The future of the Scottish cattle industry
Scenario Planning and Horizon Scanning

EPIC Membership
The EPIC centre brings together the skills and experience of a wide range of organisations from the Scottish research community.

EPIC is the Scottish Governments Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks. The overarching purpose for the EPIC Centre is 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.

www.sruc.ac.uk/epic

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Scenario Planning for the future of the cattle industry

Key stakeholders and experts from inside industry, policy and research are contributing to the development of scenarios that will envision Scotland in the year 2040. The scenarios are being designed to investigate potential challenges to the livestock industry both directly and indirectly concerning livestock disease. A rolling program of scenarios carried out by EPIC researchers will consider a number of important livestock issues beginning with possible futures for the cattle industry.

The purpose of these exercises is to stimulate a strategic conversation. Wide ranging future developments covering society, the environment, the political landscape and the economy for Scotland nationally and on the world scene will be drawn into the scenario development.

The strategic conversation is focussed on the question:

**What will the Scottish cattle industry look like in 2040, and how resilient will it be to livestock disease?**

Both endemic and exotic diseases challenge the beef industry today and regardless of any future eradication successes will continue to demand effective disease control policies and practices.

The nature of the particular challenges will vary according to the contingencies that the future will bring. Potential drivers of change might include technological advances, outcomes of CAP reform or climate change.

Successful scenario planning can better prepare the nation for some of these challenges.

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**What is scenario planning?**

- A technique for medium to long-term strategic planning
- Stories set in the future – how the world might look in 2040 if current trends continue or projections prove accurate
- Realistic envisioning of complex futures – not best-case or worst-case scenarios
- Used to test a range of plans – are plans flexible enough for different future scenarios?
- Not prediction but a formal process of evaluating possible futures.

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**Background**

*Scotch beef* is world renowned for its quality and the maintenance of effective livestock disease control is essential for that reputation to continue.

Economically, the beef industry is the single largest sector of Scottish agriculture. According to the NFUS, in 2011 Scotland had just under 460,000 breeding beef cows making up 30% of a UK breeding herd that produced £609 million worth of beef.

**Scenario Planning** is a technique originating in business and commerce now being harnessed by governments, to enhance strategic planning. Following successful national scale scenario projects in the UK, Scottish researchers are collaborating to combine this proven research methodology with other high quality scientific approaches. Examples of scenario projects that have helped shape government policy can be obtained at:

www.bis.gov.uk/foresight