BVA position on compensation for compulsorily slaughtered food producing animals

1. The government has powers to cull animals to control the spread of notifiable diseases. Compensation is generally paid for any healthy animals culled and in some circumstances for animals affected by the disease in question. Generally, compensation is not paid for animals that die before they are culled or are voluntarily killed independently of an official cull. Compensation does not cover consequential losses (i.e. income that the animal would have generated in the future for example through laying eggs or producing offspring).

2. BVA believes that if an animal or group of animals is compulsorily slaughtered for the purposes of statutory disease control, compensation should be paid.

3. Compensation should be paid for a recognisable and discrete epidemiological unit.

4. Compensation provides reimbursement for losses suffered by the animal keeper and as such compensation should be equitable and reflect the market value of the animal slaughtered. If the compensation paid is below market value the risk of keepers concealing animals suspected of infection will be heightened and the incentive to co-operate with authorities will be reduced, contributing to further disease spread.

5. BVA supports the principle of a reduction in compensation where there is lack of compliance on the part of the keeper with statutory disease control or accepted best bio-security practice within the particular livestock sector (e.g. appropriate handling of animal by products, pre-movement testing, isolation of reactors etc.)

6. An appeals process must be in place to protect those keepers whose lack of compliance with statutory disease control or accepted best bio-security practice is as a result of circumstances outwith their control.

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