



APHA Briefing Note 7/17

Changes to instructions: Laboratory TB testing of companion animals in England

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) of changes to instructions relating to eligibility for free TB testing of companion animals (dogs and cats) in England.

Background

2. If it is agreed there is a reasonable suspicion of infection, TB culture (including post mortem examination and histopathology) of samples submitted to APHA are available free of charge where:
 - the pet cat or dog is kept on a farm **with TB-susceptible livestock in England**
 - the pet cat or dog is kept in Scotland or Wales
3. Veterinary surgeons (PVSs) can continue to submit samples privately for culture to APHA at full cost recovery or to another laboratory such as a public health laboratory.
4. Veterinary surgeons should discuss with the duty vet at the local APHA Field Services office prior to submitting samples to APHA. The duty vet will advise whether the case is eligible for free testing.
5. If eligible for free testing, the duty vet will give you a TB50 form to accompany the samples. Please use form BA.704 (obtainable from the Vet Gateway) for chargeable mycobacterial culture that you submit to APHA.

6. If any laboratory cultures *M. bovis* bacilli, this must be reported to the duty vet at APHA Field Services office from where the sample originated. The reporting laboratory is asked to submit a sub-culture to the TB Diagnosis Section at the APHA Weybridge reference laboratory for full identification of the mycobacterial isolates including genotyping at Defra's expense.
7. Current animal health legislation requires veterinarians who examine the **carcase** of a pet mammal suspected of being affected with tuberculosis to notify APHA without delay. The suspicion of TB in a **living pet** is not currently notifiable. Aspirates and tissue samples taken from suspect TB live animals should also be notified to APHA.

Further Information

- APHA field services offices:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening>
- GOV.UK guidance on Bovine tuberculosis (TB) in domestic pets:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tuberculosis-tb-in-domestic-pets>

Issued: 14 March 2017