

Talkshop March 2025

Update to Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

REVIEW VISIT

£557 per visit to include:

- Sampling 30 animals for PRRS
- Review of veterinary health plan
- Review of antimicrobial usage
- Discussion of health and welfare topics of your choice

ENDEMIC DISEASE FOLLOW UP

£923 per visit to include:

- Sampling of 30 animals for PRRS
- Biosecurity audit
- Follow-up on discussions from review visit

We have previously highlighted the funding available to farmers in England from DEFRA. This is for vet visits that give an opportunity to take a more in depth look at animal health and welfare.

The aim of the visits is to engage in discussion on future steps to:

- control and prevent disease
- improve animal health and welfare
- improve animal productivity

Recent examples of topics covered during pathway visit include staff training and environmental monitoring.

Recently DEFRA have announced that from now onwards farmers can apply for funding for AHWP review and follow-up visits for more than one species under a single SBI, previously farmers had to choose one species for which to utilise funding.

Engagement with the pathway has previously positively influenced consideration for DEFRA grant funding. Although some of the capital grants schemes are now closed to applications, making use of the pathway funding may have benefits if future grant schemes are announced.

Funding is currently available to carry out 3 review and 3 follow-up visits per species. Funding will stop in 2027 so make the most of it whilst it is there!

To learn more and apply please follow this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farmers-how-to-apply-for-funding-to-improve-animal-health-and-welfare#animal-health-and-welfare-review>

Biosecurity matters

Segueing neatly from the Pathway to a brief reminder about the importance of biosecurity. African swine fever continues to be a disease specter, hovering menacingly in continental Europe but most recently it has been joined by 2 isolated outbreaks of Foot and Mouth disease,

in Germany and Hungary. These act as a stark reminder that securing your farm from incursion from disease is the proactive action that you can take to protect your business.

Important as they are we should not only be focusing our efforts on excluding exotic diseases, there are plenty of home-grown ones that would cause significant health issues and have considerable impact on productivity if allowed to enter a herd.

Biosecurity requires a multi layered approach comprising of bio exclusion, biocontainment and bio management.

Bio exclusion – preventing disease getting in

Bio management – preventing spread of pathogens within a farm

Biocontainment – preventing disease getting out

All three of these are important in protecting your herd and others around you and across the country.

The routes by which disease can spread are similar regardless of whether your aim is to exclude, contain or manage.

- with pigs
- in semen
- on vehicles and equipment
- with visitors
- via wildlife
- via the wind
- via feed/water

A review of your current biosecurity protocols, how effective they are and how robustly they are being enforced is a worthwhile exercise. Biosecurity assessment tools are available that generate a score for current practice whilst also offering guidance on what improvements could be made and the potential impact that these can have.

These biosecurity assessments can be included as part of an Animal Health and Welfare Pathway visit or done separately. They can be repeated regularly to gauge what improvement has been made from the implementation of changes to existing biosecurity protocols.

As our commitment to protecting your herds we regularly review our own biosecurity protocols and make appropriate changes as a response to updates to guidance on best practice. Some of these may be more obvious, such as using protective overshoes to enter a unit or organisation of our cars to segregate clean and dirty equipment. Others may be less obvious including how we structure our visits to respect health status and downtimes of each site that we visit.

Please ask on of the vet team for more information on how to beef up your biosecurity and if you would like to have a biosecurity assessment.

Alex