



AHVLA Briefing Note 02/14

Enhanced management of persistent TB herds

Purpose

1. The purpose of this briefing note is to inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) that AHVLA will, in future, be adopting a more rigorous approach, as a standard business as usual activity, towards the case management of herds suffering long-term bTB breakdowns in England and Wales. OVs will be consulted for local knowledge and herd health issues that may be of significance. They will also be invited to attend an on-farm meeting, for which they will be paid.

Background

2. From 3 February 2014, herd breakdowns lasting more than 18 months will be considered for enhanced case management procedures aimed at helping owners of such herds regain their Officially TB Free (OTF) status as quickly as possible. Measures may include additional investigative work to identify factors contributing to persistence of infection followed by targeted interventions to address the issues identified.
3. This approach seeks to:
 - Identify and deal with the factors causing persistent infection
 - Enhance support for cattle keepers in working towards regaining OTF status
 - Reduce risks to contiguous premises
 - Reduce the impact on farming businesses and the general taxpayer
 - Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures applied and use the skills and knowledge gained to inform management of future breakdowns.
4. Herds subject to enhanced case management may be selected based on:
 - Length of breakdown, number of reactors and cost of compensation
 - Results of post mortem examinations

- Herd size and dynamics including movement volumes
 - Herd or business history
 - Local epidemiology.
5. Trained AHVLA veterinary officers will be assigned to each case and will consider the following issues and additional measures in determining an appropriate and tailored enhanced management approach:
- Internal movement controls within fragmented holdings and the separation of different management groups
 - Test interpretation and testing pattern
 - Quality of testing
 - Use of gamma interferon and other ancillary tests
 - Increased removal of Direct Contacts, partial or whole-herd slaughter
 - Review movement controls and trading options - with continued attention to movements on to the premises
 - Disease dynamics across fragmented holdings using test results in order to facilitate targeting of enhanced controls
 - Additional advice and guidance, improving the standard of biosecurity and bio-containment (including in Wales the serving of Veterinary Improvement Notices)
 - Farmer support from OVs and others, such as South West TB Advisory Service (SWTBAS) and Farming Community Network (FCN).
- Epidemiological support work will inform individual case decisions, as well as national strategy.
6. Official Veterinarians will be consulted for local knowledge and herd health issues that may be of significance. They will also be invited to attend an on-farm meeting, for which they will be paid.
7. The success of these enhanced actions will be measured by pairing herds for epidemiological comparison, farmer questionnaires, quantitative measures (especially determining cost savings), and internal case review.

Issued: 3 February 2014