

# Partnership proposed to control bTB

THE BCVA president, Jonathan Statham, has called for the generation of a genuine new partnership between government, industry and the veterinary profession.

A longer-term view of disease control could see such a partnership taking greater ownership of endemic diseases including tuberculosis (bTB) but with appropriate “public good” support from the government: both parties will benefit from control of bTB as well as other diseases, he said.

Mr Statham proposed the setting up of an industry-owned not-for-profit company, CHCo, to facilitate cost-effective delivery of endemic disease control for the British cattle population, to include bTB.

Routine surveillance for bTB could be integrated with other endemic diseases, and delivered sustainably to

farming clients by their private veterinary surgeons who could take on a greater responsibility in a “TB plus” capacity for some of the bTB administrative and epidemiological tasks currently performed by AHVLA vets.

An industry levy could run alongside risk-based charging for surveillance at farm level with the government delivering support for bTB breakdown testing, reactor removal and compensation.

## Management board

He said the company could have a management board comprising farmer bodies such as NFU; the levy boards; the BVA and BCVA for the veterinary profession; DEFRA and AHVLA; and in addition, industry expertise from Cattle Health Certification Standards

(CHeCS); private laboratories and universities together with the Cattle Health & Welfare Group (CHAWG).

“It is essential that a critical mass of expertise is maintained in both farming and veterinary sectors,” he added.

“This concept offers an opportunity to achieve both surveillance and disease readiness for exotic or new emerging disease via an empowered veterinary profession in partnership with the government and UK farming industry.

“Current cattle control measures on their own are not preventing the



Jonathan Statham.

increase in incidence of bTB and its encroachment into clean areas... To be successful in control we must limit spread of infection in cattle and badger populations.”

Mr Statham concluded: “We are not winning the battle against bTB and time is not on our side. Hence this call by the BCVA

for a genuine new partnership between industry, government and the veterinary profession to allow for ownership of bTB and other endemic diseases and we invite all UK administrations to sign-up to the concept with healthy cattle and wildlife populations being the main aim.”