CANTER Core Steering Group Meeting

19 March 2026 – via MS Teams – Public minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair: Julie Shrubb.
Attendees: Claire Shand, Laura Peachey, Jodie Perrett, Jacqui Matthews, Martin Nielsen, Wendy Talbot, Diane Gilby, Tim Mair, Jeremy Johnson, Andrew Cairns, Chris Shaw, Lois Unitt, Lucy Coyne, Claire Williams, Victoria Murrell, Rachel Andrews, Steve Howard, Bridget Lloyd, Gwyn Jones, Rebecca Mearns, , Hillary Cowley, Mary Bawn, James Carrier.
Apologies: Nicola Housby-Skeggs, Dawn Howard, Claire Stratford, Alison Pyatt, Wendy Talbot, Victoria Murrell, Andrew Cairns, Chris Shaw/Rachel Andrews, Bryan Lovegrove, Hilary Glasgow.
We welcome James Carrier who replaces Esther Rawlinson as the Boehringer representative on this group.

2. Review of minutes & actions

December minutes were approved. Actions from the meeting, were included in this meeting updates.

3. Updates on recent activity

Recent activities carried out since December include:

- First Guideline review completed and launched in February.
- Alongside this, the two new chapters have been written and are undergoing final iterations.
- Guideline chapter podcasts are underway.
- Our Terms of Reference have been updated.
- RCVS Knowledge potential to secure funding for CANTER resource development – awaiting update.
- RCVS Knowledge collaboration award – thanks to Jacqui and Tim for their work to submit our nomination.
- BVA have invited us to feature alongside RUMA Agri in a BVA-led webinar – This is on hold until after our podcasts are completed.
- There has been significant time dedicated to CANTER since our December meeting and we extend our thanks to all who have been involved for their part in this.

4. Funding and Governance Update – Julia

Just over a year after RUMA CA&E provided a transitional home for CANTER it has been agreed that we should now become an official RUMA CA&E subgroup, alongside others such as their "Targets and Measures Working Group". Julia, as CANTER Chair, will now join their Board meetings in addition to the Alliance meetings which she already attends. RUMA CA&E fund their strategic business plan through their annual Alliance membership alongside campaign specific sponsorship.

- Nothing else will change for the moment as CANTER activity remains as a self-funded entity.
- Julia is reviewing the CANTER budget alongside the strategic plan with RUMA CA&E office holders.
- RUMA CA&E year end is January, a financial report will be provided at the June CANTER meeting.
- No one raised any specific questions, nor objected.

The administrative support was difficult to quantify prior to 2025 and has required more time and cost than expected, however all recognise the volume of work has been vast, in particular assistance for the Guidelines review and now that the podcast recordings are underway. All agree the support has been beneficial to the smooth operation and steady momentum of CANTER activities.

5. Guideline review – update – Julia

The Guidelines review updated chapters 1-10 with hyperlinks within and between chapters addressed. Each chapter is now available as a single PDF download, and the foreword, introductions and references were reviewed. This task was completed with everything uploaded to the website in February, accompanied by a news article. Huge thanks to all involved in that process.

New chapters are under review since receiving feedback from the steering group.

- **Quarantine chapter – Laura/Tim** - one final comment to review regarding a product suggestion, after which, the chapter will be ready to publish.
- **Youngstock – Co-authors include Nicky, Tim, Laura, Martin and Diane** – in discussion to agree the best way to incorporate feedback from the core steering group. A section relating to pasture

management has been added and much thought has gone into providing guidance for interpretation of specific tests in various contexts. It is a challenging chapter involving many nuances when you consider the wide range of possible scenarios. The co-author team have worked really well together to ensure the chapter includes enough usable information and is considered from all angles, to ensure it is a reliable and trusted source.

All with all CANTER Guidelines chapters – they are written to provide guidance to prescribers, not to recommend a specific protocol.

There was some discussion on the potential to develop training/education for prescribers, how to correctly use the Guidelines to develop health plan protocols. Some interesting points were raised in that discussion which could be developed through potential collaboration, linking with future CANTER Subgroup activities.

Practical representation of risk scenarios – A draft will be reviewed by the steering group when available.

2026 Autumn Guideline review - Other than completing the two new chapters we will refrain from making any further changes on the Guidelines until the next annual review in Autumn 2026. We have created an internal "Guidelines feedback" document to capture any further notes throughout the year, which will be shared with chapter authors for consideration during future annual reviews. Details on the list include all discussion points captured from previous meetings such as development of resistance for certain parasites and expanding the diagnostics chapter.

Linked additional advice documents/treatment statements to be added to the CANTER website: Ater discussion amongst the group it seems suitable that such advice documents are added into the CANTER General News section for now as they are not Guidelines but are linked advice from CANTER.

- **Large Strongyle myth-bust review** – written as we do not have specific guidance to assess this parasite although appreciate we need to keep it on our horizon. The document has been approved by the steering group with the suggestion to include the reference link to scientific review. It will be added to the CANTER News section. We thank those involved in the development of this paper.
- **Myth-busting strategy** – Comms subgroup may consider this as a future focus, as there is a lot of material already available from certain members of the core steering group which they are happy to share, if required.

6. ChatBot / AI – MN

There was some discussion about building a ChatBot "CANTER assistant" to use alongside the Guidelines including; pros and cons, challenges and objectives of this tool – all to be developed if we pursue this area.

7. Chapter podcasts & promotion of guidelines to prescribers

These are currently in development with a great schedule ahead.

8. Report on progress of CANTER subgroup activities

Communication subgroup – Claire Shand

It has been a busy first quarter with lots of activity:.

- British Equine Worming Week – end January
- Website updated with a news piece to announce the revised Guidelines – February
- Many opportunities to talk about the great work of CANTER with features included in many publications such as Vet Times, Horse & Rider, Over the Counter, Equestrian Business, etc. To show our collective activity bringing CANTER to the fore. Horse and Rider feature is planned in April.
- Alongside, many have been involved in winter events including the National Equine Show.
- World parasite day - Friday 20th March – a CANTER article and social media graphics will be prepared and circulated to all for use, to acknowledge and raise awareness of this campaign.

Horse owner communication strategy

We now turn our attention back to the horse owner resources strategy - to consider the timeline and develop plans discussed at our December meeting. Claire, Comms subgroup lead, has requested some admin support to keep momentum in this area. The next meeting is planned for the end of April.

- There was some discussion around the use of BHS Approved Centres and the role they can play with the development of horse owner resources. We appreciate the enthusiasm and support with the BHS in this area which has the potential to be a great opportunity for CANTER to reach a key

audience. We are grateful for the effort made since our last meeting to investigate this area with a view to developing a coordinated approach.

- We will also consider the potential to make use of national events in 2026 to start drip feeding key messages over the summer/autumn, using 2027 spring forums as a springboard to launch the concept of CANTER Horse Owner Resources. The backing of such forums act as valuable engine and will give our campaign credibility. We need to explore the potential to use suitable events to gear up a focused launch using such platforms.

This will be discussed further in the Comms subgroup meeting with an update provided in June.

Research subgroup – Laura Peachey

The group met recently and went through their actions:

- **Research priorities guidance document** alongside our **"Initial aims"** have been discussed and updated by the group and is being shared with the core steering group. They will be made publicly available on the Research area of the website.
- **Research project master spreadsheet** – we have developed a document to capture the research for each area which will be updated frequently. This document maps all the projects currently active in the UK and should be useful to identify which priorities are most vital to pursue for funding calls in future. It will also act as a guide to adapt research priorities in light of recent studies. Areas for consideration include:
    - Tapeworm research - gaps in evidence to assist with the translation of the perception of the problem to determine the current issue and the strength of the problem.
    - EIDS (Equine infectious disease surveillance) – Red Watch Surveillance set-up and issues around the response rate for reporting cases of parasite cyathostominosis. Potential blockers and raising awareness was discussed.
    - NEW research publications will be added to the spreadsheet as appropriate and will be highlighted to chapter authors, where relevant, to ensure that new evidence is considered alongside the annual Guideline review.
- **Research page** is live on the CANTER website & can be easily updated at any time.
    - *Contact form – to encourage people to get in touch if they are working on, or plan a funding application in any of these areas. HOLD*
- **Discussed funding opportunities –** Certain funding calls occur late spring/early summer. We discussed adapting research priorities based on recent studies and what is most vital to apply for.

9. **Online supply**

We had a discussion to help us all to understand the context of purchasing anthelmintics online, to learn the different perspectives across the group and understand the level of risk this presents. It is suggested that around 80% of equine dewormers are provided through SQPs but are unsure how much is via online sales or face-to-face. The 2024 amendment to the VMR (applying to GB but not NI) requires prescribers to record the reason for prescribing when a product is supplied without a written prescription, including for online supply: The VMR 2013 still apply in NI. There is no requirement to record equine identification. We discussed the experiences and concerns as a group.

In summary - it is positive that folk are being challenged and that more conversations are happening at the point of supply. If horse owners are provided with written test results from FEC testing or other such diagnostic tests this would support prescribers to make more informed prescribing decisions. The person prescribing and supplying is responsible for that decision and must base it on the information available to them at the time. If the guidance is provided to the owner verbally and they then give that information to the prescriber based on verbal advice – the prescriber should make the decision based on the information available to them, in line with the usual prescribing and supply obligations. The prescriber can offer a written prescription, even if it is charged for, for the owner to purchase the anthelmintic elsewhere but they have the right to decline.

Key points to highlight - Expect more dialogue with your prescriber!

- Manage expectations and raise awareness

- The prescriber has a responsibility to comply with the VMR in the same way for both online supply and face-to- face sales - all need to do the prescribing rationale if a product is supplied against a prescription that is not in writing.
- Diagnostics - Those involved in diagnostics may be advising horse owners based on test results. Where test results are written down with follow-up advice this could support more informed prescribing decisions by providing documented evidence for horse owners to give to prescribers at the point of supply, reducing the need for anyone to make decisions based on verbal rationale and likely reducing the challenge.
- Horse Owner – need to raise awareness to help them understand that wormers are a prescription product and they need to provide information at the point of sale - this responsibility lies with the horse owner.
- Prescriber – need to develop education and training to support the prescriber, to enable them to use and understand the Guidelines, help them to ask the right questions and ultimately make the right decision for anthelmintic supply.
- Helping people to interpret the Guidelines (prescribers and horse owners) will build confidence in their use.

A study conducted 10 years ago looked at the interaction between owners and sales (online versus over the counter). The advice people get at that point of sale is really important – perhaps this is an area that CANTER could support or assist with securing funded toward some updated research.

- Investigating interactions between UK horse owners and prescribers of anthelmintics - PubMed

CANTER are in a position to make a significant impact in this area, we must encourage this opportunity.

10. **Diagnostic updates -** *Market research FEC & diagnostic methods for a FECRT*

No updates in this meeting.

11. **RUMA CA&E updates**

RUMA CA&E gave a brief update to highlight their activity over the winter.

- **Webinars/events** - launched their first antimicrobial use (AMU) reduction targets which is a huge milestone using the London Vet Show platform, and in conjunction with the Webinar Vet provided two webinars one around AMU and the other to launch their Parasiticide Stewardship, where Julia was one of a number of key speakers.
- **Condition specific AMU reduction targets –** These focus areas underpin the national reduction targets, thanks to BVA we have a soft-launch planned via the BVA members webinar on 25th March.
- The formal launch of the resources is planned for BVA LIVE on 12th June – this will highlight the resources RUMA CA&E have developed and will include guidance to support veterinary teams.
- **RUMA parasiticides strategy** was launched at the end of last year with a resources area on our website with best practice links for safe use and a risk based approach: Parasiticides – RUMA CA&E.
- **Animal Medicines Amnesty** campaign encourages the return of any unused or out of date product, to promote safe disposal, responsible use and guardianship of all medicines, it will be repeated in 2026.
- **Annual report** was released at the end of the year and highlights the RUMA CA&E activity alongside the great work of our members, including CANTER and data from the VARSS report from the VMD.
    - RUMA-CAE-Annual-Progress-Report-2025-FINAL.pdf
- **Vaccine Strategy** – a survey was conducted last year for RUMA Agri and also for RUMA CA&E in response to the reduction and difficulty for supply, to get a sense from the front-line on the impact of this disruption. This information is being fed back to VMD who are doing great work with their vaccine strategy and statement of intent - we continue to work with them on that strategy.

12. **Horizon scanning – All** *Raising awareness of emerging risks/intelligence to inform future activities*

Nothing added at this meeting.

13. **Other planned activities/meetings** - *Identify additional equine AR-related activities/campaigns*

AMTRA are in the process of updating their SQP manual with the CANTER guidelines, with thanks to CANTER for allowing the use of v1.2 guidelines to be incorporated into their updated Equine module.

National SQP Week will take place from 5-12 June 2026 - this first ever event aims to celebrate the vital role of Suitably Qualified Persons (SQPs), also known as Animal Medicines Advisors, in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of livestock and pets across the UK. The initiative is led by industry regulators AMTRA, Vetpol, and VetSkill, and encourages participation from various stakeholders, including veterinary practices, pharmaceutical companies, and animal owners. The tool kit will be available via the CANTER website mid-April.

Project worms continues to the end of April – please share details www.projectworms.co.uk with your contacts to encourage survey participation: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wormslivery

National Equine Welfare Council – Thursday 16th April - a CANTER representative will present with a focus on anthelmintics and welfare.

14. **AOB –** Date of next meeting – Thursday 18th June 2026 1-3pm

COMPETITION LAW COMPLIANCE	
It is the policy of CANTER and its core steering group members to comply with competition law. The guidelines below are intended to assist members in their participation in CANTER meetings. The consequences of ignoring the law are extremely serious and include fines of up to 10% of worldwide turnover and a prison sentence of up to five years.	
Do: • Review the agenda before the meeting • Object in advance or during the meeting to any item or discussion that you consider may raise competition law concerns • Ensure that accurate minutes of the meeting are taken • Review meeting minutes to ensure they reflect what was discussed.	Do not discuss the following topics without taking legal advice: • Selling prices including price changes, discounts, rebates and allowances • Any other commercially sensitive data • Costs • Commercial actions of competitors • Terms of sale including credit terms • Allocation of customers, territories and contracts • Tenders or any other bids for contracts • Forget that competition law applies outside of the formal meeting itself. This includes discussions pre or post meeting and any follow up actions.
If you have any concerns or need specific guidance please contact the CANTER Chair or consult external legal advisors.	