Please see below the joint statement agreed between Herefordshire Council and S&A Produce regarding the recent outbreak, please do circulate amongst your residents and where you feel is appropriate.  Many thanks for your patience on this and I hope this provides the information required.

*The outbreak situation at S&A Produce, Brook Farm, Marden has been managed through a joint approach from the Herefordshire Council Outbreak Management Team, Public Health England (PHE), and the S&A senior management team. This has included repeat testing of the exposed individuals working in the soft fruit packhouse with testing extended to include the asparagus packhouse as a precaution. Anyone testing positive on daily lateral flow testing or weekly PCR testing has been supported to isolate, along with their close work/household contacts who are also being tested prior to leaving isolation to reduce the risk of passing on latent infection.*

*Testing early in the outbreak identified asymptomatic cases which led to a significant spike in the case rate reported for the surrounding area of Lugwardine, Withington & Moreton on Lugg, which includes the village of Marden. During the last two rounds of weekly testing there has been a dramatic reduction in cases as a result of the proactive focus of the senior team in S&A, who have provided an exemplary response with additional assertive measures and controls in the pack house environment and support to their workforce to isolate effectively.  The results from the two most recent rounds of testing provides evidence that the chain of ongoing transmission has been broken in the exposed group and this is reflected in a halving of the local case rate over the 7 days to 11 May, with a further significant decline expected over the next 7 days.*

*The Outbreak Management Team will reconvene on Friday to review the situation with a view to commencing de -escalation. Throughout the outbreak data shared by S&A Produce has been used to track the outbreak on the farm and enhanced levels of surveillance of cases in the community continues to be deployed to ensure that the outbreak has been contained.*