



APHA Briefing Note 02/17

Revalidation requirements for bTB testing & Change in bTB terminology

Purpose

1. To make Official Veterinarians (OVs) aware of the extension/exemption process for bTB testing revalidation.
2. To make OVs aware of a change in TB terminology. OTFW and OTFS classifications have now been replaced with 'bTB breakdown'.
3. These changes apply across England, Scotland and Wales.

Extension/exemption process for bTB testing revalidation

4. OVs are revalidating their Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)) now.
5. APHA has introduced revalidation requirement for OCQ(V) Tuberculin Testing (OCQ(V) TT) to provide assurance that OVs are maintaining and continuously improving their competence.
6. Revalidation criteria have been agreed with the approved training provider. They involve a requirement to test a minimum of 250 bovine animals on a minimum of three different farms, with at least ten reactions observed, successful Veterinary Delivery Partner audit, APHA audit, or a nominated peer review of testing.
7. APHA recognises that some OVs may find it difficult to meet these criteria. OVs who are unable to test 250 bovine animals within a two year revalidation cycle may therefore apply for an extension or exemption from the standard revalidation testing requirements.

8. The following circumstances are given special consideration:
 - OVs working in 'low volume' bTB testing areas
 - OVs specialising in non-bovine species (e.g. zoo or pig veterinarians)
 - OVs on maternity/medical/career break/other leave (greater than three months duration)
 - TB testing assessors/auditors
9. APHA will consider other valid reasons to seek an extension or exemption, and will make further enquiries and check records as appropriate.
10. OVs who are able to fulfil the standard revalidation testing requirements with a **six months extension** can apply for an 'Extension of revalidation period'. This will allow an additional six months of testing **but will not reset the future OCQ(V) TT revalidation cycle date**.
11. OV who are **not able** to fulfil the revalidation criteria with a six month extension can apply for an 'Exemption from standard revalidation protocol'.
12. Applications for extensions or exemptions should be made in writing to APHA's OV Team (OVTeam@apha.gsi.gov.uk).
13. Further details of the extension/exemption process are available on APHA's Vet Gateway: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/training-and-authorisation/tt-revalidation-exempt.htm>.

Change in bTB terminology

14. APHA is no longer using the classifications 'Officially bTB Free status withdrawn' (OTFW) and 'Officially bTB Free status suspended' (OTFS) in official communications with farmers. These classifications have been replaced with 'bTB breakdown'.
15. The intention is to simplify the terminology and counter the perception that lesion and culture negative breakdowns represent false positive test results.
16. OTFW and OTFS classifications will be retained on Sam system records and some internal documents.
17. OVs are asked not to use these terms any more when communicating with farmers, and to refer instead to the broader classification, 'bTB breakdown'.

Further Information

- Improve International training website: <https://www.improve-ov.com>
- APHA Vet Gateway:
 - OV training and authorisation: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/training-and-authorisation/index.htm>
 - Details of the extension/exemption process for TB testing revalidation: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/training-and-authorisation/tt-revalidation-exempt.htm>

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