



APHA Briefing Note 03/18

A REMINDER ABOUT OUR POST MORTEM AND DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES AND AVAILABILITY OF FREE CARCASE COLLECTION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Purpose

1. This Briefing Note is to remind Official Veterinarians about our post mortem examination (PME) services and the availability of our free carcase collection service for farmers located more than an hour from one of our PME sites. It also outlines other services available to veterinarians and the support APHA can offer in disease diagnosis.

Background

2. APHA has a network of six Veterinary Investigation Centres (VICs) carrying out PMEs in England and Wales – Carmarthen, Penrith, Bury St Edmunds, Shrewsbury, Starcross and Thirsk. In addition, the network includes APHA's specialist poultry centre at Lasswade in Scotland, a laboratory testing facility at Newcastle and a central research and diagnostic facility at Weybridge in Surrey.
3. PME services are also provided through our five external partners: The Royal Veterinary College, University of Surrey, the Wales Veterinary Science Centre (Aberystwyth), University of Bristol, and the Scottish Agricultural College at St Boswells covering Northumberland.
4. Within the catchment area of these eleven PME facilities, usually around an hour's drive from the site, farmers are asked to transport carcasses for post mortem by their own means. However, outside of these catchment areas exists a network of carcase collection contractors who can collect and transport livestock carcasses for investigation.
5. Whilst there is a charge for the post mortem service, carcase collection is provided free of charge to farmers where a post mortem is required. **The services are not provided for the purposes of general carcase disposal.**

6. If you come across a case where you believe a PME will be beneficial, please contact your usual VIC or partner PME provider in the first instance to discuss whether a PME is appropriate and will be of surveillance value.
7. Our [map](#) shows the PME and carcase collection services that operate in England and Wales. Your nearest PME site can be found using our [PME postcode search tool](#).

Other APHA services

8. We also offer diagnostic testing and advice and support to veterinary surgeons in practice to diagnose, control and prevent disease in farm animals.
9. Our Veterinary Investigation Officers (VIOs) at the VICs can provide specialist advice. You don't have to send in a submission to access advice on how best to investigate and diagnose disease incidents, and information from each farm is valuable for national disease surveillance. Our VIOs can also undertake farm visits - we are interested in anything that is new, unusual, severe, or unresponsive.
10. The information captured from your submissions is important in contributing to the identification of new or re-emerging threats to animal and public health. It also aids in understanding the patterns and trends of endemic diseases. Findings from all the PME centres feed into a variety of APHA publications such as monthly newsletters, the species quarterly reports and the monthly surveillance report in the Veterinary Record.
11. The diagnostic data that is captured from your submissions is also presented on the GB [Disease Surveillance Dashboards](#) for sheep, cattle and pigs (an avian dashboard is coming soon). These dashboards are free to use, are interactive and the data is updated monthly.

Further Information

- [Contact details for Veterinary Investigation Centres and external partners.](#)
- [Using our PME services.](#)
- [Using our diagnostic services.](#)
- [Our surveillance expertise.](#)
- [Online scanning surveillance reports.](#)
- [The role of vets in practice.](#)

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