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MANAGEMENT - IN CONFIDENCE

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4 October 1988

Dear David,

As I am sure you will know, new and disturbing information was provided by BPL representatives at the recent meeting of the Plasma Supply and Blood Products Working Party chaired by Dr Harris. This information if correct must cast grave doubt on our ability to meet Ministerial commitments to self-sufficiency in blood products and is therefore of serious concern.

Sadly the new information appears to reveal serious and even elementary errors in the way production data has been collected and used at Elstree. Particularly, I understand that no allowance has been made for the weight of the plasma containers in the plasma stockpile thereby leading to a net reduction of 100 tonnes plasma in our planning estimates.

This loss seems to be compounded by new estimates of the Factor VIII yield. As I understand, a year ago your planning was based on a yield of 185-190 i.u/kg. Earlier this year BPL discovered this was a laboratory figure and it was adjusted down to a net yield of 166 i.u/kg for this year's accountability review. I understand it has now been revised downwards to 140 and even this figure I am told does not include a 7% pre-production loss which would bring the true yield down to 130.

If these figures are correct, extraordinary efforts will be needed on the part of the NBTS to enable sufficient plasma to be collected to maintain BPL at full processing capacity. And even at that full capacity, yields of 130 would mean that the output of Factor VIII would not meet present demands.

The bungle over the stockpile is, as you will appreciate, particularly galling since given due notice the NBTS could have increased its effort in a timely fashion. Proper knowledge of yields would likewise have enabled realistic planning.

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I would be grateful if you could let me have a full account explaining how these errors were made and how planning came to be based on such inaccurate estimates. I would hope you will be able to determine who was responsible for the errors and what action you think it appropriate to take, both in relation to staff and to ensure we have reliable measurements in future.

In slower time, the forward plans in the Accountability Review will need to be revised. Although we must await the view of the NBTS as to the extent to which they can meet the new demands, it is likely that BPL may not have all the plasma it planned to process in 89/90 and the plans will need to be amended accordingly.

I know I can rely on you to give your urgent attention to these matters and I look forward to your reply. I would be grateful if we could have a word before you reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

G A HART

cc: Mr Heppell
Dr Harris
Mr Cashman
Mr Harris
Dr Moore