

August 23 2007

## **TRIPLE BOOST FOR SCOTLAND**

All farm sales, auction markets and agricultural shows in Scotland can resume on Monday.

And as of midnight tonight Scotland's livestock keepers will be free from the foot and mouth movement restrictions.

Both moves are subject to strict conditions but they come on top of the lifting today of the ban on GB meat and live animal exports to Europe.

Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, said:

"This is a great day for rural communities across Scotland. They have had three very anxious weeks fearing the worst.

"Now we have three pieces of excellent news.

"Resumption of auctions will be of enormous benefit to farmers looking to move sheep off the hills over the coming weeks and for those many sales which have had to be delayed.

"The improving disease picture also allows major relaxations in the national movement ban in Scotland.

"From midnight tonight the movement of susceptible animals directly between farm premises will be permitted subject to specific safeguards which I will be discussing with the industry later today.

"I am sure a few celebratory drams will be poured tonight as we gear up to returning to business as usual.

"But we aren't fully out of the woods yet and we must ensure that everyone remains vigilant and follows the conditions."

Scotland's Chief Veterinary Officer Charles Milne said:

"I am confident that we can proceed to allow the general movement of livestock in Scotland with sales and shows and markets resuming from Monday.

"However, these moves come with a number of temporary new safeguards which will be removed when it is prudent to do so.

"The progress that has been made is founded on the best scientific evidence including work undertaken by vets in the field and the epidemiological analysis by the expert group led by Edinburgh University.

"I urge all of Scotland's livestock keepers to remain vigilant and to report any suspicion of disease to their local Animal Health offices."

Notes to editors:

1. From midnight on Sunday shows, sales and markets can resume in Scotland subject to veterinary supervision and strict cleansing and disinfection rules.

2. From midnight tonight there will be free movement of animals in Scotland other than shows or sales with susceptible animals.

This is subject to two conditions:

(a) Extending current standstill requirements to 20 days. This means that susceptible animals cannot be moved off a farm other than for slaughter within 20 days of the arrival of other susceptible animals.

(b) Temporary suspension of separation agreements which allow parts of a farm to be regarded as separate units for standstill requirements.

3. Independent scientific analysis was provided by Epidemiology Population Health and Infectious Disease Control (EPIC), a unique Scottish science collaboration between university vet schools and research institutes in Scotland. Set up in 2006 with £2.5 million of Executive funding over five years, it seeks to develop new tools to track and control animal diseases.

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