



## **AHVLA Briefing Note 07/14**

### **Tenders invited for TB testing and other veterinary services**

#### **Purpose**

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) that AHVLA has invited tenders for the supply of TB (tuberculin) testing and other taxpayer funded veterinary services on the basis of seven geographical lots covering England and Wales.

#### **Background**

2. In July 2013 AHVLA [announced plans](#) to modernise its relationship with suppliers of veterinary services in order to ensure their delivery in a way which is demonstrably more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of the taxpayer, the farmed livestock industry, other animal keepers and the veterinary profession.
3. AHVLA has now issued an Invitation-To-Tender for suppliers (to be known as Delivery Partners) to supply a flexible package of taxpayer funded veterinary services on the basis of seven geographical lots covering England and Wales.
4. The new contractually-based model will better assure the quality of tuberculin testing and other veterinary services, enhancing their value as disease control tools, whilst continuing to recognise and support the partnership that exists between livestock farmers and their vets in controlling and eradicating animal disease.
5. In developing this tender AHVLA has sought, and acted on, feedback from the veterinary profession and livestock industry. This is recognised in some of the key elements of the procurement:

- As accurate tuberculin testing is a foundation for controlling bovine TB the tender will focus on the quality of service to be delivered, whilst ensuring best overall value-for-money for the taxpayer.
  - AHVLA recognises the importance of a strong working relationship between livestock keepers and their vet. For this reason, Delivery Partners will be required to sub-contract work to local businesses provided these businesses are able to work to the required quality assurance standards and offer a competitive price. Delivery Partners will also be required to allow animal keepers to select their preferred vet from these sub-contractors; this preference will be respected whenever possible.
  - The standards of service livestock keepers can expect will be clearer than they are now. The Delivery Partner will be obliged to work with keepers to make sure that a suitable vet is available when required, and both Delivery Partners and AHVLA will monitor customer satisfaction.
  - Delivery Partners will have to implement a rigorous quality assurance system, in particular to ensure that TB testing is done to the required standard. They will also have to adhere to a health and safety policy which includes cattle handling. Vets working for Delivery Partners will therefore resist any pressure to cut corners and will expect a good standard of handling facilities, and sufficient handler support, so that the work can be done safely and efficiently.
6. Tender clarification days will be held on 30 July (Weybridge) and 7 August (Builth Wells) to enable potential bidders to clarify any aspects of the tender. The tender period will run until 9 September 2014. It is anticipated that contracts will be awarded towards the end of 2014, with suppliers beginning to deliver services from April 2015. Contracts will initially be awarded for a three year period, with the option to extend up to a further two years. The existing way of working will continue until the new arrangements begin.
7. More detail is available in the form of a Q&A published on the AHVLA website at: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/changes-to-procurments/index.htm>

**Issued:** 17 July 2014