NADIS
TB Prospectus

TB Testing

Helping to secure your business future

NADIS Veterinary Services Ltd

Working with farm practices for more than 15 years
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AHVLA has announced that in line with European Procurement regulations it will be initiating a competitive procurement process for professional services, which will initially be for TB testing. The outcome of this process will have a direct effect on how Defra pay for TB testing and who will be doing the testing. Practices need to be considering their options to ensure that they get the best possible representation during the bidding process.

NADIS (National Animal Disease Information Service) intends to bid during the forthcoming tender process. Many vets will already be aware of NADIS’ plans. This prospectus is written to ensure that every practice in the regions represented by NADIS, has the opportunity to participate in this process.

Why Choose NADIS?

- NADIS is coordinating a national approach in order to avoid duplication of effort by many smaller groups of vets across the country. The response to the tender will consist of the ideas and input of veterinary practitioners from across the country. Everyone will have the opportunity to be heard. No practice will be disadvantaged due to size or location.

- NADIS recognises the vital service the farm veterinarian provides not only to the local farming community but also their strategic role to government nationally, and we will be working with practices to preserve this role and develop it with new initiatives from government in the future. Vets across England and Wales want the same outcomes as NADIS i.e. to retain the testing work on their clients’ farms and maintain the current fee structure.

- It makes no sense for vets to form small local groups to try to formulate their own responses to the tender when this could
be done centrally with economies of scale. The strength of this bid will be its consistency in representing the consolidated views of the profession as a whole.

- Although this is a national approach to the tender, recognition of regional requirements will be a key factor and each region will have its own representation with a separate regional NADIS company, specifically created for this purpose. Practices in these regions, who support the NADIS bid, will be offered a majority of shares in that company.

- As an independent organisation, NADIS has appointed a board of directors with the skills necessary to coordinate and manage the overall response. Most importantly this is a veterinary led project and all decisions will be made by participating vets, each region electing a steering group for that region, consisting of 4 practicing vets and the regional veterinary coordinator.

- NADIS has already established networks of practices in regions of England and Wales. The regional coordinator will manage the communication to all practices in their region. This will ensure that all participating practices will have an equal opportunity to contribute and that regional differences are properly reflected in the proposal(s). We believe that initially the tender will only cover England but could be extended to cover Wales at a later date.

- Supporting and working with independent local veterinary practices is central to the NADIS ethos, unlike some corporate bids, which may have a predatory element. NADIS has a 16 year track record working with networks of practices across the UK and in the last 12 months, over 11,000 farmers have been trained by their own vet as part of the NADIS animal health programme in association with the RDPE, helping to strengthen client loyalty in an increasingly competitive environment.

- NADIS has had an overwhelmingly positive feedback from practices so far with over 80% of practices supporting the proposal in some regions.
NADIS is forming 7 regional companies in England, each of which will be submitting a tender bid. The regions are, North East, North West, Yorkshire & Humberside, West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England and Gloucester/Wiltshire.

In regions where NADIS is not directly bidding, NADIS will be working in collaboration with other delivery partners in those regions.

NADIS will be submitting a separate tender bid for Wales.

**Regional Map  England**

NADIS North East Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS North West Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS Yorkshire & Humberside Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS East Midlands Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS West Midlands Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS East of England Veterinary Services Ltd
NADIS Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Veterinary Services Ltd

**Wales**

NADIS Welsh Veterinary Services Ltd
Board of Directors

Technical Director: Nick Coulson MA, Vet MB, PhD, MBA, MRCVS

Nick Coulson qualified from Cambridge University in 1982. He then spent 11 years in the RAVC and then from 1994 to 2001 he worked for the Defence Science and Research Laboratories at Porton Down in a variety of management roles and completed his PhD (Microbiology) and MBA (OU).

He joined Defra in 2001 to manage their animal health research projects including TB research. He then managed the veterinary team that supported TB policy which included managing the people working on the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. He then led Defra’s international trade team.

Nick was acting Deputy CVO during the outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza and Bluetongue in 2007/8.

During 2009/11 he was Director of Veterinary and Technical Services for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency with wide responsibilities at Board level for professional standards and delivery issues including TB testing.

“Knowing the likely requirements at EU and government level for TB testing and its audit process, I am confident as Technical Director of NADIS that the management board has the necessary experience and expertise to ensure that the TB tender submission will be compliant with the requirements of Defra and the EU and will provide a sustainable and efficient service for the livestock industry, delivered by veterinary practices for their clients.”

Veterinary Director: Chris Watson MA, Vet MB, MRCVS

Qualified 1975 Cambridge University and devoted whole career to cattle practice. During this time spent many years working with the British Cattle Veterinary Association as a member, secretary, and as president in 1996 during the Buiatrics year. Currently a full partner in the Wood Veterinary Group in Gloucester and still working in cattle practice.

“In the 36 years since I qualified I have come to appreciate the important balance of clinical cattle work, herd health approaches and the role TB testing plays in everyday cattle practice. TB testing is a necessary service to our clients. When integrated into practice work it is part of the full service offered and constitutes an important income, shaping the structure of the practice. It is also part of the education and information process by which we meet clients, deal with their herd issues and offer advice. It is essential to preserve the role of the practice as the benefits to everyday work and TB control are enormous. In future the process of TB testing will change but the practice should still retain the key role of delivering this service.

The NADIS approach has the aim of keeping all practices firmly in control of their own testing regime without compromising the cost of doing so. There is the potential to develop other opportunities with TB testing and with further AHVLA work that becomes available.”
Veterinary Director: Andrew White BVMS., CertBR., DBR., GP Cert (FAP)., MRCVS

Following graduation from Glasgow in 1964, Andrew joined a farm practice in Lancashire where he worked until his retirement from full time work 6 years ago. His interest has always been in bovine reproduction and was one of the first RCVS Specialists in that field. Andrew represented the SSAB on BVA Council for 10 years. He continues to work in his old practice on a part time basis acting as a cattle health advisor.

Over the past 6 years, Andrew has acted as instructor and regional co-ordinator for several projects, working with Liverpool University, The Lancashire Veterinary Association, Kite consultancy, SAC and NADIS, which have variously been sponsored by DEFRA, NWDA and EU. These projects have covered Facilitator training, Farm animal disease surveillance in the North of England and the training and mentoring of vets and advisors in the North West Livestock Animal Health and Welfare planning Programme

“Having spent a lifetime in farm practice, I well understand the importance of maintaining all contacts with our own clients. I appreciate the contribution that bTB testing makes in this context and also that some practices rely more heavily than others on testing for a considerable portion of their income. In addition, if practices continue to carry out their own testing, they will be able to offer a more appealing on call rota to their staff, leading to a much improved quality of life.

This prospectus has been drawn together incorporating many of the thoughts of practitioners gained over several months of consultation and I believe that you will find it attractive. With the support of the trusted name of NADIS, I feel that it will meet with approval from AHLVA”.

Communications Director: Mike Howe B Vet Med MRCVS

Qualified from the RVC in 1983 and has spent 20 years in mixed practice. Founded UK Vet and NADIS in 1995. Mike set up a network of veterinary practices which carried out surveillance across the UK for over 15 years and is now heavily involved in the RDPE animal health and welfare training programme for farmers. Over the last 12 months over 11,000 farmers have been trained and received certification from their veterinary surgeons.

“This is a real opportunity to help to secure TB testing and the economic benefits that come from it, for local practices. If AHVLA continues to reduce frontline veterinary services there are likely to be further opportunities for practices to take on additional roles, keeping them at the forefront of the livestock industry. To maintain a strong network of livestock practices in the UK, it is vital these services are retained by veterinary practitioners. I believe with the management expertise NADIS has to offer and its 16 year track record of successfully working with networks of practices, NADIS is ideally placed to facilitate delivery of these services to the livestock industry. NADIS has extensive training and surveillance material which it will continue to develop for the benefit of the livestock industry and profession as part of this process.”
Although there are still many details to be clarified, AHVLA have indicated that there will be 35 TB tendering lots in England. It is anticipated that there will be 3 – 12 possible delivery partners selected. Each will be able to bid for any or all of the lots, but no delivery partner will be given more than 30% of the lots. AHVLA have stated that their preferred option is for the local veterinary surgeon to continue to test his or her clients. AHVLA do not favour predatory bids by corporate companies as they see the local veterinary surgeon as a key partner in their animal health activities in the future, as AHVLA decrease their role in frontline veterinary services. AHVLA also favour well established veterinary networks. This is also NADIS’ view.

Other important considerations are that a significant proportion of the total budget for TB testing is currently spent on administration costs. This is the area were AHVLA wish to make significant savings, not from the veterinary testing fee.

Verifying quality assurance of the test procedure is a major concern for AHVLA. Any successful delivery partner will need to be able to demonstrate that the test procedure is being carried out to the required standard and that there is a clear audit trail to demonstrate the integrity of the testing procedure to both Defra and the EU. Nick Coulson, former Veterinary Director of AHVLA is now on the board of directors for the NADIS TB bid. He has many years experience of both UK and EU policy on TB as well as developing proposals for delivery of TB Testing and other frontline veterinary services.

There is also an opportunity to develop and share best practice. AHVLA may require the delivery partners to provide their own OV training and this could be developed by NADIS and made available to collaborative delivery partners. Companies could also develop common approaches when dealing with health and safety issues encountered during testing (such as poor handling facilities).
NADIS is forming 7 separate regional companies that will bid for lots in these regions on behalf of the veterinary practices that support the companies.

**Expertise:** NADIS has brought together a board of directors with the necessary expertise and experience to draft successful tender bids and with the financial probity to run the regional companies in the most cost effective way, delivering value for money for Defra and a sustainable business for the participating practices. NADIS' technical director, Nick Coulson, has an outstanding track record in running projects of this scale for AHVLA. Chris Watson, veterinary director of NADIS is a well known authority on TB and is a partner in a livestock practice in a TB hotspot so knows the problems faced by both farmers and practitioners. Andrew White, veterinary director, has many years experience as a partner in a livestock practice in the NW and will be coordinating the northern regions. Mike Howe, communications director, has many years experience in practice, publishing and veterinary surveillance, will facilitate the development of the regional companies and the local practitioners' role in future contract work from government.

All the regional companies will be run from 1 central site, so that the specialist skills can be used most cost effectively, with economies of scale, to benefit all regions.

**Quality assurance:** Quality assurance will be a key factor for AHVLA when they decide which delivery partners to select, and all participating practices will need to make an undertaking that the testing procedure will be carried out as stated in the “Manual of Procedures”. Quality assurance not only applies to the on farm test but also administrative processes. A group of independent vets will be used to carry out randomised audit checks on TB testing as required by AHVLA. The frequency and methodology of these audits will be a critical part of the tendering process and Defra's acceptance of it.

AHVLA has a new IT system called SAM and is currently implementing changes to the way that OVs report TB Test results using an electronic interface. Given the expertise within the NADIS bid team we believe we are well placed to identify the most efficient and effective way to interact with the AHVLA systems and the Company's admin function. This will ensure that practices know which tests they have to complete and can submit the results with the least paperwork.
Practices within a region will be given majority shares in that regional company if they decide to support the NADIS bid. Practices will be able to guide the development of the company and benefit from any dividend payment.

In each regional company, four vets will be elected by practices in that region, who along with the regional coordinator will form the steering group for that company. Each of the regional coordinators will have a voice on the board of directors. In the run up to the tender application, the steering group will review the national tender document in consultation with their member practices and highlight any regional variations necessary.

After the procurement process, it is envisaged that the steering group would meet every 2 months to advise the board of directors.

A number of veterinary auxiliary testers will be engaged by the regional company to carry out testing for any practices in that region that are unable, for any reason, to carry out testing for their clients. NADIS will work to standardise and simplify procedures.

The Future

It is likely that when contracts are due for renewal in 3-5 years’ time, there will be increased pressure on costs. In regions where NADIS has TB testing programmes, it will be able to provide added value to AHVLA as part of the TB testing programme by including elements of surveillance and animal health Knowledge Transfer to farmers. Although the individual effort required of practices will be limited, the cumulative outputs over several regions will have major benefits for AHVLA, and will provide added value for the continuation of TB testing by practitioners. NADIS will actively seek to develop the role of the veterinary practitioners as partners with AHVLA, which will be increasingly important if AHVLA reduce their frontline veterinary services in the future.
Contact NADIS

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