

**NOAH submission to the Welsh Parliament's
Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee Meeting on Animal Health**

1. NOAH (the National Office of Animal Health) has been representing companies that research, develop, manufacture and market licensed animal medicines in the UK since 1986. NOAH represents the UK animal health industry, promoting the benefit of safe, effective, quality products and services for the health and welfare of all animals.
2. NOAH supports preventative health approaches, including the use of vaccines and the responsible use of antibiotics.
3. [Our Vision for UK Animal Health and Welfare](#) sets out how taking animal health approach can deliver benefits for welfare, productivity, sustainability, and the resilience of farms.
4. The NOAH [Animal Medicines Best Practice training programme](#) is a practical example of how our sector has developed tools to help sheep, beef, dairy, and pig producers in using medicines and antibiotics responsibly.
5. **'Leading the way for livestock - achieving excellence and sustainability through core vaccines'**: farming, and producing high quality food, is a national source of pride and benefits communities across the country's rural economy. The food and farming industry is worth over £120bn to the national economy and provides jobs for more than 4 million people. The success of these sectors supports the security and livelihoods of individuals and businesses across our nations. The business of farming is unpredictable and challenging and it now sits on the cusp of major change.
6. Protecting animal health and welfare and reducing losses (20% of global animal production is lost to disease) will lay the foundations for a sustainable vibrant sector that delivers safe, high quality and nutritious food. This approach will also help to deliver on the future farming vision, enabled by the Agriculture Act 2020, supporting farmers to deliver valued public goods, such as environmental benefits and improving the health and wellbeing of the nation. Now is the time to introduce measures and reforms to support the sector to evolve and to prepare so that these opportunities can be realised.
7. Achieving excellence and sustainability in farm animal health and welfare can also be supported through core vaccines. Key to achieving this is the development and implementation of a livestock core vaccine protocol – positioning our nations to be at the forefront of efforts to enhance the quality, sustainability and efficiency of the livestock and food production industries. The concept of core vaccines has already been proven and adopted in human health and companion animals. Core vaccines can be

defined as those which protect livestock from diseases that are endemic and place all livestock at risk, have public health significance, are highly infectious or pose a risk of severe disease. Other non-core vaccines are also appropriate depending on circumstances and risks.

8. To deliver maximum benefits across all nations, a population level approach is needed for livestock vaccination. Government must work with industry to catalyse these changes and position the UK as an international brand for excellence in animal health and welfare.
9. The need for a livestock core vaccines protocol: livestock vaccines prevent and protect against harmful disease and are an evidenced-based way to secure world leading standards in animal health and welfare. Vaccines are vital tools that should be harnessed at a population level and implemented into the management protocols of all livestock farms, supporting them to be proactive and progressive. This requires the support of Government and industry to drive a mindset change and facilitate a greater uptake of vaccination to ensure UK farms consistently achieve excellence in animal health and welfare. An increased use of livestock vaccines will help speed up delivery of important national priorities, whilst supporting farm businesses and the rural economy. The implementation of effective livestock core vaccine protocols, to provide a framework for disease prevention and control within each of the different sectors of the ruminant livestock industry, is an important step towards achieving:
10. Increased sustainability and productivity through efficiency:
 - Rather than focusing on producing more, we can think about how efficiently we produce food.
 - Keeping animals healthy is a good start as healthy animals are naturally more productive.
 - Preventing disease on farm will reduce losses and produce food in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way, contributing to a green economic recovery.
 - Healthy livestock need less resource inputs to produce meat and milk, they generate less waste including manure and have a lower carbon footprint.
 - Key to achieving sustainable improvements is proactive and preventative herd and flock health planning that effectively employs available vaccine tools.
11. Enhancing resilience across the sector:
 - A more resilient food production system strengthens national food security and supports all farming businesses to plan and grow into the future.
 - Resilience relies on high health and welfare standards, and this means putting in place measures to protect and mitigate disease risks.

- A vet-led animal health team can best support farmers and their livestock by taking a holistic preventative health approach, making improvements in health and welfare with effective use of vaccines to enhance resilience.

12. Developing competitive advantage to support international trade ambitions:

- High standards of animal health and welfare offer a competitive trade advantage.
- Levels of vaccine use is measurable so can be used to demonstrate high standards of producers.
- Raising healthy livestock, effectively protected from disease and the consequential impacts on welfare, allows farmers to be more competitive at home and abroad.
- Increasing the attractiveness and trust in a quality export food market offers market access potential and business growth opportunity.

13. Harnessing innovation and high-tech solutions to meet sector needs:

- The UK is a world leader in animal health research and development and is forging a position as a champion of technology and innovation to drive economic recovery and improvements.
- Vaccines offer a high quality, safe and effective solution to today's animal health challenges.
- They form the cornerstone of preventive health and the 'prevention is better than cure' approach.
- Future vaccine development will innovative further but needs a sound basis and market for investment.

14. Meeting societal expectations with a preventative approach to animal health and welfare

- Consumers expect the highest standards of animal health and welfare on our farms.
- The social contract of public money for public goods includes an expectation to uphold high standards with all livestock receiving the best possible care.
- National livestock health improvements can best be supported by taking a preventative population health approach with the use of an approved livestock vaccination protocol in a Herd Health Plan.
- This approach has the added 'One Health' benefit as a national effort on livestock vaccination could further support the responsible use of antibiotics and the UK's global AMR leadership position.

15. Delivering excellence in animal health and welfare – call to action:

1. Endorse the principle of a core livestock vaccination protocol developed by an independent, expert panel.

2. Promote the use of a core vaccination protocol. This means all farmers must use an appropriate livestock vaccine protocol for their production system, which is incorporated into the farm's Herd Health Plan and consistently delivered.
3. Use government financial assistance to drive sustainable and progressive farming, through the inclusion of a vaccine review within a vet-led herd health review.
4. Commit to measuring outcomes e.g. vaccine use, health, and welfare metrics, to evidence improvements and to increase national and international trade opportunity.