

IN CONFIDENCE

CVO BSE 1 24

SURVEY OF HOUNDS FOR SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY

1. You will be aware that the early part of this survey was beset by difficulties in interpretation of results, caused in part by problems with fixation of hound brains. Instructions were issued to staff in mid-March requiring more rapid fixation and I believe that this has significantly reduced artefacts on histology. An analysis of results before and after the protocol change, prepared by Allan Hunter, is appended.
2. There are still cases that have to be categorised as "unresolved" histologically, and others where "fibrillar structures of unknown significance" were detected.
3. Where there have been difficulties in interpretation, whether in 1990 or in 1991, results have not been reported to DVOs. Not unexpectedly, owners are becoming concerned, if not suspicious, in view of the delay in reporting.
4. Statements on the progress of the survey have usually failed to put a finite limit on the number of brains to be examined. Nevertheless, with 295 submissions to date in 1991, approximately 140 of which will have been subject to rapid fixation procedures, I think it is time to call a temporary halt to the submission of samples. This would allow all material already in the system to be examined and a thorough evaluation of results to take place before deciding whether or not to continue.
5. There is an urgent need not only to compare results produced by current procedures with earlier results, but also to interpret the findings. Also, we need to determine how "inconclusive" or "unresolved" findings are notified to owners and Ministers without causing undue alarm.

*K C Taylor*K C Taylor
28 June 1991CVO

cc Mr M Atkinson
Dr D Matthews
Dr P S Dawson
Dr R Cawthorne
Mr P Gayford
Mr A Hunter, Supt VIO, Wolverhampton

CVO BSE 1 24

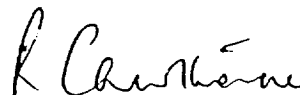
GROUND SURVEY

1. As discussed, Allan Hunter has now provided an analysis of the results obtained before and after change in protocol was introduced.

2. The results are interesting in that better fixation etc appears to have been achieved with improved categorisation into positive, negative inconclusive and unresolved categories.

3. The number falling into the "unresolved" category is, however, still significant and there would seem to be little point in continuing with the survey unless or until more fundamental studies are undertaken.

4. I am therefore content for the CVO to be so advised. You might consider attaching Allan Hunter's analysis to your paper as Annex.



R Cawthorne
25 June 1991

Mr K Taylor (plus attachments)

cc Dr Dawson (plus attachments)
Dr D Matthews (plus attachments)
Mr Hunter (minute only)

ATW 688

HOUND SURVEY - ANALYSES OF RESULTS BEFORE AND AFTER PROTOCOL CHANGE
(13.2.91)

1. Old Protocol

Year	No. exam.	+	-	i/c	Unresolved	Awaiting result
1990	91	0	56	7	28	0
1991 - (1.1.91-13.2.91)	55	0	19	11	25	5
TOTAL	146	0	75	18	53	5

2. New Protocol

1991 (13.2.91 onwards)	149	0	91	16	42	
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3. Comparison

Old Protocol	146	0 (0%)	75 (51.3%)	18 (12.4%)	53 (36.3%)
New Protocol	149	0 (0%)	91 (61.0%)	16 (10.8%)	42 (28.2%)
TOTAL	295	0 (0%)	166 (56.2%)	34 (11.6%)	95 (32.2%)

Findings:

- With the change in protocol the number of negative diagnoses has risen significantly at the expense of both inconclusive diagnoses and unresolved cases.
- The reduction in unresolved cases is significant on existing figures and reflects the increase in negative diagnoses, with the inconclusive returns showing no significant influence.
- Fundamentally, however, the results highlight an "unresolved" category in hounds not paralleled in cats, sheep and cattle examined for transmissible encephalopathies.
- No SAF results are available for analyses.

A R Hunter

A R HUNTER
21 June 1991

91/06.28/10.3

CVO BSE 1 24

HOUND SURVEY - ADDENDUM

1. Robert Higgins 'phoned and the Hound Survey was discussed. The following points are forwarded for information.
2. (a) As a result of the new protocol better fixation, tissue preparation and sections were achieved.
(b) Improved categorisation into negative, inconclusive and unresolved was possible.
(c) The division between negative and unresolved was definable, confirming the existence in hounds of an "unresolved" category not seen in cattle, sheep or cats.
(d) In several instances developing or decaying toxoplasma cysts in obex/medullary areas of younger hounds were findings. These may be a cause of the lesions which produce the unresolved category.
(e) In none of the hound tissues examined was there any evidence of florid lesions to suggest a spongiform encephalopathy.
(f) Although no SAF results were known, it was nevertheless considered that with no evidence of florid lesions in any case, the interpretation of SAF findings was invidious (especially if applied to genuine inconclusives as done in cattle under BSE protocols).
3. It was concluded that -
 - (a) the changed protocol had been successful in eliminating doubts over tissue quality and had re-inforced the classification of an existing unresolved category.
 - (b) With a further 48 cases still to be examined there seemed no advantage in prolonging the survey longer than necessary and cessation should be addressed.
 - (c) The existing residual wet tissues and blocks have been retained at Thirsk. What should be done with these should also now be considered.



A R HUNTER
21 June 1991

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91/06.28/10.4