



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Animal experts aim to keep Europe safe from infection threat**

Animal health experts are joining forces to combat emerging infectious diseases that affect farm animals and household pets across Europe.

They aim to track outbreaks of diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza, as well as bacterial infections that can cause food poisoning if they enter the food chain. The diseases can have devastating impacts on farmers' livelihoods and also pose a threat to human health.

Vets, scientists and technical specialists are teaming up to establish a new European research centre that will be coordinated from a hub at the Easter Bush Campus in Edinburgh.

Experts hope to develop new diagnostic tools, vaccines and treatments that help to stop diseases from spreading.

The Centre of Excellence for Surveillance of Emerging Infectious Diseases in Europe is a collaboration between the Easter Bush Research Consortium (EBRC) and global animal health company Zoetis.

It will draw on the expertise of each consortium member to rapidly respond to disease outbreaks in animals and help protect the health and livelihoods of those who raise and care for them.

Michelle Haven, a Senior Vice President and vet at Zoetis, said: "Enhanced surveillance to identify these threats early makes it possible to speed development of high quality, effective medicines and vaccines to help control these diseases. By working together, we can advance unique solutions to the evolving and complex threats of emerging infectious diseases in Europe."

Professor David Hume, Director of The Roslin Institute, added: "Our goal is to detect at a very early stage new diseases appearing in Europe. By reaching out to our partners in Africa and Asia, we hope to identify potential threats, fully sequence the genetic material of the infectious agent very quickly and identify routes to develop diagnostics and therapeutics."

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Professor David Argyle, Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: “The collaboration between the EBRC partners and Zoetis in Europe will be incredibly important for controlling disease outbreaks across the continent.”

Professor Geoff Simm, Vice Principal of SRUC, said: “A number of potential threats exist within the European area, extending through to Africa and the Middle East as well. And with some 75% of emerging human infections originating from animals – including Ebola, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza – it is vital that we monitor and manage new threats as soon as they begin to appear.”

The Easter Bush Research Consortium brings together experts from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) and the Moredun Research Institute.

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