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From George Eustice MP

Minister of State for Farming, Food and Marine Environment

Dear Tom

At our meeting on 19 November 2015, I agreed to three actions by way of follow-up to our discussions:

- to look back at the historic records to confirm the rationale for the ending of compulsory sheep dipping
- to find out what benefits may be available to someone who believed they may have experienced organophosphate poisoning
- to discuss with the Department of Health how to get access to lost medical records and what might have happened to them

Defra officials have now reviewed hundreds of documents and liaised with the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions. The annex to this letter sets out full responses to these three points.

I thought it would be helpful to summarise officials' findings:

The rationale for the ending of compulsory sheep dipping:

- After looking through hundreds of records stretching back to the 1980s, we have found documented evidence that compulsory dipping was ended because eradication of the disease had become unrealistic and individual outbreaks could be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- No evidence has been found that fears over human health played any part on the decision to end compulsory dipping. It is also worth noting the independent Committee on Toxicity researched organophosphates extensively and found no evidence that low-level exposure causes long-term health effects.

What benefits may be available to someone who believed they may have experienced organophosphate poisoning:

- The Department for Work and Pensions has explained the benefits available for those who are ill or disabled from an accident or disease and may have mobility needs.

How to get access to lost medical records and what might have happened to them:

- The Department of Health has explained the difficulties of locating mislaid pre-2012 medical records. I have also attached the relevant documents from the early 1990s that provide further information together with a summary note of our meeting of 19 November.

I am copying this letter to Jessica Morden MP, Andy Burnham MP and the EFRA Committee.

George Eustice

GEORGE EUSTICE MP