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10th of April 2008

To The Quarantine and Bio-security Review Secretariat,
GPO Box 858,
Canberra,
ACT,
2601

To whom ever it may concern,

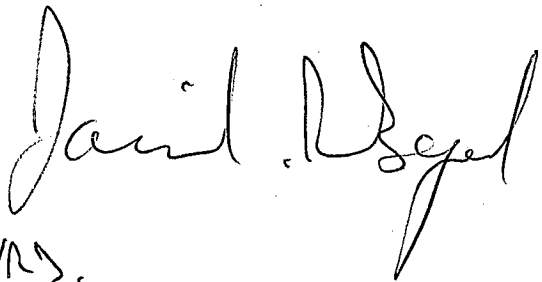
Having recently emigrated to Australia from the UK to dairy farm, which is what I did in the UK. I feel it is imperative, that Australia does not lower its guard with regard to Bio-Security.

As you can see from the enclosed headline, the negative publicity that is generated to a countries food base, from a bio-security breakdown. Let alone the financial, human and animal cost of such an outbreak.

Something I personally experienced when we had Foot and Mouth on the 19th of December. I can still remember the silence, after all our cattle had been slaughtered even though I was very young at the time.

I can also say compared to the UK, in my experience border security in Australia is far superior. Do not relax your vigilance. In fact vigilance needs to be increased at a time of concerns about food security.

Regards,



David. R. Byrd.

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March 14, 2008

FMD review condemns the management of Pirbright

By Alistair Driver

'Muddled and ineffective management of the Pirbright site by Government departments was to blame for last year's foot-and-mouth outbreak, a damning report published this week has concluded.

Launching his *Lessons Learned* review of the outbreak, Dr Iain Anderson described the facilities at Pirbright as 'shabby and dilapidated' and attacked the management failures that allowed it to get into such a state.

He has called on the Government to replace the Institute of Animal Health (IAH), based at Pirbright, with a new National Institute of Infectious Diseases, following the leak of foot-and-mouth virus from the site last summer that has cost the farming industry over £100million.

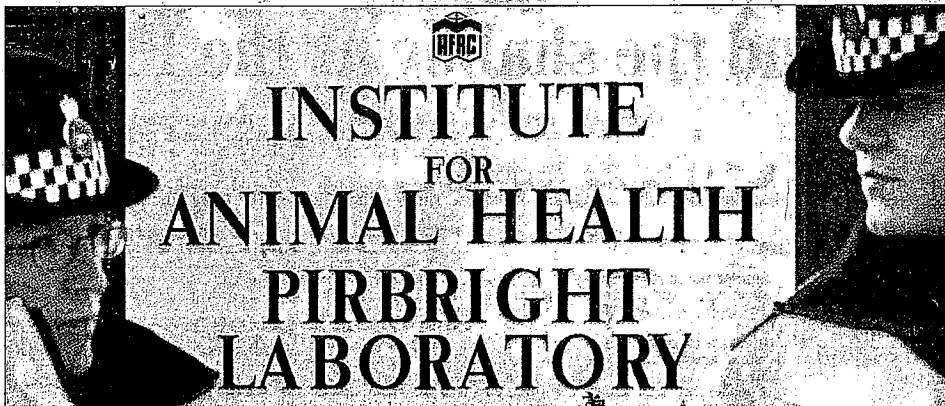
The report concluded that, overall, the 2007 outbreak was handled much better than in 2001 and on balance 'the positive easily outweighs the negative'.

Dr Anderson highlighted the improved contingency planning, better use of science and more effective communications as examples of where lessons had been learned.

He praised 'inspirational' leadership from Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former chief veterinary officer Debby Reynolds.

But he highlighted a number of areas of concern, prin-

Facilities 'shabby and dilapidated'



A flashback to when police stood guard outside the Institute for Animal Health laboratory at Pirbright, last summer following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

cipal among them the failure to improve 'often inaccurate and out-of-date' data on livestock despite firm recommendations made in 2001 to improve them.

The report said 'weak' information systems 'lost time, caused mistakes and added to the frustration' and could have jeopardised efforts to contain the disease had it spread further.

It said Defra would have

been unable to scale up its response if the virus had spread more widely and highlighted tensions between the devolved administrations in the way they responded to the outbreak.

It said the decision to lift restrictions in September, only for new outbreaks to emerge, was wrong.

But the key message from Dr Anderson was that the virus should never have

escaped from Pirbright in the first place.

"The foot-and-mouth outbreak in 2007 was avoidable. If there is one lesson to be learned it is this: the creeping degradation of standards that led to the outbreak must never be allowed again," he said.

He blamed the 'structural and management inadequacies' and 'poor' regulatory system largely on 'ambigui-

ties' over who was responsible for running the site and 'wrangling over departmental leadership that had bedevilled progress in this area'.

At the report launch, he named the main culprits for the site's failings as:

■ Defra, as the regulator and major funder

■ The Department of Trade and Industry (now Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills), as having ultimate

responsibility for the site.

■ The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, as the main funder of IAH.

■ The governing body that oversees the Pirbright site.

■ The top management of IAH.

Dr Anderson called for the inadequacies to be tackled 'urgently and comprehensively'.

He said Defra should be responsible for the new institute that replaced IAH and it should be supported by multiple funding sources from Government, through Defra, and elsewhere.

"I am convinced Defra can make a success of this knowing the nation's eyes are upon them," he said.

Responding, Defra Secretary Hilary Benn said the Government had already taken action in relation to Pirbright and the IAH.

For example, it had accepted the recommendations of the Callaghan Review to shift responsibility for regulating the site to the Health and Safety Executive and had ordered a review of the governance, funding and risk management of IAH, he said.

"Many of Dr Anderson's recommendations encourage us to build on the improvements that have already been made," he said.

The highly critical report prompted renewed calls from politicians and farming organisations for the Government to compensate farmers affected by the outbreak.

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