



NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION

DISCUSSION PAPER ON PROPOSED PILLAR TWO (RDP) AGRI-HEALTH SCHEME

Background

The NSA believes animal health and welfare needs to be given far greater priority under the Rural Development Programme, however, any discussion about additions to RDP are absolutely not a green light for increasing modulation from Pillar One to Pillar Two. But given that Owen Paterson (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and his counterparts are in support of increased modulation it is vital that farming organisations look carefully at RDP and options to ensure farmers can access funds they may no longer get under Pillar One and the Single Farm Payment. The NSA would like to see common thinking on this in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but appreciates that each will likely take a slightly different approach.

Why do we need an Agri-Health Scheme?

- A growing population means increased demand for food, at a time of resource constraints and climate change challenges
- CAP is out of line with social needs
- Public goods need to be provided to justify CAP funding
- Domestic animal health and welfare budgets are set for further cut backs
- There is an urgent need to change attitudes towards health and disease management
- If Defra succeeds in increasing modulation, producers need a way to access more Pillar Two monies

What public goods would the scheme deliver?

- Greater food security/increased food production with a smaller carbon footprint
- Contribution towards UK target to reduce carbon emissions by 11% by 2020 and 80% by 2050
- Increased control of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance
- Better surveillance of exotic/new diseases
- Better resource use
- Sustained UK livestock numbers, with all the knock-on positives for maintaining landscapes and rural communities
- Maintaining trade capability, domestically and internationally
- Optimising contribution livestock sector can make to the UK economy

How would farmers benefit?

- Direct incentives to tackle endemic diseases that are not currently being addressed by industry
- Culture change in attitudes towards endemic diseases
- Active role in surveillance of exotic/new diseases
- Increased control of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance
- Better use of resources, including grass, concentrates, fuel, labour and medicines.
- Sound footing for relationship with vet/increased contact with vet for beef and sheep sectors

Discussion points

- An Agri-Health scheme fits very well with Pillar Two's aims of improving competitiveness, environment and quality of life
- An Agri-Health scheme is good use of Pillar Two funds but is not a green light for increased modulation. If there was increased modulation (as indicated by Defra) an Agri-Health scheme would be vital for farmers to access funds.
- 25 years of Agri-Environment schemes have delivered results and changed attitudes. Agri-Health schemes could do the same
- An Agri-Health scheme would reward farmers for doing more than the very basics. They could gain points for:-
 - Health planning
 - Advisory visits by the vet
 - Involvement in voluntary monitoring and health schemes
 - Optional biosecurity measures
 - Employing quarantine procedures
 - Attending certified KT events
- The Pillar Two budget could accommodate an additional scheme.