

Inquiry into the effects of organophosphate sheep dipping on farmers and their families

1. Nature of the inquiry

Given the well documented cases of people adversely affected by their contact with organophosphate sheep dips we would like the inquiry to try and ascertain;

- I. The number of people that have had their health adversely affected by organophosphate sheep dips
- II. The nature of those ill health affects
- III. The availability of and effectiveness of any healthcare that they have received as a direct result of their illnesses
- IV. Whether health care arrangements are satisfactory or whether there needs to be an increase in access to and provision of specific healthcare for those affected.

2. What do we hope to achieve

In the first instance better recognition of the issue for those affected by organophosphate sheep dips. To raise the issue of and gain better recognition of the potential dangers associated with the use of organophosphate sheep dips in particular and other farm chemicals in general. By raising awareness about the potential dangers the aim is to avoid and minimise casualties in the future. And to ensure that those already affected and anybody affected subsequently is afforded the most effective and suitable medical treatment and that this is offered as early on in the process as is possible.

3. The kind of evidence we would like the Committee to collect

- I. Toxicological evidence on the effects of organophosphates used in sheep dips
- II. Medical evidence from those affected
- III. Epidemiological evidence if available for instances of ill health amongst sheep and livestock farmers
- IV. Evidence of what advice on health and safety has been circulated to sheep dippers; both by whom and when, the nature of the advice and the manner of conveying that advice
- V. Evidence of what advice has been issued to GPs and others in the medical profession in dealing with the effects of organophosphate poisoning
- VI. Information on available treatments, their efficacy and availability both historically and up to the present day

4. Suggestions for witnesses

- I. There are many sufferers available as witnesses and these would perhaps be best accessed through one of the various organophosphate support groups
- II. Toxicological experts such Dr. Sarah McKenzie Ross and Professor Vyvyan Howard
- III. Past and Present civil servants from Defra or MAFF as it then was
- IV. Past and Present Government Ministers responsible for that specific area
- V. There have been a number of journalists that have covered the issue and could provide valuable information to any inquiry