

BVA response to Public Accounts Committee inquiry on UK Border 2020: preparedness

Who we are

- 1) The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom. With over 18,000 members, our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the United Kingdom's veterinary profession. We therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health, animal welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.
- 2) Veterinary surgeons deploy their expertise across domestic food production, from farm to fork, ensuring UK production meets high standards of animal health, animal welfare and food safety, and providing assurance to trading partners. The veterinary profession has a great deal of expertise that can contribute to the development of the UK's future trade policies and help secure opportunities for the UK economy.
- 3) We welcome the opportunity to provide our evidence to this inquiry on UK Border preparedness ahead of the end of the transition period.

Introduction

- 4) On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union, and the current "transition period" ends at the end of 2020. The current rules relevant to the UK border, including on trade, travel and business for the UK and EU continue to apply during the transition period, but the government has been preparing for when the UK–EU relationship changes.
- 5) The vital role of veterinary surgeons in trade, protecting public health, food safety and animal health and welfare is recognised around the world. Imports of both animals and animal products may carry pathogens that can represent a threat to public health and the health of animal populations

POAO from July 2021.¹⁰ That figure is 490. It is important to note that this figure will include a sizeable number of veterinary surgeons, as well as other professionals. It is also important to note that this figure will be in addition to the number of OV's required for export certification work as explained above.

- 24) In Great Britain there are very limited numbers of OV's that have the required training to function as Portal OV's. It is likely that Port Authorities will be seeking to source private OV's from existing certification businesses further reducing the availability of experienced export OV's in the supply chain.

Northern Ireland border preparations

- 25) Under the provisions in the Northern Ireland Protocol, exports from NI to the EU will not require EHCs at the end of the transition period. The UK government has indicated that movements of into GB will also continue without any additional certification being required.¹¹ However, where products move from Northern Ireland to Great Britain for onwards export to the EU, third countries outside the EU, or movement back into NI, either directly or following further processing, the OV in Great Britain will require supporting information from NI OV's to permit certification of the goods and completion of the relevant EHC.¹² Supplying this supporting information will require veterinary capacity.
- 26) The UK government has indicated that border controls on live animals and POAO will be delayed

the challenge ahead for plans in Great Britain.

Equine movements

- 30) The UK will likely be subject to EU third country rules relating to equine movements. Third countries apply to the European Commission to become listed to allow equine movements to the EU to take place. The listing is based on the health status of the country with requirements dependent on the perceived level of disease risk. During no deal Brexit preparations in 2019, the EU Commission agreed the UK's listed status application after it met the animal health and biosecurity assurances required for a third country to export live animals and animal products including equines. The UK may need to reapply for this status ahead of the end of the transition period.
- 31) When the UK becomes listed, horses would need both an appropriate ID document and appropriate health documentation to travel to the EU. As the UK would be a third country, an Export Health Certificate (EHC) would be required to move equines, on a permanent or temporary basis, to the EU. This would require additional action from vets to confirm the absence of disease. This new process would require more planning from the equine owner and could involve increased cost if additional tests are required.
- 32) In order to be considered registered, an equine will need to have its studbook approved by the EU (unless it is registered by an international sporting organisation like the FEI Federation Equestre Internationale).¹⁵ If the studbook has not been approved

Wait 3 months from the date the successful blood sample was taken before they can travel.
An OV must give the owner a copy of the test results and enter the day the blood sample was taken in an animal health certificate (AHC).