



MEETING	Advisory Committee
DATE	21 April 2009
TITLE	Certification Sub-Committee
CLASSIFICATION	Unclassified
SUMMARY	To consider the Report of the Certification Sub-Committee detailing those matters upon which the Sub-Committee has been asked to comment, and meetings of the Sub-Committee
DECISIONS REQUIRED	None
ATTACHMENTS	
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CERTIFICATION SUB COMMITTEE REPORT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Additional Guidance on the 12 Principles of Certification

1. Following a meeting between the Certification Sub-Committee and Defra in December 2008, the chairman of the Sub-Committee and the Professional Conduct Department were in discussion with Defra regarding additional Guidance for the profession on the 12 Principles of certification, and in particular the signing and stamping of official veterinary certification.
2. Agreement was reached on the guidance, a copy of which is below, and it is hoped that this will be the subject of a joint letter from the RCVS and CVO in the Veterinary Record and also published in the next edition of RCVS News.

Draft joint letter to Vet Record from RCVS and CVO

Sir

SIGNING AND STAMPING OF OFFICAL VETERINARY CERTIFICATION

Official veterinary certification is not only a written statement of fact made with the authority of a veterinary surgeon, but also a means of communication between government veterinary authorities, in accordance with international agreements. This facilitates trade with ultimate benefits for UK citizens and industries that need to move animals and animal products around the world.

We have recently become aware of differences in the interpretation of the twelve principles of certification (set out in an annex to the Guide to Professional Conduct). This has resulted in variations in the approach to certification and variations in the appearance of completed certificates. For example, some veterinary surgeons will apply OV stamps liberally, others sparingly. In some quarters, this variation has started to undermine confidence in British export certificates. Therefore, in addition to the principles of certification and the 12th principle in particular, Defra and the RCVS wish to offer the following guidance to veterinary surgeons who complete official veterinary certification:

Principle 12 of The Twelve Principles of Certification

When signing a certificate, a veterinarian should ensure that:-

- a. *he signs, stamps and completes any manuscript portions in a colour of ink which does not readily photocopy ie a colour other than black;*

- b. the certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those which are indicated on the face of the certificate to be permissible, and subject to such changes being initialled and stamped by the certifying veterinarian;*
 - c. the certificate bears not only his signature but also, in clear lettering, his name, qualifications and address and (where appropriate) his official or practice stamps;*
 - d. the certificate bears the date on which the certificate was signed and issued and (where appropriate) the time for which the certificate will remain valid;*
 - e. no portion of the certificate is left blank, so that it could subsequently be completed by some person other than the certifying veterinarian.*
- The following confirms how this should be applied when completing official veterinary certification on behalf of Defra.

Any stamps, signatures or initials must be applied carefully and placed so that text in the certificate is not obscured, preferably in the margin.

Manuscript entries on the certificate must be legible, preferably typewritten or handwritten in block capitals.

Manuscript entries on the certificate, the signature and stamp must be made in a colour other than black, unless directed otherwise by instructions on the certificate or in accompanying notes for guidance.

Manuscript entries on the certificate should not be stamped or initialled unless this is specifically requested by instructions on the certificate or in accompanying notes for guidance. Alteration of manuscript entries must be avoided, but on the rare occasion that this is not possible, the alteration must be stamped and initialled.

Deletions of non-applicable pre-printed options or alternatives should be made before signing the certificate. Alteration or deletion of other pre-printed text must only be carried out in accordance with an official derogation or instructions on the certificate or in accompanying notes for guidance; such alterations or deletions must be stamped and initialled.

No part of the certificate should be left blank such that it could subsequently be completed by somebody other than the certifying veterinarian. Such spaces should be ruled off, but only stamped and dated after the last line of a separate schedule. Schedules may be 'fan folded' and stamped and dated.

3. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee is on the list for notification of the meetings of the UKECP and for circulation of the agenda and minutes. Whilst not attending the meeting held so far, the Chairman reserves the opportunity to attend the meetings in the future.
4. So far, there has been one meeting of the Partnership; on 21 January 2009, and another is scheduled for March 2009.

Movement of rodents under A(SPA)

5. The Sub-Committee was asked to give an opinion on wording of a certificate for movement of animals undergoing regulated procedures from a designated establishment in the UK in mid 2008. The Sub-Committee decided that the use of the colloquial phrase 'bona fide' was not appropriate for official certification
6. Following a meeting with the RCVS and Home Office in December 2008, the Sub-Committee was asked to reconsider the use of 'bona fide'. The Sub-Committee considered that the phrase was too vague and uncertain to be used on official certificates. This issue is on-going.

Bull Soundness Certificate

7. As noted in the January report to Advisory Committee, the Sub-Committee was asked to comment on a UK Bull Pre-breeding certificate. One comment was that it could be difficult to evaluate 60% motility of samples, as required by the guidance documents, and it was questioned whether this measurement is reasonable or too subjective.
8. The Sub-Committee was satisfied with further information suggesting that it is normally easy to judge if motility is over 60% and after that the actual value is not critical; and that visual assessment of motility is standard in all current bull fertility certificates used overseas.