

EPIC Scottish government centre of expertise on animal disease outbreaks: new horizons in the research policy interface for animal disease control

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EPIC is the new Scottish Government Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks. The Centre is designed to provide access to high quality advice and analyses on the epidemiology of animal diseases that are important to Scotland and to best prepare Scotland for the next major disease incursion, by: (1) delivering timely and accurate advice to the Scottish Government; (2) developing the coordination of research, analysis and interpretation across disciplines, leading to high quality, world leading research; (3) stimulating innovative thinking in support of policy development and implementation; and (4) developing a programme of knowledge exchange in order to ensure the effective underpinning of policy as well as the wider dissemination of knowledge. These aims will be delivered through a series of five linked modules: Module 1 – Communication and Contingency; Module 2 – Risk Modelling; Module 3 – Disease Control; Module 4 – Forecasting and Horizon Scanning; and Module 5 – Knowledge Exchange. EPIC is a consortium project involving SAC, University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, Moredun Research Institute, BioSS and James Hutton Institute, providing an exceptional concentration of expertise spanning veterinary epidemiology, economics, social science, molecular biology, disease modelling and biomathematics, and a unique opportunity to combine these disciplines to achieve outputs that are meaningful and relevant. This project builds on a previous award to an ‘EPIC consortium’ project focused on surveillance, and aims to build a sustainable model for the control of animal disease outbreaks for Scotland.