Policy Committee meeting 15 March 2017 at BVA Headquarters, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ

Attendees
Gudrun Ravetz (Chair)
Paula Boydend
Danny Chambers
John Fishwick
Margaret Hosie
Rob Kelly
Fiona McFarland
Kate Sharpe
Huw Stacey

Apologies
Liz Mullineaux

BVA staff
Sally Burnell
Amelia Findon
Hannah Jordan (part)

Minutes of the last meeting
1) The minutes of the meeting held 2 November 2016 were accepted as an accurate record.

Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel
2) Policy Committee were updated on the recent meeting of the Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel (EWAP) held by teleconference on 22 February 2017. Policy Committee supported the EWAP framework for the review of BVA policy development and the more complex tool intended for BVA working groups to use when considering a single proposition. Policy Committee were reminded that each working group had a nominated EWAP member and, once elected, the Chair of EWAP would be a member of Policy Committee.

Brexit Working Group
3) Working in breakout groups, Policy Committee reviewed the draft Brexit report making a number of suggestions for amendments and additions. The next iteration would be circulated to Policy Committee once the Brexit Working Group had convened by teleconference week beginning 27 March.

Action: Secretariat to circulate near final draft report to Policy Committee by 31 March.

Surveillance Working Group
4) Kate Sharpe, chair of the Surveillance Working Group, updated Policy Committee on the first meeting held 23 February 2017. The group had reviewed the current surveillance situation in the UK, considering statistics from the BVA Voice of the Veterinary Profession Survey, diagnostic submissions data, and evidence from the species representatives, as well as receiving short presentations in relation to Scotland and NI. The group was developing a survey with a view to building a more detailed picture of the perceived value of surveillance by practitioners, their engagement via post-mortem and sample submissions, in-house data collection, and their views on surveillance reporting. Two further meetings were planned focusing on production animals, and companion animals, equine and wildlife.

Antimicrobial Resistance Working Group
5) Huw Stacey, chair of the AMR Working Group, explained that, although the group would not meet in person until April, draft principles in relation to target setting for a reduction in antimicrobial usage were being developed via email loop. The group would liaise closely with the RUMA Targets Taskforce and were aware of concerns regarding duplication of effort.

Farm Assurance Working Group
6) Danny Chambers, chair of the Farm Assurance Working Group, explained that the first
meeting, to be held 22 March, would focus on establishing BVA criteria for identifying high welfare within farm assurance schemes in order to assist members to understand the different schemes, and signpost the public.

7) Policy Committee were supportive of working group activity to date.

Election of Policy Committee Chair
8) Policy Committee members elected Liz Mullineaux as chair of Policy Committee for a three-year term.

BVA policy priorities (not covered by a working group)
9) Vet Futures – One Health Coordination Group
Policy Committee supported the draft scoping document for the One Health Coordination Group. In discussion it was suggested that the draft could include:

- A specific reference to the concept of One Welfare
- Links between animal and human abuse as a potential area within One Health
- Reference to the economic benefits of a One Health approach

Action: Secretariat to incorporate proposed amendments to the scoping document.

10) Animal Welfare Strategy – cattle analgesia
Policy Committee supported the principles of the BCVA draft position on cattle analgesia. In discussion it was suggested that the position should include reference to:

- the economic benefits to the farmer of using NSAIDS
- other sources of supporting peer-reviewed evidence

It should also be clear whether the position was intended to refer to cattle, or only calves.

Action: J Fishwick / R Kelly to provide links to relevant supporting evidence

Action: Secretariat to circulate peer-reviewed paper once published and liaise with BCVA on working up the draft position further with a view to giving BVA support.

11) Welfare at slaughter
Policy Committee received an update on recent activity around welfare at slaughter including a response to Lesley Griffiths AM regarding CCTV in Welsh slaughterhouses, and a recent meeting of the non-stun slaughter group.

12) Welfare of pet animals
Policy Committee agreed to form a small, virtual group to develop the BVA position on Brachycephalic breeds, including BSAVA representation.

Action: Secretariat to convene virtual group

13) Policy Committee supported the principle of developing BVA guidelines on the responsible use of pets in advertising. In discussion it was suggested that the guidelines should:

- Focus on characteristics (physical and behaviours) rather than specific breeds
- Cover the need for pets to be portrayed in an appropriate context/environment
- Address issues such as dogs being shown with chocolate cakes/sticks, alone with a child
- State that advertisers should seek BVA/vet advice
- Acknowledge the need for exceptions for educational purposes

Action: Secretariat to work up draft guidelines, in liaison with BSAVA, for consideration by Policy Committee
14) Policy Committee supported the draft position on dogs in public spaces, and the proposed additions from BSAVA. In discussion it was suggested that the draft should include reference to:

- The importance of exercise for dog and owner
- The value of dogs in a shared environment
- Dog walkers and the number of dogs which could be safely handled at any one time

**Action:** Secretariat to develop draft for sign off by Policy Committee and recommendation to Council

15) Policy Committee received an update on the development of new Model Licensing Conditions for dog breeding, boarding, and pet sales via the Defra Expert Panel, attended by the BVA President. The draft in its current form was not considered to be fit for purpose and would be reviewed.

16) **Veterinary wellbeing and workforce issues**

Members received an update on the BVA workforce research project led by Prof. Michelle Ryan from Exeter University. It was agreed that the term feminisation in relation to workforce issues may be misunderstood/misinterpreted (NOTE: Prof. Ryan has subsequently proposed ‘the gendered nature of the veterinary career’)

**Horizon scanning**

17) Policy Committee noted the current version of the BVA horizon scanning document.

**Action:** PC members to raise any other live or upcoming issues via the email loop

18) **Veterinary Surgeons Act**

It was noted that RCVS intended to look at whether the VSA needed amending to address workforce issues in light of Brexit. The BVA President would attend the RCVS Legislation Working Party which would meet over the coming 18 months. Policy Committee agreed that BVA should be involved throughout the process.

19) **Anthelmintics/ Suitably Qualified Persons (SQPs)**

The VMD had agreed to a request from the Marketing Authorisation Holder to change the legal distribution category of Zolvix from POM-V to POM-VPS, despite concerns raised jointly by BVA with Sheep Veterinary Society to SCOPS (Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep) in January 2016. BVA’s current position was that all anthelmintics should be POM-V, ‘whilst recognising and allowing for the role of SQPs in the UK system.’ In July 2016 the Veterinary Policy Group had recommended to BVA Council that Group 4 & 5 anthelmintics should remain the responsibility of veterinary surgeons and classed as POM-V, and that BVA should recognise the role of SQPs in prescribing Groups 1-3 anthelmintics (POM-VPS). Council rejected the proposal on the basis that it could lead to increased resistance. Policy Committee agreed that the evidence base for Council concerns should be reviewed before considering the BVA position further.

**Action:** Secretariat to research evidence base

**Current consultations**

20) Policy Committee supported the draft response to RCVS on the review of the use of teledicines in veterinary practice (NOTE: RCVS have subsequently confirmed that they will be seeking further input from BVA before proposals go to RCVS Council)

**Any other business**

21) Formalin – Policy Committee supported the Fish Veterinary Society (FVS) proposal for joint working on a position on medicinal and non-medicinal use of formalin.

**Action:** Secretariat to liase with FVS on the development of a draft position