

February 2023

Many of you will already be aware of the “Health and Welfare Pathway” available in England. This is a Defra funded initiative which opened at the end of January 2023. It provides money to individual farmers to pay for a vet and farmer review targeted at improving health and welfare of animals on farm by improving health.

There is a requirement to do some PRRS testing on farm as part of this review and to finish with a report which remains confidential between vet and farmer.

The first phase will be available in this format annually for 3 years and the ambition under phase 2 is to use this information to target further improvements in the health and welfare of farm animals.

We at GVG Pig Practice have looked at this programme and believe that it is an opportunity to further roll out the environmental testing package that we have been piloting over the last year. It is clear that the environment around our pigs can be a key trigger for causing disease and we now have the tools to measure and monitor this in a way which we can score and evaluate so that we can go on and measurably improve it..

Other projects may be considered for funding under the Pathway but,, they must be performed on-farm and, must have health/welfare implications. The PRRS testing is mandatory for all farms and fully funded under the Pathway.

To participate, phase 1 in this way will open up the possibilities to access the phase 2 funding. This will, if the discussions are accurate, be the opportunity to apply for this bigger funding for farmers to improve buildings and physical infrastructure. Basically, phase 2 will open up a raft of funding opportunities to enable capital investment for eligible health/welfare projects to farmers that have already participated in phase 1. All of this represents ambitious UK government plans for post Brexit support of British agriculture.

The review is very separate to the Red Tractor inspection, that most of you are very used to, but our intention is to tag it on to the end to minimize travel and therefore to get the most value out of it.

Farmers need to apply individually for this review and will need to share their SBI number at that time. Currently it is only possible for claimants of single farm payments (BPS) to access the payment and it is only currently available for one claim (and therefore species) per holding but, the intention in future is to expand this eligibility criteria is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfi-annual-health-and-welfare-review> . Farmers will soon be able to apply for the above phase please see following link [The Annual Health and Welfare Review: rolling out yearly vet visits - Future Farming \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

When completed the money will be released when the following statement is returned by the farm to DEFRA.

- i. That the review and diagnostic testing has happened to required standards.
- ii. That they have received the report from the vet.
- iii. Which vet (including RCVS number) undertook the review
- iv. Reference number from lab for PRRS testing.

We think that this is a very exciting development which our farmers can take advantage of to assist in the further development of their farms and the wider industry.

Kind Regards

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