



USE OF PREVIOUS SEAC OPINIONS

ISSUE

1. Given the evolving nature of scientific understanding of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), it is suggested that an agreed procedure be in place setting out a time limit for the use of SEAC advice by a Government Department without referral back to the committee. It is suggested this is needed because new data could have appeared since the advice was given that would cause the committee to alter that advice.

CONSIDERATION

2. It is suggested that a convention be introduced so that in the future when Government Departments wish to use SEAC advice older than say, two years, to formulate policy or create / modify Regulations that advice is referred to the SEAC Chair by the Department via the SEAC secretariat together with an assessment by the Department/secretariat of the new evidence that has emerged since SEAC gave its opinion.
3. The Chair will then decide whether relevant new information is available that might have altered or reinforced the advice given by SEAC. If this is then case then the matter will be addressed by SEAC at the earliest opportunity in order to update the advice.

ADVICE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMITTEE

4. The committee is invited to comment on the suggested procedure and on the time limit, if exceeded, when the Chair's view should be sought.