**SVS Executive Committee Meeting**

**29th April 2020**

President Nick Hart opened the meeting at 19.30

**Present:**  Hazel Rice (HR), Yoav Alony-Gilboa (YA), Heather Stevenson (HS), Tricia Sutton, (TS), Amanda Carson (AC), Nick Hart (NH), Rachel Foster (RF), Amy Jennings (AJ), Moyna Richey (MR), Mark Thompson (MT), Clare Phythian (CP)

**1. Apologies:** None

**2. Specific Items:**

**a) Action points from previous confertel (26/3/20)**

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| **Action Point** | **Person Responsible** | **Completed** |
| Contact hotel re Belfast 2022 | HR | Y |
| Contact webinarvet/inform BVA student members of free access | HR/AJ | Y |
| Circulate research grant applications after 31/3 and contact Yolanda | HR | Y |
| Arrange SVS stand at Malvern and attend | NG/MR | Y |
| Contact Ian Gill re NADIS advertising on Yahoo | HR | Y |
| **General Reminders** |  |  |
| Nominees for awards 2020 |  |  |
| New JVP/committee members 2020 |  |  |

a) **Research Grant –** After discussion and a vote (see Appendix 1 for summary) it was agreed to offer £2000 to Nicola Fletcher (OPA) and Emma Borkowski (Effect of sample refrigeration on nematode culture results). HS to put this proposal to them and write to all applicants.

**Action: HS**

b) **CPD –** NH has been in discussions with Fiona Lovatt (FL) regarding whether or not SVS would like to be involved with a series of 5 webinars covering aspects of sheep production. FL (Flock Health Club) will organise these via Webinar Vet with the first due to run in 2 weeks. NH suggested that if anyone wished to talk/present then they should speak to FL about possible future dates. There was agreement that this initiative should be supported and AC suggested that we could raise awareness of the webinars among SVS members. These are to be free to vets but MT queried whether this applied to all vets or only if members of Flock Health Club. AC asked if they will be recorded and stored and HR asked who will have the rights to the webinars. TS suggested that SVS members should have access to them both on the night and in the future. NH to contact FL. CP noted that zoom can be used to deliver and record webinars and could be used in the future.

**Action: NH**

c) **Sponsorship for Moredun document –** A letter had been received from Beth Wells requesting help in funding this publication. £4500 is required in total. HR stated that Moredun are trying to avoid pharmaceutical company finance, the SVS logo will appear on the front and a pdf can be circulated via the Yahoo group. AC pointed out that Moredun is a not for profit organisation. Having seen the document AC thought it will be useful and SVS members will be able to print it out to give to farmers. NH felt it was right for SVS to be associated with Moredun and suggested a figure of between £500 and £1000. TS noted that SVS do not usually sponsor things and AC suggested that we should look at finances before putting forward a figure, and potentially set aside £1000/year to sponsor initiatives we like. TS confirmed that finances were good. Following a vote a figure of £750 was decided on.

**Action: TS**

d) **AVS Conference –** NH had been in discussion with Sara Pedersen (SP), BCVA regarding repeated requests for funding to pay for the farm animal stream at the AVS conference. BCVA want to formalise a payment so that it is easier to manage year on year. AJ suggested that no money should be given but that we should supply and pay costs for a speaker. TS agreed. AJ thought that FAVS was a better option. FAVS hold a conference every year which rotates around the different vet schools and the lecturers usually speak free of charge. It is funded by pharmaceutical companies. After discussion it was agreed that NH would contact SP with the opinion that we would prefer to support FAVS.

**Action: NH**

e) **Sheep Antibiotic Guardian Group –** NH explained that it had proved impossible to collate useful antibiotic usage data for sheep either because none was being collected or different formats were being used. It will become possible once the electronic medicine book becomes available. We have been asked to provide feedback to RUMA within the next couple of weeks on what constitutes appropriate principles of antibiotic prophylaxis and metaphylaxis for sheep. AC pointed out that antibiotic use in sheep was negligible compared to other species. NH explained that there is a need to pre-empt being told what to do. The end goal is to create a target figure and reduce it going forwards. NH will circulate response from PVS.

**Action: NH/ALL**

f) **Elanco letter –** There was general agreement that this was acceptable.

g) **Emergency slaughter –** NH informed the meeting that there was now a requirement for vets issuing emergency slaughter certificates for animals entering the food chain to be registered with the Food Standards Agency.

h) **6 day standstill –** MR had circulated documents outlining proposed changes to this regulation for comment in order to provide feedback to SHAWG. NH and MT felt that the current rules should be maintained and AC indicated that these were not always followed. MR noted that the industry had rejected previous proposals which were over complicated.

**Action: ALL**

i) **Autumn meeting –** MR asked if we should start organising this meeting. Potential speakers have not yet been approached but some of those meant to speak at Belfast could be used. NH felt it unlikely to go ahead due to continuing restrictions on gatherings. AC and YA felt that people would not attend because either they would not want to travel or that they would not have the time or resources. TS felt that once restrictions are lifted people may be very keen to go. AJ noted that a few conferences have been replaced by a series of shorter webinar sessions over several days/weeks which meant that attendees were not obliged to spend a whole day online. HR will contact the hotel in Cheltenham to see where we stand – a deposit has been paid. She also noted that Kate Hovers has proposed doing a Talking Sheep meeting using zoom. MSD have their own platform and want to use it.

**Action: HR**

**Date of next meeting** – No date was set. CP confirmed that she was happy to host future zoom meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 21.05

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| **Action Point** | **Person Responsible** | **Completed** |
| Contact Nicola Fletcher/Emma Borkowski with funding offerWrite to all applicants | HS | Y |
| Contact Fiona Lovatt about FHC webinars | NH |  |
| Transfer funds to Moredun | TS |  |
| Reply to Sara Pedersen regarding AVS funding | NH |  |
| Circulate document on pig antibiotic prophylaxis/metaphylaxisComment on sheep antibiotic prophylaxis/metaphylaxis | NHALL |  |
| Comment on changes to 6 day standstill | ALL |  |
| Contact Cheltenham hotel | HR |  |
| **General Reminders** |  |  |
| Nominees for awards 2020 |  |  |
| New JVP/committee members 2020 |  |  |

H. Stevenson

Hon. Secretary

**Appendix 1: Research grant applications**

Comments from several people had been circulated prior to the meeting. Further discussions are summarised below.

**1. Nicola Fletcher Development of ante-mortem blood tests for Jaggsiekte sheep retrovirus using liquid biopsy and PCR**

YA – similar to previous grant award.

MR – based in Dublin not the UK.

NH – anything that moves OPA forward is good.

AJ – small number of sheep in the study. How do they know that the negative controls are truly negative.

**2. Dianna Bowles Identifying genetic diversity in the locally adapted Romney Marsh breed of sheep**

NH – should be funded by the breed society. TS agreed.

AC – very few pure Romney Marsh flocks left and would be of interest to compare to the work already carried out in Herdwicks.

AJ – noted that no phenotypic data was being collected.

MT – unclear of the practical applications of this work. AC clarified that native breeds can be very adapted to their local environments. Future climate change could mean it is important to be able to identify sheep with adaptive traits. YA and NH noted that there are many Romneys abroad but that these will often have been crossed at some point. AC explained that genes triggered by environmental factors (epigenetics) may be lost over time.

**3. Jennifer McIntyre Scotland wide survey of anthelmintc use, anthelmintic resistance and PGE management with a focus on Moxidectin and SCOPS guidelines**

MT – not novel and restricted to Scotland.

YA – very reliant on getting a large number of survey respondents.

MR – asking a lot in the survey and generally trying to do too much.

AC – very ambitious and no incentive for farmers to complete questionnaire.

AJ – overlaps with a current ongoing pan European survey.

**4. Ben Strugnell Establishing the prevalence in the swaledale sheep population of gene mutations responsible for neuroaxonal dystrophy**

AC - this is not a prevalence study. Rare - only 2 cases in 1 flock have been described and there are no estimates of the number of carriers. Would need a home office licence to blood sample sheep at the abattoir and overall is too problematic. Neuronal axonopathy has been found in other breeds.

AJ – would need to do work in advance to look at prevalence.

NH – should be funded by the breed society.

**5. Emma Borkowski Assessing the effect of refrigeration on gastrointestinal nematode species cultured from sheep faeces**

YA – practice is one of the Surrey teaching practices. Potentially important for the future.

MT – speciation is rarely used in practice.

AC – not sure how widely it would benefit industry. Other similar studies have been done.

HS - does PCR carried out on eggs have more potentially in the future?

NH – has used speciation in practice looking for haemonchus.

AJ – becoming more affordable.

The fact that this project enlisted the help of vet practices was felt to be in its favour.

**6. Ana Christensen Identification of frozen thawed semen markers sin MOET programmes**

AJ – too much noise, will be hard to pick up an effect.

MR – ewe effects not taken into account.

There were concerns over the welfare implications of MOET programmes.

**7. Ian McDougall Vaginal and cervical AI with chilled semen: developing a protocol for next day use on UK farms**

MT – will a home office license be required? AC thought not as is recognised agricultural practice. CP – ethics should still be considered.

YA – this is an interesting project but should SVS be funding research for a commercial company? AC and MT also had doubts about this.

NH – new extenders are available and could get manufacturer of CIDR or extender to fund. Will move sheep away from laparoscopic AI.

MT – doesn’t benefit the health of the animals.

**Result of vote:**

**All to 1 – 2**

**All to 5 – 0**

**All to 7 – 1**

**50:50 1/5 – 5**

**50:50 1/7 – 1**

**50:50 5/7 - 1**