WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON SHARING THE LOCATION OF TB INFECTED FARMS – BVA / BCVA / BVA WELSH BRANCH RESPONSE

1) The BVA is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 15,000 members. Its primary aim is to protect and promote the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and it therefore takes a keen interest in all issues affecting the veterinary profession, be they animal health, animal welfare, public health, regulatory issues or employment concerns.

2) The British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) is a specialist cattle division of the BVA comprising 1,250 members, of whom approximately 950 are practising veterinary surgeons working with cattle in farm animal veterinary practice.

3) The BVA's Welsh Branch brings together representatives of the BVA’s territorial and specialist divisions, government, academic institutions and research organisations in Wales. The Branch advises BVA on the consensus view of the Welsh members on Welsh and United Kingdom issues.

4) We were pleased to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the Welsh Government’s consultation on sharing the location of TB infected farms. We fully support the proposals as we support the principle of risk-based trading, which the proposed measures would appear to complement in that they would assist farmers in making better risk-based decisions.

5) Do you agree that the location of TB infected herds should be published? Yes, we fully support the proposal to publish the location of TB breakdown herds in Wales. However, we would stress the need to ensure that all farmers are fully aware of the proposals before they are implemented.

6) How do you think this information might be used by cattle farmers to help protect their herds from TB? The information regarding current breakdowns would raise awareness amongst other farmers in the locality of the increased risk of TB and facilitate the introduction of risk-based precautionary measures, such as improvements to biosecurity, thereby helping to prevent the introduction of TB. Biosecurity measures could include preventing contact between cattle, or contact with cattle on neighbouring farms, by improving fencing or changing grazing plans. As reactors will occur in cattle grazing away from the main holding consideration should also be given to publishing the location of the grazing ground, if the full benefits of this proposal are to be recognised.

7) What do you think is the best way of publishing information on TB breakdown herds? We believe that herds under restriction should be identified on-line both in list form and on a map, although care should be taken to ensure that no personal information about the farm or farmer is divulged. The proposed SPIDA system would facilitate such mapping.

8) Would it also be useful to publish information on herds that have recently come off movement restrictions?
Data regarding breakdowns should be available for a period of five years as knowledge of how long a herd has been free from TB would be useful when making purchasing decisions as the risk of a herd suffering a further breakdown decreases with time.

9) **Additional comments?**

Regarding the wording of the proposed Order, the definition of ‘affected animal’ is not clear and we suggest that this should be changed to ‘infected animal’. Animals which are infected should be identified via testing so that herds are declared OTF(W) because reactor(s) are detected either during a test or as a slaughterhouse case. We propose that a colour coded system should be used on the published map so that the different degrees of risk can be identified. Presumably details of herds under restriction due to compliance issues would not be listed, however, we would appreciate some clarification of this point. BCVA is currently working with Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS) to develop a TB control module which includes a risk-based score largely based around the number of years free from TB. The publishing of outbreaks in the way proposed by Welsh Government could help to promote a risk based trading model and facilitate a consistent approach across several initiatives.