

**March 2007**

**“Animals under our Care”**

**BVA Specialist Advice**

Pig Veterinary Society (PVS)

The PVS recommends that the definition of “Animals Under Our Care” should require:

- The veterinary surgeon to have been given responsibility for the health and welfare of the animals by the owner, or owner’s agent, and that this responsibility should be real and not nominal;
- The veterinary surgeon must have regular and on-going knowledge of the health and welfare of animals on the farm. This should be achieved by a combination of regular visits, inspection of farm records and the findings of any laboratory, post mortem or abattoir investigations that may have been made. In all cases, the interval between visits to the farm should not normally exceed three months. Visits may be more frequent where the health and/or welfare of the animals on the farm require increased veterinary involvement. When the farm has not been visited for more than three months no medicines should be prescribed until the farm has been visited, except when there are sound mitigating circumstances and animal welfare may be compromised. A veterinary surgeon should, in normal circumstances, only prescribe sufficient medicine as can be anticipated would be used in a one month period. A veterinary surgeon should visit all farms under his care within a six month period whether medicines are used on the farm or not;
- Where the care of the animals on the farm is divided between two, or more, veterinary surgeons there must be a clear understanding between them and the farm staff regarding the relevant responsibilities and action to be taken for all predictable situations. All clinical and health monitoring records must be made available to all veterinarians involved in the care of the animals on the farm. There must be clear understanding regarding which veterinary surgeon has the animals under his/her care for the prescription or supply of veterinary medicines; and