Welsh Branch Council teleconference 24 March 2015

Attendees
Rob Davies - President
Neil Paton – President Elect/South Wales Practitioner Group
Dinika Dhir – Honorary Secretary and recent graduate
Ifan Lloyd – regional representative
Bob Stevenson – past president
Kate Hovers - AWF
Sarah Carr - BEVA
John Blackwell – BVA President
Jill Hubbard – North Wales/MSG
Esther Barrett – BSAVA

Apologies
Tricia Sutton - SVS
Collin Wilson – VPHA
Les Eckford – GVS
Sam Hambleton – AVS
Dai Grove-White – Liverpool
David Barrett - Bristol

Apologies
1) The President of the Branch welcomed members to the meeting.

Minutes of the last teleconference held 7 November 2014

2) It was reported that the actions from the last teleconference were complete or would be discussed further during the teleconference.

3) Regarding paragraphs 3 of the minutes, it was noted that there did not appear to have been any further developments on the Welsh Government response to recommendation 77 of the Working Smarter report which stated “The role of AHVLA in Wales is currently being reviewed to identify alternative delivery models. The substance of the recommendation will be considered alongside other service delivery options. The main priority is to maintain effective animal disease surveillance and readiness to respond to notifiable disease outbreaks” The OCVO was understood to be looking at a variety of approaches to delivery in Wales in addition to APHA (formerly AHVLA). An update had been requested.

Updates
4) Branch Council received updates on Branch and BVA activity as follows:

- **North Wales Division** had continued to hold successful CPD meetings, including a presentation from Matthew J O'Donnell BVSc MRCVS of Cheshire Equine Clinic in February 2015 on “Bringing new techniques and procedures to the management of performance horses”. A recent graduate meeting would be held in May and an up-to-date list of recent graduate email addresses would be required. **Action: Secretariat**

- **South Wales Practitioner Group** – K Hovers had continued to organise cattle scanning CPD courses under the SWPG banner and the events were largely breaking even with a small profit made on some. A well attended
recent graduate meeting had been held prior to Christmas and further events were planned. An up-to-date list of recent graduate email addresses would be required.  

**Consultations** – The President of Branch thanked Branch Council members for their input into recent consultation responses. The recent *Welsh Government consultation on sharing the location of TB infected farms* had attracted approximately 30 responses from a range of stakeholders broadly in support of the proposals. It was expected that an announcement would be made shortly.

**Fly grazing** – S Carr (BEVA) had given evidence to the Environment and Sustainability Committee of the National Assembly for Wales on 12 March in a session looking at Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014: post-legislative scrutiny. She had welcomed the legislation but highlighted some of the barriers to its use, including the disposal of horses once seized under the Act. As yet it was unclear how many equines had simply been moved to fly graze over the border in England, where similar legislation was imminent. Details of the session would be shared on the Wales forum of the BVA Community.  

**Welfare at slaughter** - The President and President of Welsh Branch had met with Rebecca Evans AM, Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, for a positive and constructive discussion following concerns regarding BVA’s press release in relation to the non-stun abattoir at Caernarfon. Branch Council agreed it would be useful to know whether the plant had begun to run a non-stun beef line.  

**BVA Survey Panel** - members were encouraged to sign up

**BVA Strategic Plan**: had been uploaded to the website

**Vet Futures**: Vet Futures road-shows were planned across the UK over the coming months. The event in Wales would be held in Swansea on 17 June, replacing the proposed Welsh Branch ‘meet the members’ event. Branch Council was encouraged to attend.

**ITN** - BVA was working in partnership with ITN Productions to produce a news and current affairs-style programme on the veterinary profession focusing on the trends and innovations that would shape its future. The project would look at the challenges and opportunities facing the profession now and in the future, in terms of the health and welfare of animals as well as the health and wellbeing of veterinary surgeons. It would be premiered at BVA Members’ Day on Thursday 24 September 2015 and would also be screened at BVA Congress.

**Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group**

5) The Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group had been set up in June 2014 to support the implementation of the *Framework*. Priorities for the Group included BVD (through the work of the BVD Subgroup), Sheep Scab (through the work of the Sheep Scab Subgroup), equine and small animal issues which were being taken forward via smaller working groups, and raising awareness of the importance of good biosecurity, and responsible use of antimicrobials.

**BVD Subgroup**

6) The Wales BVD steering group had been established to consider options for Wales and was composed of representatives from the farming unions, levy boards and vets. Branch Council had previously supported the principle of a move towards eradication in Wales, commenting that a compulsory phase would be an essential
follow on to an initial voluntary phase. The Subgroup was working towards a proposal for eradication including a possible application for RDP funding. N Paton reported that input from Branch members on the likely budget required for vets taking samples during TB testing, as well as thoughts on turnaround times from laboratories, would assist with the preparation of the RDP bid. **Action: All**

**Sheep Scab Task and Finish Group**
7) The industry led Sheep Scab Task and Finish Group had been formed in order to make recommendations to Welsh Minsters on the eradication of Sheep Scab in Wales. The published report from the Group offered a comprehensive and robust model for eradication. Due to the current lack of evidence as to the scale of the Scab problem in Wales the possibility of commissioning a study was being explored with a view to setting a baseline before taking the report recommendations forward.

**Livestock Identification Advisory Group**
8) It was reported that progress had been slow. Branch would be kept updated.

**Animal Welfare Network Wales**
9) BVA was currently a member of the Animal Welfare Network Wales (AWNW), an independent initiative set up to bring together all organisations with volunteers in the animal welfare sector in Wales. K Hovers had continued to attend AWNW meetings on behalf of BVA and Branch, and S Carr had attended on behalf of BEVA, although concerns remained that AWNW activity was limited and the website remained disappointing. It was agreed that the member login details for the AWNW site would be circulated. **Action: Secretariat**

**Cymorth TB**
10) Future training provision for vets involved in the Cymorth TB programme was being developed in liaison with Improve International. Branch Council commented that some members would have preferred for the training to be developed in liaison with a Wales based provider. The Cymorth TB programme was being rolled out across Wales with consideration being given to ways in which it could be expanded, including the provision of advice to cattle keepers who were not under TB restrictions to help them stay TB free, and extra practical support for those who had been on restrictions the longest.

**Official veterinarians**
11) On 27 January 2015 APHA and the Welsh Government had announced that contracts had been signed with two delivery partners, Menter a Busnes (North Wales) and Iechyd Da (Gwledig) Ltd (South Wales), to deliver bovine TB testing and other Official Veterinarian (OV) services in Wales. BVA had welcomed the announcement that both delivery partners would involve a large number of local farm veterinary practices to deliver OV services.

**BVA Governance review**
12) At the November Welsh Branch teleconference, members had considered proposals for the BVA governance review and had taken part in a SWOT analysis of Welsh Branch, the wider committee system and other elements of BVA’s governance in order to feed in to the review.

13) On 4 March the Governance Review Steering Group had met to discuss priorities for the review and next steps. The Steering Group had received a presentation by Compass Partnership, the independent consultancy working with BVA on the review, on the findings of their in-depth stakeholder interviews (with a representative cross-section of key stakeholders including representatives from BVA Board and Council, BVA divisions, standing committees and Branches) and desk-based research.

14) Based on the research and feedback the Steering Group had agreed four priority
areas of work:

i. The relationship between BVA and the specialist divisions
ii. Procedures for electing BVA officers
iii. BVA’s committee structure and appointments to committees
iv. The relationship between Board and Council

And two cross-cutting themes to be addressed throughout work on the priority areas:

i. Member engagement
ii. Equality and diversity

15) The other issues identified during the consultation phase would be brought into the priority areas where possible or progressed through other BVA activity. Devolution and the role of Branches would form part of the review under a number of the priority areas although it had not been identified as a priority area in its own right. Consideration would be given to formalising the reporting structure for Branches, and also to devolved representation on BVA’s committees.

16) Branch Council supported progress to date. It was agreed that the profile of Welsh Branch had grown steadily since its inception and consideration would need to be given to sharing the workload more effectively between Branch Council members, as well as additional resourcing, going forward. It was agreed that a physical presence for Welsh Branch in Wales would be desirable and this could be considered in the future, resources permitting.

Any other business

17) Welsh Branch AGM
The AGM would be held on 16 June in advance of the BVA Welsh political dinner that evening. Expressions of interest in the role of Branch Junior Vice President were invited via the secretariat. It was agreed that the AGM would provide a valuable opportunity to review the Branch terms of reference and that consideration should be given to ways in which new members could be encouraged to get involved. **Action: All**

18) Schmallenberg Virus
It was noted there had been some suspected cases of SBV in the south-west of England.

19) The Branch President thanked members for a useful and productive session and for their support during his two year term of office which would come to an end at the AGM.