

Exercise to test Foot and Mouth Disease contingency plans to take place

Welsh Government officials and veterinary experts will work in partnership with counterparts in the Devolved Administrations, Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on a real-time simulation of an outbreak, called 'Exercise Blackthorn'.

The simulation exercise will see a series of desk based exercises, known as tabletops, taking place over the next few months and a two day live exercise will take place on 25th and 26th April.

'Exercise Blackthorn' will simulate a medium to large scale outbreak that has spread from England to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as within England.

Chief Veterinary Officer Christianne Glossop said:

"Having effective contingency plans are crucial to containing and managing the spread of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and it is a requirement of the European Union.

"The effectiveness of our plans must be fully tested so we can establish our current state of readiness for such an outbreak. Exercise Blackthorn will also present an opportunity to identify any issues and improvements in the policies, plans, instructions and procedures we employ in managing an outbreak of the disease."