

In brief

■ **LAMINITIS TALK:** Animal health firm Boehringer Ingelheim is hosting a live online broadcast for horse owners as part of its "Talk About Laminitis" disease awareness initiative. Presented by David Rendle from Liphook Equine Hospital, the one-hour webinar is at 8pm on April 10 and will educate horse owners on how the veterinary profession's understanding of the disease has been revolutionised in the past five years. The webinar will be followed by an interactive question and answer session when viewers will be able to pose questions to Mr Rendle. Horse owners can register to view the online programme at www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk

■ **HEALTH CHECK FILM:** The Kennel Club has released a short film showing what happens during a veterinary health check at general and group championship dog shows. A candid look at the non-invasive process, the film demonstrates what is looked for during a veterinary health check. It was produced for the benefit of exhibitors, judges and veterinary surgeons in the process, as well as the public. The health check film can be viewed online at www.youtube.com/thekennelclub

VETS AND INDUSTRY BACK UK CATTLE DATABASE CALL

VETERINARY surgeons and industry have given a warm welcome to calls for a national cattle health database.

The issue was raised by the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA) as part of an industry meeting; however, no one group has yet put itself forward to spearhead the plan.

Speaking at an industry meeting, LAA chairman Robert Addison said: "[A database] would be of great benefit to anyone involved in the buying and selling of livestock, but would also be immensely helpful in the implementation of disease control policies."

At the same meeting, Mr Addison's deputy Chris Dodds said his organisation was "keen to help lead the field in bringing the industry together" to help realise a health database.

Speaking to *Veterinary Times* after the event, Mr Dodds said: "If you look at where we are compared to the EU in terms of a cattle database we're 100 miles behind everyone else.

"People want to know the

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herd status of animals they're looking to buy and that information is starting to be built up on [the Government's bovine TB recording database] SAM, but no one can access the information [apart from vets].

"As a market that sells 1.3m cattle we need a database that industry can use as a tool to inform those looking to buy replacement cattle."

Mr Dodds said a health database would sit alongside, rather than replace, the existing British Cattle Movement Service, and it would be a restricted resource, with buyers needing a log-on from sellers before they could access commercially sensitive information about specific herds.

"It's my sincere hope we would be able to link such a database with the privately owned sheep database that's on the way," he added.

"I know two of those looking to tender for the sheep database could link up a cattle one quite quickly.

"It is a waiting game; we'll need to see who the Government is going to award the sheep database to, but at the same time we need to be pulling everyone together to talk about a cattle version."

Farmer benefits

BCVA president Jonathan Statham welcomed calls, saying the concept was "a really good opportunity for a cross-industry initiative and there would be real farmer benefits in a proper functional cattle health database".

"It would be really timely to get industry working together on this, so we have all the links in the chain working together," Mr Statham said.

He added: "When you look at Ireland's bovine viral diarrhoea control programme, that's built around a robust database and it will be difficult to achieve any long-term benefits

of disease control programmes if we don't have robust identification of animals, their movement and health.

"Health identification at point of sale would be a huge benefit for the cattle industry, and would really influence buying behaviour," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Dodds told *Veterinary Times* he was "extremely disappointed" not to have been approached by any cattle vet representatives wanting to get involved in building a health database.

"Vets need to be a part of this from the word go; however, we've had no one from BCVA or the vets come to us after the LAA announcement," he said.

Asked who should take charge of the scheme, Mr Dodds added: "We're just an auctioneers – we're part of this issue but I believe it's time we got everyone around the table on this and we need a leading industry representative, either the NFU, EBLEX or the AHDB to front it."

Nick Allen, sector director



Jonathan Statham.

for EBLEX, the beef and sheep meat division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, said: "We would agree this is something that would be of significant benefit to the industry and different bodies and trade associations need to work together to try to make it happen.

"It does need industry consensus, though, to make it worthwhile. If we have that, I see no reason why it can't be driven forward.

"Exactly who does the driving will need to be part of that industry discussion."