

Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) (VSH0006)

Our Ref: MC2024/00029

21 March 2024

Dear Sir Robert,

I wanted to thank you for initiating the recent EFRA non-inquiry session to discuss vet shortages and I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the Committee, and particularly to the Chair, Dr Neil Hudson. I thought it was a really informative session and very effectively highlighted the urgent need for systemic change across the veterinary profession.

At the FSA, our main focus is on:

1. financial investment in the system to recognise and reward public health vets and support universities and students;
2. Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) recognition of more overseas veterinary qualifications;
3. reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act; and
4. a request for Meat Hygiene Inspectors, particularly those on the trainee Official Veterinarian (OV) route, as well as for qualified OVs, to be exempt from the new Home Office immigration salary threshold.

The latter point is a very pressing concern and I understand that it now appears that this may also affect vet recruitment from overseas too. I would be most grateful if the Committee could provide a written summary of their conclusions to the Minister of State for Legal Migration and Delivery at the Home Office, Tom Pursglove given the potential financial implications if an exemption for MHIs and OVs is not agreed.

More generally, it would be helpful if you could provide a summary to the Defra SoS Rt Hon Steve Barclay, Chief Secretary to HM Treasury, Rt Hon Laura Trott and Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom.

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Finally, I wanted to re-emphasise the FSA's interest and commitment to continuing to work in partnership with the Committee on this issue. I look forward to reading the Committee's conclusions and the FSA would be pleased to help support the dissemination of your work through our networks.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan".

Professor Susan Jebb OBE, PhD, FRCP (Hon), FMedSci