

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

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From the Chairman of the Committee

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25 April 2016

Organophosphate sheep dips

I understand that EFRA officials held a meeting with the Sheep Dip Sufferers Support Group on 19 November 2015 and subsequently, in answer from you to a parliamentary question from Jessica Morden MP, on 22 March 2016, said that information sought by the group was being processed and would be completed and released shortly.

I further understand from the group that the information has not yet been forthcoming and ask for an update on when it will be and to be included in the circulation of that information, which, according to your answer, will:

answer the actions from the meeting and include news releases from MAFF and the Veterinary Products Committee (VPC) from 1992 and 1993 [explaining] why the decision was taken to end compulsory dipping and the conclusions of the VPC reviews of organophosphate sheep dips at the time.

The group has also approached my Committee seeking assistance in obtaining access to advice the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food received from the Health and Safety Executive and the poisons unit at Guys Hospital, London, immediately before the decision was taken on 8 June 1992 to halt compulsory dipping, and I am therefore seeking, on the Committee's behalf, access to any relevant correspondence between those three bodies in the months immediately preceding that decision, and, in particular, records kept of blood samples provided by sheep dippers to Guys Hospital during 1992 (the previous year's having been released).

For clarity's sake, I may add that the Committee is not, at present, formally inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the decision to withdraw organophosphate sheep dip, but is concerned by the suggestion from the group that there are information gaps in the material made available to it?

Neil Parish MP
Chairman of the Committee