

# Keeping up to date with developments in surveillance methods

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## Introduction

Methods for conducting surveillance of animal and human health have developed rapidly in recent years stimulated by the need to detect outbreaks of disease and acts of bioterrorism rapidly in order to protect public and animal health and welfare. Maintaining an awareness of these changes in available methodology is essential to ensure that animal health surveillance in Great Britain can be conducted effectively using up to date tools. This contributes to achieving the third strategic goal of the UK Veterinary Surveillance Strategy by allowing a range of surveillance approaches to be identified in order to derive better value from surveillance information and activities.

The vast amount of literature published about disease surveillance means that an efficient strategy is required to obtain an overview of developments in methods of data collection, analysis, dissemination and the evaluation of surveillance.

## Aim



The aim of this work is to develop an efficient strategy for keeping up to date with the rapid developments in surveillance methods and to share the information identified by this strategy within the surveillance team at VLA and with policy makers in Defra. The long-term aim is to combine information on developments in surveillance methods with information about Defra's objectives for animal health surveillance in order to provide recommendations for the future development of these surveillance activities.

## Methods

### The strategy

**Step 1 - Identify** articles of potential interest from bibliographic databases, specific journals, conference proceedings individual team members

**Step 2 - Select articles** thought likely to provide information about benefits or developments of surveillance methods (based on review of article abstracts)

**Step 3 - Categorise** articles by

- Surveillance objective (e.g. outbreak detection)
- Type of study (e.g. data collection, evaluation)
- Aspect of surveillance improved (e.g. analysis)

**Step 4 - Prioritise** articles according to their potential to provide information about surveillance methods that would have immediate application to veterinary surveillance in GB.

**Step 5 - Store** information about articles of interest on a Microsoft Access database and **summarise** information provided by high priority articles in highlight report

### 2. Selection criteria

### 3. Classification criteria

### 4. Prioritisation criteria

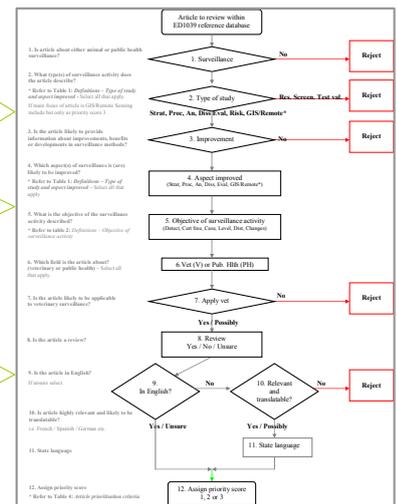


Figure 1. Selection criteria (Steps 2 and 3)

## Results

### Pilot study of articles published during 2006/07

- **1455** articles of **potential interest** that were published during 2006/2007 were identified from searches of bibliographic databases
- **245 / 1455** of these were selected as likely to provide information about benefits or developments of surveillance methods
- **59 / 254** articles were thought likely to be highly relevant to the development of the current animal health surveillance strategy in the UK and the information contained was summarised in a highlight report

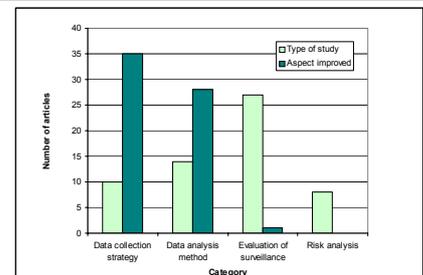


Figure 2: Type of study and aspect of surveillance improved for 59 articles though most likely to provide information relevant to development of animal health surveillance in GB

## Conclusions / Further work

The strategy developed provides an efficient way of summarising developments in surveillance methods that could be applied to animal health surveillance in UK and of sharing this information with researchers and policy makers

We will be refining the search terms used to identify articles of potential interest based on this pilot study by assessing the sensitivity and precision of different search terms to identify articles thought most likely to provide information of interest. We will then implement the strategy to continually identify articles of interest.

## Acknowledgements

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