DEFRA, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GB CONTROL STRATEGY FOR LUMPY SKIN DISEASE – BVA / BCVA RESPONSE

1) BVA is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 16,000 members. Our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and we therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

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 Branches in Wales and Scotland bring together representatives of the BVA’s territorial and specialist divisions, government, academic institutions and research organisations. The Branches advises BVA on the consensus view of the Welsh and Scottish members on Welsh, Scottish and United Kingdom issues.

4) We welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft GB control strategy for Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and strongly support the principle of a coordinated, consistent and complementary GB-wide approach to movement controls and restrictions, vaccination, and management of any LSD outbreak. We agree that good biosecurity and animal care, responsible sourcing of animals, international disease monitoring, risk based testing and import conditions are all crucial to effective disease control and as such we broadly support the proposals outlined in the draft strategy. There are a small number of points which we believe would benefit from additional clarification, detailed below.

5) Vaccination
   We agree that vaccination can play an important role in controlling LSD and whilst we understand that the merits of vaccination will be considered in the event of an LSD outbreak, and industry groups would be consulted in advance of any recommendations being put to Ministers, we would value clarification on the likely outcomes for vaccinated animals. Assuming no DIVA test availability to distinguish infected from vaccinated animals, we understand that vaccinated stock could only move direct to slaughter. However, we anticipate that there may be reluctance from supermarkets to sell products derived from healthy vaccinated animals. We would support any moves to prioritise funding for the development of a DIVA vaccine.

6) Consideration must be given to the availability of suitably trained individuals in the event of an Emergency Vaccination Programme being approved and a Vaccination Zone declared. We have concerns regarding the standard of vaccination protocols for delivery by farmers rather than veterinary surgeons. Furthermore, given that implementation of an effective vaccination programme would be crucial for the resumption of international trade, appropriate certification will necessarily play a role. Given the existing pressures on the veterinary workforce, which are being, and will further be, exacerbated by Brexit, GB’s capacity to implement and certify a vaccination programme must be considered as part of the strategy.

7) As the currently available commercial LSD vaccines are live vaccines, we would value assurances regarding availability, and clarification regarding shelf-life and
storage and handling requirements. If there will be a requirement to return unused vaccine to the point of vaccine distribution, it will be essential that clear storage instructions are provided in order to protect the quality and effectiveness of the returned product.

8) **Disease control zones**
   Although the proposed zone sizes go above and beyond the legal minimum set out in EU legislation, we would value assurance that the minimum of 20km radius is adequate for a protection zone when the disease is vector borne. We strongly agree that consideration should be given to seasonal vector activity and weather conditions, as well as the other factors listed in the draft strategy, when determining the size of zones to be applied.

9) **Movement restrictions**
   Whilst we support the proposed movement restrictions detailed in the draft it is important that animal welfare is not compromised as a result of any restrictions imposed. We welcome the caveat that certain animal movements may be permitted under licence, subject to risk assessment.

**Conclusion**

10) We welcome the proposals in the draft LSD control strategy and, subject to clarification and assurance on the points listed above, support the GB-wide approach as a pragmatic step in ensuring disease preparedness.

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