn (FSA)**

- Finally, since the last meeting, the FSA's Food Safety Group has begun a restructuring process which is likely to continue until June 2009. This, together with the departure of Nick Tomlinson<sup>3</sup>, led to the decision to have VLA chair the meeting, for continuity reasons, until the restructuring process is complete, when we can review the situation again. CL thanked Nick Tomlinson for his support in setting up the group and chairing the first meeting.

## **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

3. JC introduced this agenda item, explaining that the revised ToR was sent to members on 18 March. This takes into consideration comments made by members at the last CHaIRS meeting. For example, references to additional costs have been taken out, as per instructions from the group. Also the ToR clarifies what the current reporting requirements are and updates the membership.
4. SW questioned whether the first line of the risk assessment section of the ToR should be amended to reflect that agencies/departments are responsible for risk assessments and risk management in the areas for which they have lead responsibility. This was agreed. CL confirmed that the ToR will be amended accordingly and added that this document can be amended as necessary, in the light of experience.

**Action: John Caseley (FSA)**

## **DISSEMINATION OF VLA INCIDENT REPORTS**

5. CL introduced this agenda item proposing that, subject to members' approval, the reporting of suspected chemical contamination and poisoning incidents by VLA to participating departments within the CHaIRS Group, begins forthwith. This will ensure that departments/agencies are suitably joined up during these incidents and are all alerted at the same time.
6. AG queried whether the members of the group will be the designated email contacts. It was confirmed that this would not necessarily be the case and members can nominate more appropriate email addresses. It was agreed that the number of email addresses per department/agency would be limited to a maximum of two contacts, who can then cascade as necessary to others or regional teams.
7. CL confirmed that there are on average 100 notifications from VLA per year, and all initial notifications would be circulated to all CHaIRS email contacts for information only. Follow up notifications for each incident would not be circulated to CHaIRS contacts unless individuals specifically contact Jo Payne (VLA) to request receiving them. KT advised that input is not expected from CHaIRS members and that this is sent for information only. The Agency provides information on food safety issues, and if all CHaIRS members were to comment this would affect the response time in handling incidents and could potentially lead to contaminated/unsafe food on the market.

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<sup>3</sup> Former Head of the FSA's Food Protection Division

8. Members agreed to provide John Caseley with the relevant email addresses that notifications should be sent to by close of play on Friday 27 March.

**Action: All**

#### **FORWARD WORK PLAN**

9. JC introduced this item, proposing that the Secretariat draw up a forward work plan for the group to include suitable items for discussion/further work over the coming financial year. Items suggested at the last meeting included arsenic surveillance, stemming from the recent Goongumpas incident in Cornwall, and future research on PFOS, in the light of the 2005 Buncefield incident. In addition, members suggested another item worth discussing would be the use of recycled material as animal bedding e.g. ash. It was agreed that all of these items would be discussed at future meetings, with arsenic surveillance as a priority. In addition, it was agreed that FSA would provide a briefing note on each issue prior to discussion at future CHaIRS meetings.

**Action: John Caseley (FSA)**

10. Members agreed to submit any further suggestions for future work over the coming financial year to John Caseley by the end of April 2009.

**Action: All**

#### **AOB**

11. AG requested clarification as to what level of input there will be into the group from other areas e.g. COT. CL confirmed that others will be included as necessary depending on the issues being discussed.
12. KT queried whether any joint surveillance is planned between departments/agencies. Members agreed that there may be cases where this would be beneficial and this should be another area to discuss at the next meeting.

#### **DATE, VENUE AND FORMAT OF NEXT MEETING**

13. CL confirmed that the next meeting was originally scheduled for 10 June 2009 but due to the unavailability of key officials will now be postponed until later in the summer. The Secretariat will be in contact with members in the coming weeks to arrange a date.

**Action: Beth Dunn (FSA)**

**Beth Dunn  
CHaIRS Secretariat  
March 2009**