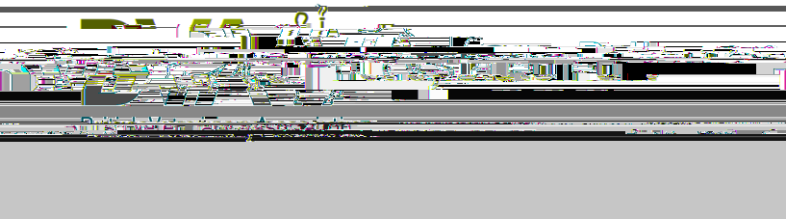

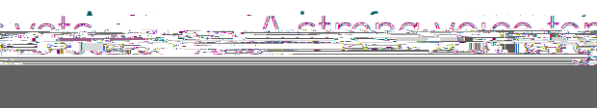

conduct research into any knowledge gaps relating to source, prevalence and impacts of veterinary parasiticide products in the natural environment. This should include all commonly used pesticides, in addition to fipronil and imidacloprid, and consider the impacts of combination products.

conduct further research into the sources of parasiticide pollution in the environment (in addition to veterinary product use).

collate existing data and where gaps exist, conduct further research into how companion animal parasiticide products are bought, used, and disposed of, and develop evidence on how they may be contaminating the environment.

identify the extent of the threat posed by resistance to common companion animal parasiticides.

conduct research on the balance of harms and benefits from current prescribing of all parasiticide compounds to help inform future guidance and recommendations.

undertake independent research into the optimal use of parasiticide products, with a focus on the required frequency of administration and application to control parasite risks.

carry out research to better understand the factors which could increase the risks of pets being infected by parasites, including seasonality, multi-pet households, geography, lifestyle factors and pet factors. Veterinary associations have a role to play in signposting the profession to this information as it develo

Veterinary organisations, guidance, and resources

Veterinary organisations play an important role in raising awareness of issues, promoting discussion and developing guidance. Veterinary organisations like BVA, BSAVA and BVZS should:

- take concerns about the possible environmental impacts of small animal parasiticide products seriously, proactively promoting discussion and highlighting these challenges.
- work to get profession-wide agreement on the best practice for parasite testing protocols
- engage small animal vets in discussions to ensure the small animal sector as a whole to acknowledges the challenges and works together to consider what constitutes responsible use of parasiticides.
- develop guidance to help prevent or delay resistance to common companion animal parasiticides.
- produce clear independent guidance to assist vets making evidence-based decisions, keeping this updated as new research is produced.
- produce comparisons between costs-to-client of major parasiticide products, in-clinic risk assessments and laboratory testing should be produced to help practices adapt their health plans.
- signpost the profession to new information on the factors which could increase the risks of pets being infected by parasites as it develops
- ensure independent information on the risks associated with parasiticide treatments is available to assist in veterinary decision making.

Veterinary professionals and responsible use

At an individual and practice level, veterinary professionals have a role to play in ensuring medicines are prescribed responsibly. All veterinary professionals should:

- be mindful of the potential for serious harm to natural invertebrate populations, taking a proportionate and targeted approach to treatment when using parasiticides.
- play a role in making sure consumers are educated on the correct use of parasiticide products.
- report to the VMD any cases of suspected resistance to parasiticides.
- use parasiticides responsibly to limit the risks of resistance developing.
- avoid blanket treatment, and instead risk assess use of parasiticides for individual animals as part of their responsible prescribing measures. This should take into account animal, human and environmental health risks, in addition to knowledge of the individual's lifestyle or environment and the results of routine examination to look for parasites eg faecal examinations for worms.
- increase awareness of responsible use and applying tailored, as opposed to blanket, treatments of parasiticides, amongst future vets and through veterinary schools.
- not have blanket treatment policies in place in a veterinary business, instead empowering individual vets to have those conversations with their clients.
- promote clear information on how to prevent animals getting parasites, and how to check for them, to the animal owning public.
- consider more frequent use of testing as part of a risk-based approach to prescribing parasiticides.
- explore and consider the alternative approaches to parasite control currently in place in other European countries.
- ensure they understand the risks associated with parasiticide treatments and be able to advise clients appropriately.
- wherever possible, use targeted and specific treatments rather than combination or broad-spectrum products, unless they assess there is a need to treat for multiple types of parasite, or have evidence that a broad-spectrum product poses a lower environmental risk.