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1 April 2011

Dear Colleague

### **Merger of Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency**

Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) have today merged to form a new executive agency headed by Catherine Brown, Chief Executive.

The new agency will be known simply as **Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)**. Its creation brings together delivery capability and scientific expertise into a single organisation, which will enhance the resilience and effectiveness of our animal health and welfare scientific and regulatory activities.

By combining the resources and expertise AHVLA will be in a better position to rise to the challenges ahead. Not least among these will be that of continuing to deliver effective interventions on-farm and elsewhere and world-class veterinary science in an extremely challenging financial climate.

The new agency will continue to carry out its work on behalf of Defra, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Scottish Government. It also has some UK functions and many international roles – for example as international reference laboratory for many key animal diseases.

The challenges we face are complex – particularly in the context of changing and increasing disease and conservation risks, tight restrictions on public expenditure, and economic pressures on the industries we support and regulate. We believe that it will only be by working in partnership with others with shared interests that we can make the biggest difference in the areas in which we work.

Business as usual activities carried out by the AHVLA offices based in the West Midlands region are unchanged. Please note the change of e-mail address for the AHVLA Stafford Regional Office:

[ahrowestmidlands@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ahrowestmidlands@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk)

On behalf of the West Midlands Regional Team I would like to thank you for your support to VLA and Animal Health in the past. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely

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The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, working across Great Britain on behalf of Defra, Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government

[www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla](http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla)