BVA SCOTTISH BRANCH RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE SPECIFIED DISEASES (NOTIFICATION) AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) ORDER 2016

1) The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 15,000 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) BVA’s Scottish Branch brings together representatives of the BVA’s territorial and specialist divisions, government, academic institutions and research organisations in Scotland. The Branch advises BVA on the consensus view of Scottish members on Scottish and United Kingdom issues.

3) We have consulted with specialist division the Pig Veterinary Society and understand that they, along with other representatives of the pig industry, have been closely involved in the development of contingency plans for the control and elimination of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea (PED) should an outbreak occur in Scotland. As the contingency plan can only be effective if the organisations responsible for its implementation are told as soon as possible that disease is suspected on a holding, we fully support the proposal to make PED notifiable as detailed within the Specified Diseases (Notification) Amendment (Scotland) Order 2016.

4) We do not believe that a requirement to report suspicion of PED could delay investigations into other pig diseases as the clinical signs are sufficiently different to other notifiable diseases such as classical swine fever, and foot and mouth disease.

5) We strongly support the suggestion that the benefits of informing keepers within the local area regarding a confirmed PED case outweigh any risks to privacy of the affected keeper being identified. Early identification and containment of the disease is paramount to effective control.

6) PED is a devastating disease and we are very pleased that the pig industry and veterinary surgeons in Scotland have worked together so effectively to develop a robust process for preventing incursion and dealing with any outbreak. We recently welcomed the announcement that PED will become a notifiable disease in England and are pleased to offer any support that we can to the Scottish Government in the protection and promotion of pig herd health and welfare in Scotland.

December 2015