

BPEX Pig Health Improvement Scheme

(Reference DMA 003/2011)

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is the organisation that helps to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of various agriculture and horticulture sectors. Its BPEX division has responsibility for achieving this in relation to pigs in England.

What is the BPEX Pig Health Improvement Scheme?

This project aims to improve pig health in a collaborative and sustainable way by involving people from all parts of the supply chain.

This scheme will enable veterinary practitioners to help pig producers to improve the health status of their pig production holdings. It extends three existing projects in Yorkshire and the Humber, the East of England and the East Midlands. It is funded by AHDB pig industry funds and money being made available through the Rural Development Programme for England.

All pig producers in England and all veterinary practices are eligible to participate in this scheme.

The specific aims are to:

- Facilitate collaboration and co-operation;
- Promote high standards of biosecurity on pig farms and in the supply sector (eg haulage, deadstock collection and pig transport);
- Promote openness and honesty between producers so it is easier to identify and overcome the main challenges to the control and elimination of infectious diseases;
- Map the location and health status of pig herds – this will be made available online to members of the existing projects and to those involved in this scheme;
- Provide support and tools for producers to improve health status;
- Establish areas of disease freedom;
- Establish networks throughout the industry to withstand future outbreaks of disease.

A main focus of the scheme will be to identify herd level prevalences of swine dysentery, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV), *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae* (MHyo) and mange as well as levels of biosecurity (including amongst smallholders and at the abattoir). Cross-sectional serological data can help producers and vets to better understand which diseases are present within different age groups on-farm so they can identify the proportion of individuals that have been exposed to a particular pathogen and the age and time specific risk factors for infection.

BPEX expects the scheme to improve the ability of pig producers to overcome disease challenges on farm by using its results in combination with information on internal and external biosecurity, vaccination/medication usage and the location and disease status of units around the farm.

The results of the scheme will be made available on an anonymised basis on the BPEX website.

Applications will only be accepted from veterinary practices. These may be individual practices or a consortium of practices acting together. An individual must be named by the applicant as its contact point.

Any pig producer who wishes to participate in the scheme should discuss this with its usual veterinary practice, or another practice if that practice does not wish to apply.

For the scheme to be successful, producers must be prepared to share accurate information on the health status of the pigs on their unit(s) with other producers who are also named on the application form and who will meet as a group to discuss the results of the diagnostic testing.

The scheme will run from 3 August 2011 until 31 March 2012, and will close on 31 December 2012.

The closing date for applications is 24 February 2012.

Prioritisation and Funding

Priority will be given to applications from veterinary practices or consortia that are willing and able to identify and engage with groups of producers who are willing to co-operate together to coordinate the delivery of diagnostic testing. The producers concerned must be willing to meet as a group to discuss the results in association with other information relevant to their units. Each producer must complete a participation form that must be submitted by the veterinary practice(s) with the application form.

BPEX wishes and will prioritise to ensure geographical representation from five regions: the Midlands, the North-East, the North-West, the South-East and the South-West of England.

BPEX will give priority to applications to provide diagnostic testing in relation to any or all of swine dysentery, PRRSV and MHyo.

Having applied these priorities, grants will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis.

BPEX will provide a maximum of £1,000 to any farmer and any holding under this scheme.

The maximum total funding that BPEX intends to provide for this scheme will be £80,000. BPEX reserves the right to increase or reduce the total funding available under this scheme.

Application

AHDB, through BPEX, will only accept applications relating to producers from their selected veterinary practice.

If a producer (with its veterinary practice) commits to this scheme using the attached forms, and it is eligible under the '*de minimis*' scheme rules (see later), it will be eligible to receive a maximum of £1,000 for or towards its share of the diagnostic testing fees, of which 30% will be a *de minimis* award. If the application is successful, BPEX will make a grant to the producer which will be paid directly to the veterinary practice. It must only be used in relation to this scheme.

When BPEX receives an application, it will check that each of the producers is eligible for the grant and will confirm the grant and the conditions that will apply.

This scheme will run from 3 August 2011 until 31 March 2012, subject to any extension in BPEX's sole discretion if resources permit.

The closing date for applications is 24 February 2012

Legal Restrictions

EU law restricts the amount of State aid that can be given to agricultural businesses. The aid provided by BPEX under this scheme is '*de minimis*'. This means that the amount of aid provided under the scheme is small enough for the EU authorities to be sure that it will not affect the common market, and therefore more stringent State aid rules need not be applied.

Aid will be provided in accordance with the EU agricultural *de minimis* Regulation 1535/2007.¹ This Regulation restricts the total amount of such aid granted to any enterprise to a maximum of €7,500 in any three-years' period and requires BPEX to make certain checks.

This scheme is geographically restricted to England. All pig producers in England are eligible for support.

The budget is limited and support will be awarded on a geographical, 'first come, first served' basis to eligible applicants who satisfy the scheme conditions and in accordance with its priority rules.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is satisfied that the aid provided under this scheme will not result in breach of the maximum *de minimis* aid that may be granted by the UK in the agricultural sector.

The Regulation allows you to receive a maximum of €7,500 of agricultural *de minimis* aid in any period of three fiscal years. If you have received any aid of this type, you will have been told in the grant letter that the aid was *de minimis* aid and was provided under either Regulation 1535/2007 or its predecessor, Regulation 1860/2004. No other funding counts towards this maximum. You must let BPEX know if a grant made under this scheme would result in you receiving more than a total of €7,500 of agricultural *de minimis* aid in this fiscal year and the previous two years. False declarations will result in recovery of the aid with interest.

The application form makes this declaration easy for you.

AHDB is required to keep a record of the *de minimis* support it will provide for ten years after the last payment of aid under this scheme, and it will provide this record to the British or EU regulatory authorities on request.

This document is available at:

<http://www.bpex.org.uk/KTRandD/ResearchAndDevelopment/Deminimischeme.aspx>.

Data Protection Act

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (as data controller) requires details of the identity of recipients of *de minimis* aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, amounts of aid granted and date(s) of aid granted to be kept on a central register. Such data will be kept in order to comply with the provisions of Commission Regulation 1535/2007 on *de minimis* State aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors and in particular to ensure that ceilings on the amount of aid granted are not breached. To this end, the data may be shared amongst any organizations granting *de minimis* State aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors and will be passed to organizations responsible for upholding the provisions of Regulation 1535/2007 on request. Defra may also be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information, on request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, Defra will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor will Defra act in contravention of its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. There is a legitimate public interest in knowing how public funds are spent and so details of the amount of aid paid, the identity of the recipient, and other details may be disclosed under the Access to Information legislation mentioned above.

¹ OJ L337, 21 December 2007, p.35.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board also requires this information and will deal with it similarly including non-exhaustively transmitting it between itself and Defra for the purposes indicated above.

BPEX hopes that this scheme will help you and looks forward to receiving your application.



The Process

Step 1 – Application

Each veterinary practice (or consortium) needs to send a completed application form (Annex A).

For each farm in its group, it must also send a completed participation form (Annex B). This will provide BPEX with the information it needs to make the checks required by EU law.

The application form and participation forms must be sent to:

Helen Clarke, BPEX, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL.

BPEX will acknowledge receipt, then assess the eligibility for support of each producer in the group, and the priority of the application. It will inform you and your veterinary practice whether the application has been successful. Because of the intention to achieve geographical spread, BPEX may not be able to respond quickly.

Step 2 – Payment

BPEX will pay the grant once it receives evidence that the diagnostic testing has been completed and it has received the results in an acceptable form.

Unless the scheme is extended, BPEX expects to make all payments under this scheme not later than 31 July 2012.

All payments must be made by 31 December 2012, when this scheme will close.

Step 3 - Notification

BPEX will record the amount of aid granted to you under this scheme and the date of the grant, which will be made available to the national register of such aid. This will allow Defra to ensure that you do not breach the *de minimis* aid rules, which it must do under the EU Regulation.

You must inform anyone proposing to grant similar *de minimis* aid to you within the next three years that you have received this *de minimis* aid from AHDB, and the date on which it was provided to you.

ANNEX A

BPEX Pig Health Improvement Scheme Application Form

Please complete and sign the following form, and send it with the Participation Forms of each producer to:
Helen Clarke, BPEX, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL
The completed forms must be received no later than 24 February 2012

Name of Applicant:
(veterinary practice, or lead practice of a consortium of practices)
Contact Name:
VAT number:
Business address (registered office for companies):
Post Town:
Post Code:
Telephone:
Mobile:
Fax:
E-Mail:

Participants:

I have formed a group of pig producers who are each willing to participate in the scheme.
I enclose a completed Participation Form (Annex B) for each producer.
I attach a list of the number of samples to be taken from each herd by age and a breakdown of costs for the testing, the delivery of the meeting and any other charges that will be incurred.

Testing:

The veterinary practice(s) will commit to undertaking diagnostic testing under the scheme, at a cost of £ per sample, and adhere to the scheme's rules.

The testing will include (tick as appropriate):

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| swine dysentery | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

I confirm that I am authorised to commit the practice(s) to participate in this scheme.

For consortia, please attach a list of the practices involved, and contact information for each. Contact will ordinarily only be made by BPEX with the lead contact point.

Signed: Date: 201

For BPEX use only:

Date application received	201.....
Conditions satisfied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 201.....

ANNEX B

BPEX Pig Health Improvement Scheme Participation Form

Please complete and sign the following form, and give or send it to your scheme veterinary practice

Name of Participant:
(of company or sole trader)
Trading Name:
(for sole traders)
VAT number:
Holding number: CPH..... SBI.....
Business address (registered office for companies):
.....
Post Town:
Post Code:
Telephone:
Mobile:
Fax:
E-Mail:

State aid eligibility:

If you have already received agricultural *de minimis* aid under Regulations 1535/2007 or 1860/2004, this will have been mentioned specifically in the grant letter.

Have you received any aid described as agricultural *de minimis* aid in the past three years?
 Yes No

If the answer is Yes', please provide details of all such agricultural *de minimis* aid.

.....
.....
.....

I will commit to the testing programme and adhere to the scheme's rules.

The testing is expected to cost £ and I am seeking a grant of £
(maximum £1,000)

Signed:..... Date:201

For BPEX use only:

Date form received	201.....
Does the applicant meet the <i>de minimis</i> criteria.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Grant Conditionally Approved?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 201.....
Grant amount?	£.....	Date:201.....
Conditions satisfied?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No201.....
Grant Paid?	£.....	Date:201.....