CANTER Core Steering Group Meeting

15 May 2025 – Public minutes

Welcome and apologies
Chair: Julie Shrubb. Attendees: Jodie Perrett, Bryan Lovegrove, Jacqui Matthews, Nicola Housby-Skeggs, Lucy Coyne, Martin Nielsen, Claire Shand, Wendy Talbot, Diane Gilby, Tim Mair, Hillary Cowley, Claire Williams, Esther Rawlinson, Jeremy Johnson, Laura Peachey, Victoria Murrell, Hilary Glasgow, Gwyn Jones, . Steve Howard, Dawn Howard, Mary Bawn, Bridget Lloyd. Apologies: Alison Pyatt, Andrew Cairns, Jane Hodgkinson, Chris Shaw, Rachel Andrews, Lois Unitt.
Actions from January 2025 Core Steering Group meeting
The minutes from last meeting held in January 2025 were signed off. Outstanding action points were reviewed from the combined meetings and updated. Terms of reference have been updated to reflect the transition from VMD governance to RUMA CA&E. Julia confirmed she is happy to continue as Chair for the two year term, unless anyone feels they would like to put themselves forward. Julia gave her vote of thanks to RUMA CA&E for the work that has been going on behind the scenes in organising the smooth transition from the VMD to the new working arrangement.
CANTER identity/brand
Going back to the fundamentals of CANTER – Julia gave a huge thanks to RUMA CA&E so far, with a lot going on in the background, she feels very positive that this relationship will work going forwards. Gwyn Jones, the Chair of RUMA CA&E joined CANTER representatives at the National Equine Forum in March with the announcement of the transition from the VMD to RUMA CA&E, this launch was accompanied by the press release CANTER Steps Forward as an Independent Industry-Led Initiative - CANTER. **a. Transparency/neutrality** What is CANTER for… what are our aims? The purpose of CANTER is: - To provide a coordinated approach for the equestrian community to combat wormer resistance. - To provide independent and collaborative expertise for sustainable parasite control in equines. - To bring the whole industry together to provide support, knowledge and information for the required behaviour change. CANTER is such a diverse group of people with real value in such a large collaborative effort and is seen as a trusted source of advice and information. We benefit from a lot of value, in-kind, from our core steering group, from passionate people who are experts in their field. People also have their own backgrounds and no-one is here for their own commercial gain. We have to be mindful to ensure that CANTER remains independent, transparent and neutral. There was some debate around third party resources and if they should be shared through the CANTER website platform. All agreed that anything we endorse should be consistent with our guidelines, noting that additional "noise" on the website can cause distraction and we remain mindful of our main aim to reduce the contradiction and confusion around parasite control which is an important task. However, another important aspect of CANTER is our power, as a collective group using our various skills and resources, to generate collective progress in our mission to improve control of resistance parasites in horses through reduced and responsible use. Used in the right way, the website platform can accelerate progress in certain directions in terms of research, with coordinated knowledge to attack parasitology in equines. Thus, as long as external information continues to be vetted by the experts within the steering group, then promoting other research/tools should improve engagement. We want to encourage progress to ensure the biggest impact. **b. Competition law** Reminder that we have to comply with competition law regulations. It is stated in our Terms of Reference that "*For CANTER activities, Group members are expected to act in the best interests of sustainable parasite control in the UK equine industry and must not allow personal or commercial interests to influence CANTER*

decisions. CANTER communications and messages must be agreed by the Group before entering the public domain to ensure messaging is consistent."
Julia established that if anyone has any issue, at any point during any meeting, they should raise their hand or interrupt and specific wording will be added as a footnote to each agenda as a reminder of this etiquette.

Future CANTER activities

a. **Promoting the guidelines to prescribers - short chapter podcasts**

Our asset is the guidelines and we discussed the development plan to encourage promotion to prescribers. A series of podcasts will be created, using a conversational manner and involving the expert authors. Each podcast would be a chat between two people, one for each chapter, using predetermined questions with the chapter summaries as an outline guide, keeping each to 20 minutes maximum.
The podcast idea pitch was received with enthusiasm and full support from the group.

b. **Horse owner communication strategy –** discussed with funding and communications (pg3)

c. **Further Guidelines a) Quarantine b) Youngstock**

Two small focus groups were established from core steering group members to develop two further chapters to cover quarantine and youngstock – to be actioned in the near future.

d. **Research database**

We discussed implementing a monthly research peer review, through the research subgroup resource to feed key info to the guidelines group as necessary and to use the website to list research which has been reviewed, for an up to date reference guide which is easy to access. This ensures we keep abreast of current research and our guidelines remain up to date, with evidence based guidance, where possible.

e. **Any others – Single PDF version of the guidelines**

It has been discussed previously, whether we should do a single PDF version of the guidelines and there was some discussion around whether we create one to include the whole document or one for each of the ten chapters? All would require version control so we must keep this in mind when updates are made and we considered the practicalities of downloading them. Appreciating that the whole guideline resource can be overwhelming, we accept that the ability to review specific chapters can appears more manageable, giving value to keeping the chapters separate.
All were in agreement to create a working group to create PDF versions for 10 chapters rather than one big document with volunteers from the core steering group putting themselves forward. These same people will manage the updates, signposting new information to the guidelines team to ensure updates are implemented with version control as necessary. We also discussed the guidelines update strategy and concluded that all live documents will be reviewed annually, by the chapter author and two other core steering group members, each October, on the guidelines anniversary.

Report on progress of CANTER subgroup activities

Research subgroup

The group last met in March and reviewed the research priorities, previously identified by the BEVA grade literature review, making sure all remained relevant, and identifying any evidence gaps or other areas that would provide useful additions, for example, demonstrating the clinical impact of parasite control programmes to engage veterinary professionals, promoting population base for disease control, improving diagnostic tools, monitoring large strongyles. They also talked about how they can generate the most impact from this subgroup.

- Make the identified research priorities public on CANTER website – to direct research toward important areas and support research funding applications, promoting the impact of their work.
- Map activities against the priorities – a research database which will help to demonstrate areas where there is already great progress such as behavioural research, but will also map research activity areas against priorities to ensure we keep relevant, track progress, identify who is working on what, which resources are available and could foster collaboration opportunities.

This can be done in stages and the research subgroup will work together with the communications subgroup to ensure information is on the website, after establishing what is public and what is private. It would be useful to have a way that the research subgroup could be directly contacted via the website, which is an area to develop, within the resources available. The research group will feedback to the wider steering group with their progress. Julia informed the group that through RUMA CA&E, CANTER has access to the Independent Scientific Panel resource, who are a group of independent experts and could provide further support if needed.

Communication subgroup

13th January was their last formal meeting when they discussed ideas such as measurables and provide information to kick start the horse owner side for the guidelines, alongside their promotion to prescribers. Highlighting the Redwings case study regarding the Strangles Awareness Campaign, and the work in breaking down the messaging from the horse owners perspective around prevention and control in the case of outbreak. Such a campaign requires a huge resource in money and time resource to achieve the required impact. The horse owner communication strategy has been on hold, whilst our comms team have concentrated on recent governance and transition from the VMD to RUMA CA&E.
CANTER representatives introduced the guidelines in the AHDA conference knowledge hub and they have been involved in the transition to the RUMA CA&E partnership, ensuring the website is up to date in preparation for the launch at the National Equine Forum (NEF), the announcement was supported with recent press releases highlighting this new era for CANTER. The articles are available on our website. As part of the handover strategy we have discussed what we would like to prioritise to support the various activities through funding and how to manage the resources available through labour, time and cost.

Funding strategic plan - Table enclosed for discussion

There have been a lot of discussions in the background to establish funding and what works for all parties in the long term. Through this process we have got to know the office holders behind RUMA CA&E and really hope that RUMA CA&E becomes the long term future for CANTER.
Although grateful to those organisations, for their initial agreement in principle for funding, which were discussed during 2024, we note that these initial conversations are dated and need to consider the options as part of this transitional process to ensure we establish a route that all parties are comfortable with.
The CANTER strategic plan developed for 2025 includes:

- Guidelines (including updates and podcast which may need £3000.00)
- Quarantine & Youngstock chapters – value in-kind
- Horse owner resources – first need to establish funds
- Research database – value in-kind
- Website hosting, security domain, word-press costs - £500 - £1000
- Contingency budget – to allow some flexibility
- Administration/governance support from RUMA CA&E – £3000
- We acknowledge all individuals who have already volunteered to support with offers in-kind.

CANTER and RUMA office holders we have discussed membership and funding and if this transitional phase becomes a long term arrangement, then establishing a separate CANTER membership is more complicated, both SCOPS and COWS operate in an independent capacity so are slightly different. Instead CANTER would need to integrate into their existing model, with an established membership tier structure in place. Some core CANTER steering group members already form part of the RUMA CA&E alliance, others may wish to become members in time.
RUMA CA&E have an established alliance membership with Subgroup activity, with Subgroup Chairs sit on the RUMA CA&E Board, these subgroup activities are fully supported. If CANTER comes in under that guise it would fit well within the model with access to the Independent scientific panel and support from Mary Bawn, Communications Lead and Bridget Lloyd, Office Administration as required. Within the RUMA Subgroups are individuals, who are not members of RUMA CA&E but sit on those focus groups for their expertise and assistance and some may assist with funding to specific activities in the form of sponsorship.

- What we propose, as part of this transition, is to establish activity based funding against these strategic activities.
- We must ensure continued transparency and neutrality, whilst ensuring that funding put in place now, works for the longer term so could perhaps take the form of sponsors against these activities, for example toward productions costs.
- All external funding will go into the general RUMA CA&E account, and be managed with funding streams determined against various CANTER activities.
- Being part of RUMA helps with our neutrality and transparency and from Julia's experience to date, feels RUMA is a great fit for CANTER and finds the combined expertise very helpful. All agreed.

We plan to contact all members on our CANTER distribution lists by letter with an open request, for consideration within their organisations, inviting offers of funding to allocate against core activity streams.

Public and confidential minutes

The group discussed the need for public minutes to co-exist alongside the confidential minutes. The overall consensus was to continue to provide both versions, it is a useful way to keep extra organisations informed. The public minutes will be available on the website and are shared to others on the distribution lists.

a. **Meeting frequency**

It was proposed that CANTER will hold four steering group meetings a year, quarterly, 2 hours maximum, to include the following dates: 18th/25th September, 11th/18th December, 12th/19th March, 11th/18th June.

b. **Streamline activities of other subgroups?**

Diagnostics:

It was suggested that the Diagnostics Subgroup could be covered under the research group, now that the guidelines have been published, future information relating to FECs and testing can become a running item for the Research subgroup. Diagnostics is already a research priority needing focus and remains a key part in parasite control programmes, with the need to consider validation studies and facilitate frequent updates. We concluded that the this will remain within the research team for now, with a plan to create a small working group as and when additional support is needed. All agreed.

Education:

The Education lead was not available to provide an update and there have not been any recent meetings with this group. However there was some discussion about the importance of the guidelines being incorporated into education through lectures and CPD for prescribers and how the education subgroup could be absorbed into the Comms workstream and be included as knowledge exchange/transfer activities. Education and sustainability include ways to drive behaviour change toward reduced anthelmintic use. When we have confirmed funding we can develop a comms strategy, identifying our target audience and develop the campaigns, making use of the offers of support from individuals, who signed up for the Education Subgroup, who remain a beneficial resource with their expertise in those areas.
All were happy with these two suggestions.

Horizon scanning - Raise awareness of emerging risks & intelligence to help inform future CANTER activities.

- High levels of tapeworm are being reported on some stud farms in the UK – is this due to poor management or reduced effectiveness of anthelmintics, or a combination of both? We need strategies to sustainably control tapeworm, especially on premises where resistance is suspected or we see persistently high tapeworm saliva scores on well managed premises. As a group we should consider, what other products can be looked at if these anthelmintics stop working? Both from a regulatory perspective and a commercial perspective.
- There are a lot of calls about larval cyathostominosis this year but are not sure why; is this due to emerging resistance to moxidectin, is it due to poor management or changes in weather patterns?
- There are also some big equine practices having the highest number of colic cases in young stock, coming from studs who are treating for tapeworm 4x yearly, emerging tapeworm resistance is a concern. There are a lot of multidrug resistant tapeworms reported in the US.

Other planned activities/meetings - Identify additional equine AR-related activities and/or campaigns.

This agenda item was not discussed at this meeting.

AOB

a. Identification of equids when prescribing

An ongoing strategic challenge is to keep equine anthelmintic resistance in the equine trade press. Most RQPs have no obligation to keep records of prescriptions (which the competent authority has deemed are verbal, i.e. oral rather than written). The biggest strategic threat is that in the reviewed VMR 2024 the VMD facilitated remote prescribing in GB, including from e.g. Ireland, without addressing any of the above and obliging the retention of records by RQPs. We all expect governance by consent but it is very difficult for the VMD to move forward without independent guidance on how to do so. The VMD pride themselves on being industry-led. The value of a group like this is that it can take a look at the obligations imposed on prescribers to keep records, and it can suggest what it thinks the obligation should be and can then involve other people to question foreseen problems, that in turn can flesh out CPD and training needs. The VMD cannot move forward without a consensus or consent and it is important for a group like this to consider this, because it is independent. This agenda item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

b. Market research FEC & diagnostic methods suitable for a FECRT?

There are upcoming diagnostics tests which are commercially available for AI-based faecal egg counting machines and assessing the reliability of egg counting techniques with studies to evaluating them. This is an area which we may need to develop. This agenda item will be discussed further at the next meeting.