



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Agriculture Group

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Stakeholders in the Provision of Vets and Veterinary Services

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Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to update you with progress on the Working Group on Vets and Veterinary Services, with which many of you will have been involved. Following concerns raised by stakeholders in the development of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain, the Scottish Executive, Defra and Welsh Assembly Government agreed to look into the provision of large animal veterinary services. The remit of this initiative was to consider how the problems facing the profession could be mitigated and the opportunities exploited.

There is no quick answer to these issues, and the starting point was gathering an evidence base to inform our decisions. This stage is now to a large degree completed. Today we are pleased to announce the publication of the Working Group on Vets and Veterinary Services Report and the Veterinary Career Choices Report. The evidence base consists of the following:

- Working Group on Vets and Veterinary Services Report. This is an objective report prepared by OCP (independent consultants) of the findings from the 5 working group meetings held in vet colleges across Great Britain. It was also informed by written and other contributions by stakeholders. A sixth meeting was held in June with key stakeholders from the profession and its clients to agree this report and discuss next steps.
- The Institute of Employment Studies Report into Veterinary Career Choices. This has been funded by Defra with practical and financial support from the RCVS. It examines the factors that influence the career direction of veterinarians from those coming up to graduation to those who have been in the profession for 5 years.
- Westley Consulting Report into the Supply of Large Animal Vets (published in March). This report examines the supply of large animal vets now and in the future, and also looks into factors which are influencing this.

All of this evidence is available on our website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/about/ERADA/LAH/00019469/Initiatives.aspx> Hard copies are also available on request.

The challenge for all of us now is to sustain this enthusiasm and momentum. Key stakeholders are signed up to formulating an action plan, which will identify what work will be done and who is best placed to lead. We will be meeting with stakeholders after the holiday season to agree this action plan and governance arrangements to monitor the situation in the large animal sector and the impact of the work being undertaken. The results of these meetings will be published later this year.



We would like to thank you for your contribution to this work, but must recognise that this is only the beginning of the process and results can only be achieved by working together. We would like to restate the offer made in Edinburgh to meet with you to discuss this issue and make sure it is taken forward in a manner that will find the right solutions for Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Bates