

Achieving Objectives

The Secretary of State of Defra announced our performance objectives to Parliament on 24 October 2005. These provided a clear framework of action that was designed to ensure that the VMD continued to provide the best possible service to all its customers.

In summary, our work in 2005/2006 continued to support and maintain the high level of public confidence in the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines in the UK. Authorised veterinary medicines in the UK are accepted as being safe and fit for their purpose, having regard especially to food and environmental safety, animal health and welfare, and protection for those handling such medicines. We believe such confidence to be justified through the achievement of our key objectives in 2005/2006.



Objective 1

Authorise veterinary medicines efficiently, using good science, thus ensuring their safety, quality and efficacy, and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Highlight

We met all of the targets for national applications set for the Licensing Business for 2005/2006, including the quick and efficient processing of applications for variations and Animal Test Certificates (ATC). We missed three milestones in European procedures but neither the applicants nor other Member States were inconvenienced because the processes, overall, ran to time.



Objective 2

Ensure the field use of veterinary medicines is safe and effective by monitoring use by using best practice in pharmacovigilance.

Highlight

The VMD initiated discussions with the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) aimed at introducing bolus administration to the Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines and to the Certificate of Competence in Planning and Supervising the Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines. This followed a slight increase in the number of serious adverse reactions reported following maladministration of such products. Sixteen cases were reported in 2005 compared to 13 in 2004.

Progress was made in 2005 towards establishing a European electronic network for the exchange of information about adverse reactions involving veterinary medicines. Many products are marketed throughout the European Union and a data source on this scale should aid the identification of emerging trends at an earlier stage.



Objective 3

Ensure the safe use of veterinary medicines authorised in the UK through surveillance of residues and follow-up action where misuse is detected.

Highlight

The overall 2005 UK plan of statutory surveillance for residues of veterinary medicinal products was met. Appropriate follow-up action was taken in all cases where violative samples above any agreed limits were detected in UK produce.



Objective 4

Develop policy to ensure that veterinary medicines can be used effectively and safely and protect human health, animal health and welfare and the environment.

Highlight

The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 were implemented to widespread acclaim after much informal and formal consultation with stakeholders. The Animal Medicines Inspectorate was transferred to the VMD from the RPSGB on 1 January 2006.



Objective 5

Seek to encourage the proper use of veterinary medicines and actively discourage improper use.

Highlight

Work with the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) helped prepare farmers for the withdrawal of antibiotic growth promoters. Improper use was discouraged through increased publicity of prosecutions²⁴ including a six-month prison sentence for one persistent offender.



Objective 6

Develop the VMD to ensure it is fit for purpose and its vision and objectives are contributing to Defra's PSA Objective VI as well as its overall vision and values.

Highlight

The VMD's IT work was assessed against the BS7799 standard and the team were awarded accreditation in September 2005. The HR team and VMD's recruitment and selection processes underwent successful assessment against the Investors in People model for Recruitment and Selection and the VMD received formal accreditation in November 2005. The VMD became the first in Defra to hold accreditation in these areas.

24. You can find out more about successful prosecutions via www.vmd.gov.uk under Publications, MAVIS, MAVIS on-line, Enforcement News