

Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS)

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Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS)

- Self regulatory body for UK cattle health schemes
- Established late 1999. Non-trading organisation
- Sets standards for control and eradication of non-statutory diseases to which all licensed health schemes must adhere
- Herd health status in one scheme equivalent to that in all other schemes
- Licensed schemes in UK compatible with those in other countries



Objectives

- To advance the health and welfare of cattle in the UK
- To provide standards and certification for monitoring and accreditation schemes.
- To collect, store and disseminate information on health and welfare of cattle.
- To promote, by training and education, improvements in cattle health and welfare
- To develop and monitor links with cattle producers, vets, labs, Government agencies and animal welfare organisations to promote the above



Governance

- Owned by:
 - Holstein UK
 - National Cattle Association (Dairy)
 - National Beef Association
 - BCVA
- Board of 5, chaired by Sam Noble
- Start up funds provided by MDC
- Administration run by RABDF



Participating Schemes

- Premium Cattle Health Scheme (SAC)
- Herdcare (BioBest)
- Hi-Health



CHeCS

Programmes for the monitoring, control and ultimate eradication of the four most important non-statutory diseases in the UK

- Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)
- Leptospirosis
- Johne's Disease
- Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)



Accreditation Programmes

- To demonstrate the herd is free from infection
- To maintain freedom from infection
- To allow sale of stock accredited free of infection



Screening and Eradication Programmes

- To implement a control programme to reduce detrimental effects of disease on herd productivity
- To allow sales of animals of known status
- To achieve freedom from disease and accredited status



Vaccinated Monitored Free Programme (BVD)

- To control BVD through vaccination of breeding herd
- To demonstrate that control is effective and exposure of youngstock to BVD has not occurred
- To allow sale of stock accredited as being from a vaccinated herd and monitored free of active BVD infection
- Appropriate for commercial herds selling stock for finishing
- Herd Status lower than that of BVD accredited herds



Monitoring Programmes

- Measure level of antibodies in bulk milk sample
- High titres indicate widespread infection (or use of vaccines)
- Negative titres indicate likely freedom from current infection
- Intermediate levels suggest presence of some infected animals
- Information becomes more reliable and helpful as sequential results are added and trends become clear



Monitoring Programmes (Cont)

- Available only to dairy herds
- Use regular bulk milk testing
- Simple tool to give good assessment of disease status of herd
- Sample every 3 months
- Only available for IBR, BVD and Lepto
- No reliable test available for testing milk samples for Johne's Disease
- No requirements for herd health security



Health Assurance Programmes

- Pool of accredited herds free of disease
- Quality assurance for herds selling breeding stock
- Should be standards for sale of high value stock
- “Why aren’t all pedigree breeders testing?” (BCBC Conference 2003)
- Pedigree shows and sales to require testing
- Declarations of health status on cattle passports



The Problem

- Less than 1% of herds participate
- Scottish and beef orientated

Why?

- Lack of clear features and benefits
- Poor profitability /general uncertainty
- Other health issues - mastitis, lameness, fertility
- Not a pre-requisite for Assurance Schemes



Grounds for Optimism

- Government Animal Health and Welfare Strategy
- Working Groups on Farm Health Planning
- Limousins advocating members joining cattle health schemes (Holstein?)
- Johne's Workshop (NBA etc)
- SW Developments (Launceston Group)
- Dairy UK - growing concerns.

For success we need critical mass!



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