

SETTING STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE MHS: VISION

Summary

1. This paper considers work undertaken to date on vision for the MHS.
2. The MHS Board is invited to:
 - **Note** the recommended attributes of a vision statement;
 - **Note** the themes emerging from the three events held by the MHS Board in 2005; and
 - **Note** that members will be receiving a timetable for the production of a new strategic plan at their March 2006 meeting, and that this timetable will include the development of a vision statement.

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Issue:

1. To consider work undertaken to date on vision for the MHS.

Background

2. The current MHS vision was developed in 2003 during production of the MHS Strategic Plan 2004/05 – 2008/09, and is:

“We will be the first choice provider of independent services in meat production premises, recognised for our professional, forward-looking, efficient and effective approach.”

3. As members are aware, the MHS Board has taken forward its remit to give strategic direction to the MHS through the following three events:

Awayday	21 July 2005
Briefing/ Brainstorm	15 September 2005
Stakeholder meeting	22 September 2005

4. The outputs from all three events were discussed and distilled during a session held prior to the MHS Board’s meeting on 3 November 2005. During the November meeting itself, members asked for a paper on vision.

Discussion

5. Creating a vision is an essential element of strategic planning. Typically a vision aims to describe the desired future for an organisation at a specified point in the future (typically 3-5 years), and assumes all current issues can be addressed. Vision statements should:
 - Draw on the beliefs/values, purpose, goals and operating environment of an organisation;
 - Answer the question, “Where do we want to go?”
 - Articulate the dreams and hopes of an organisation, and act as a reminder of what it is trying to achieve;
 - Not necessarily be achievable - a vision should always be just out of reach, and be what an organisation constantly strives to attain.
 - Identify an organisation’s ‘customers’;
 - Be aware of significant changes in the operating environment;
 - Be a visible declaration of desired outcomes;
 - Express a clear sense of identity;

- Be brief and memorable;
 - Be positive, inspiring and motivational.
6. Bearing in mind some of the attributes identified above, 2006 provides a timely opportunity to revisit the MHS vision due to:
- Re-introduction of OTM bovines into the food chain, and further extension of BSE testing should the export ban be lifted;
 - Implementation of new EU Food Hygiene Regulations (in particular the culture changes required of both the MHS and Food Business Operator); and
 - Proposed changes to the MHS veterinary supervisory structure.
7. The themes which emerged from the three events held by the MHS Board in 2005 included:
- Cooperation, partnership, teamwork and joined up working;
 - Flexibility;
 - Managing stakeholders expectations;
 - Vision shared by stakeholders;
 - Public health protection;
 - Risk based, proportionate regulation and enforcement;
 - Effective and efficient MHS;
 - 'Safe' meat;
 - Best in Europe;
 - Animal health and welfare protected;
 - Being a good employer
8. In the autumn, as part of work on developing the MHS Business Plan 2006/07, an MHS working group put forward a proposed short and succinct vision, as follows:
- "We will be the leading food hygiene enforcement body in Great Britain"*
- However, this work on vision undertaken by the working group was put on hold until 2006/07 pending the development of a new MHS Strategic Plan.
9. It has not yet proved possible to obtain the views of consumers in any of this work. Caution should therefore be exercised in taking work on vision too far forward until consumers' views can be assessed. Work is in hand to rectify this.
10. MHS Board members should note that, for the MHS, it will probably not be possible to reflect all of the attributes for a vision statement identified in paragraph 5 above, due to the differing demands and dynamics of its many stakeholders.

Conclusion

11. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the MHS Board in 2005 in considering strategic direction for the MHS. However, in view of the current absence of input from consumers, the MHS Board is asked to note that further work on vision will be taken forward as part of the development of a new strategic plan for the MHS during the first half of 2006/07. As noted at their November 2005 meeting, MHS Board members will be receiving a timetable for the production of a new strategic plan at the March 2006 meeting, and this timetable will include the development of a vision statement.

Recommendation

12. The MHS Board is invited to:
 - **Note** the recommended attributes of a vision statement;
 - **Note** the themes emerging from the three events held by the MHS Board in 2005; and
 - **Note** that members will be receiving a timetable for the production of a new strategic plan at their March 2006 meeting, and that this timetable will include the development of a vision statement.

Business Development Unit
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