

Dear All

We are writing to update you on the outcomes of Exercise Alpheus, which some of you participated in at the end of 2015.

Exercise Alpheus was designed to test our response to a cross border (Scotland, England and Wales) outbreak of *Gyrodactylus salaris*.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for their participation and valued feedback again.

Administrations have been working towards implementation of action and learning points.

Below is a simplified summary of the outcomes of Exercise Alpheus:

Policy Consensus

- Following cross-border discussions (Defra and Scottish Government) a national standstill of live fish movements was applied through the application of a single ID across England & Wales and similar action in Scotland. Stakeholders were informed, including on .gov.
- Mitigation measures and exceptions to the standstill were implemented where possible, (e.g. disinfected eggs and table fish processed on site) following a risk assessment to ensure that all restrictions made/actions taken were proportionate and evidence based.
- A clear exit strategy was developed and variance implemented on a case-by-case basis. Surveillance was prioritised and targeted with due consideration given to epidemiological factors and forward and backwards tracings from the infected catchment(s).
- Consideration was given to economic factors and welfare
- The exercise highlighted our existing presumptions and **emphasis on prevention** rather than cure and this view point was supported across government and throughout stakeholders.

How did we do?

<Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) 1.jpg>

How confident do you feel about our collective ability to respond to an outbreak of Gs?

Many reflected a high-level of confidence in our ways of working and capability. Views on resource in the short term were positive, but views on the longer term resource strain were generally more pessimistic.

"The government bodies worked well together and gave the impression of being proficient in dealing with emerging issues"

“I feel pretty confident in our ability to respond, but a little pessimistic about our chances of controlling an outbreak.”

All commented positively on cross-border working and many cited continuous collaboration as the reason for this. Some cautioned that this would come under increasing pressure as the scenario unfolds

Actions identified by the exercise

The exercise led to the identification of 30 actions for Defra, CEFAS, Scottish Government, MSS, NRW, stakeholders and EA including:

- Testing our contingency plans later in the scenario
 - Testing communication with stakeholders
 - Continued engagement with industry and other stakeholders to better understand the likely impacts of disease and their preparedness for it.
 - Making an assessment of Stakeholder capability and resource in an outbreak
 - Continuing to foster good working relationships across UK governments and consider a UK-wide exercise.
 - Reinforcing the [check-clean-dry](#) and [home and dry](#) message
 - Updating Scottish Government contingency plans for Aquatic Animal Diseases, particularly with respect to embracing Defra contingency models where appropriate

 - Continued communications with Norwegian colleagues and maintaining our existing Memorandum of Understanding (SG)

 - Further consideration to ruling out suspicion, in terms of sampling strategies with respect to epidemiological risk in different scenarios and locations

 - Improved methodologies for wild fish surveillance

 - Amending our respective contingency plans following the lessons learnt from the exercise- expect further communication about this over the summer
- Kind regards

Gemma Bruno and the Exercise Alpheus planning team

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