



Welfare Aspects of Bovine Tuberculosis

Bob McCracken

Former CVO &

Past President BVA



**Elements involved in
Determining
Government Policy**

“I PROMISE above all that I will pursue the work of my profession with uprightness of conduct and that my constant endeavour will be to ensure the welfare of the animals committed to my care.”

Whilst not the sole custodian, the veterinarian must recognise and accept his/her responsibility – private or Government.

What is the role of a State Veterinary Service?

- **Originally; to eradicate “cattle plague”;**
- **Currently; to assist Government in addressing issues (at EU and National levels) of:**
 - **Animal health;**
 - **Animal welfare; and**
 - **Veterinary public health.**
- **To advise on policy and (variable) to implement that policy.**

Constraints upon National Governments

- **The EU consists of 25 member states.**
- **Within the EU, the UK Government aims to influence and lead on policy determination.**
- **Majority of policy is determined at EU level and is imposed on all member states.**
- **“A camel is a horse designed by a committee”!**

Constraints upon National Governments

- **National Government is largely charged with implementing the EU policy.**
- **National Government must accept, in full, the EU policy.**
- **National Government MAY add to the EU policy – challenge.**

State Veterinary Service

- **SVS exists to advise Minister on the needs of industry & public re animals and animal products;**
- **CVO should have the freedom to speak with a veterinary voice (as does CMO);**
- **The “wants” are for the Minister to consider.**

Policy Decisions

Policy direction is determined, following the consideration of various angles:

- **Veterinary advice followed by;**
 - **Social,**
 - **Economic,**
 - **Environmental and**
 - **Political impacts.**

Bovine Tuberculosis

- **Many aspects of bovine TB are governed and dictated by 64/432/EEC.**
- **The UK is required to have an eradication programme in place.**
- **However, it is the UK who can decide on how to tackle the wild life reservoir. A national policy is appropriate.**

Reasons for Government action?

- **Perceived or real threat to human health;**
- **Negative impact on national economy;**
- **Public discontent;**
- **Party political advantage.**

“I PROMISE above all that I will pursue the work of my profession with uprightness of conduct and that my constant endeavour will be to ensure the welfare of the animals committed to my care.”

.... animal welfare is paramount

Government & SVS:

- **Always has more tasks to do than financial resources will meet.**
- **Financial resources are required for tasks that are important, urgent or both.**
- **History suggests that whilst animal welfare is regarded by Government to be very important there are other SVS issues that are more urgent!**

If animal welfare is to receive adequate Government funding then Government must be persuaded that the welfare issues are:

- important and**
- urgent**

Important but not urgent?

- **Animal health**
 - **FMD, Avian Influenza, Bovine TB**
- **Veterinary public health**
 - **BSE; Avian Influenza**
- **Animal welfare**
 - **Importation of live, wild birds and reptiles.**

Policy, Science and TB

- **Policy should be based upon science but it is folly to insist that all policy decisions must be scientific in nature.**
- **Emotions logically enter into policy making but they must not enter into science.**

Policy, Science and TB

- **Too many scientists are trying to be politicians!**
- **Policy is based upon science but is not a scientific procedure!**
- **We must allow our elected politicians to take the responsibility and accountability.**
- **Too many scientists are speaking with more emotion than science and this gives science a bad name.**

Bovine Tuberculosis

- **Bovine & badger animals are the main reservoirs of *M. bovis*.**
- **Problem is clear to all; solution is much less clear.**
- **The way forward:**
 - **accept the well recognised problems;**
 - **concentrate on the development of solutions.**

Bovine Tuberculosis

- **Concentrating on “problems” leads to stagnation.**
- **Concentrating on solutions leads to progress.**
- **The way forward must be to make use of the emerging science and proceed in a scientific manner.**
- **Government & we must not be stimulated into inactivity by the existing problems.**