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News Release

June 27, 2008

12 MILLION DOSES OF BLUETONGUE VACCINE SECURED

Twelve million doses of bluetongue vaccine for Scottish livestock have been secured, it has been announced today.

The doses will support a compulsory vaccination campaign later in the year.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment Richard Lochhead, said:

“This is excellent news for Scottish livestock keepers, who can now be assured that vaccine will be available when needed.

“The Scottish Government is providing unprecedented support towards the costs of the vaccine in the first year.

“This is another example of our commitment to supporting rural communities and the farming industry that underpins it.

“We are continuing to work with industry to protect Scotland from the threat of bluetongue. The clear advice from the Chief Veterinarian Officer Scotland is that we are best vaccinating in the winter midge-free period.

“It therefore remains vital that livestock keepers continue to take care in the sourcing of stock and wherever possible avoiding high risk areas.”

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

1. The contract is with Merial (estimated value up to £5 million) and has been awarded following EU procurement procedures. The Scottish Government has committed to supporting half the manufacturing costs of the vaccine in the first year. This is subject to State Aid approval from the European Commission. The industry will meet other costs.

2. The vaccine can only be used in a protection zone. Illegal use of vaccine would risk Scotland's free area status, and is subject to penalties of up to £5,000 and/or six months in jail.

3. The first delivery of vaccine is expected in August, and this will provide a contingency reserve should it be required. The expectation remains that, subject to developments in the disease situation, a compulsory vaccination campaign will be undertaken during the midge-free period this winter.

4. The Merial vaccine will require one dose for sheep and two doses for cattle given 4 weeks apart.

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

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