



APHA Briefing Note 09/18

Delayed Removal of In Calf TB Reactors and Direct Contacts in England

Purpose

1. To inform veterinarians that delayed removal of TB reactors or Direct Contacts (DCs) that are due to calve within the 60 days following their identification will be considered subject to a satisfactory APHA Veterinary Risk Assessment and compliance with defined conditions. This policy will apply in England only and will be implemented from 1 May 2018.
2. Where a preliminary APHA VRA concludes that delayed removal may be possible, APHA will require:
 - A signed declaration from the keeper that they will comply with the conditions and
 - A signed declaration from a veterinary surgeon confirming that certain conditions for approval can be met. Completion of the veterinary declaration will be a private arrangement between the keeper and the keeper's chosen veterinarian and at the keeper's expense.

Background

3. In 2017 Defra carried out a public consultation on proposals to simplify surveillance testing in the High Risk Area of England and other disease control measures https://consult.defra.gov.uk/bovine-tb/simplifying-testing-and-other-control-measures/supporting_documents/Consultation%20document.pdf. This included a proposal to permit delayed removal of in calf TB reactor cattle for up to 60 days.

Most TB reactors/DCs are removed from farms within 10 working days following disclosure, though APHA have for some time considered a delay in

removal for cattle in the last 28 days of gestation. This approach reduces the need for on-farm slaughter of TB reactors in late gestation when they are unable to be transported to slaughter and also enables herd-owners to retain the calves.

The consultation proposed that there may be scope for allowing longer retention of in-calf reactors on farm, but whatever the length of retention it was recognised that effective controls were needed to manage the risk of spreading disease within the herd from the animal whilst it remains on farm.

Following consideration of the consultation responses, most of which supported the proposal to allow keepers to retain in-calf reactors for up to 60 days, it was announced on 21/12/2017 that this measure would be introduced. The summary of responses can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670205/bovine-tb-testing-hra-consult-sum-resp-final.pdf

A process has been developed that allows for consideration of delayed removal of in-calf cattle that are in the last 60 days of gestation whilst also providing mitigation against the risk to disease control of retaining such animals.

Detailed guidance on the conditions required for consideration of delayed removal have been developed for cattle keepers and to inform private veterinarians. This information will be available on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) from 1 May and from APHA. The conditions will also be detailed in the owner/keeper and veterinary declaration documents which will be made available on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

On request for delayed removal from a keeper, APHA will carry out a preliminary Veterinary Risk Assessment (VRA) to assess the situation on the holding. If following VRA it is concluded that delayed removal is a possible option, then the following will be required:

- A declaration completed by the owner/keeper (form TB212)
- A declaration completed by a veterinary surgeon of the keeper's choice and at the keeper's expense (form TB211)

The veterinarian completing the declaration is not expected to monitor compliance with the conditions of approval and will not be responsible for ensuring that the conditions are met throughout the period of retention.

However should any veterinary surgeon become aware that the conditions for approval are not being met at any time during the retention period they are expected to notify APHA without delay.

APHA may carry out ad hoc inspections at any time during the period of retention and such visits may be unannounced.

Subsequent TB skin testing of the herd will be instructed taking into consideration the risks of disease spreading during the period of retention of the TB reactors or DCs which are due to calve. No herd testing will be instructed whilst the reactor/DC remains on farm and any Short Interval Tests will be delayed until at least 60 days following the removal of the reactor/DC.

Where a high disease risk is identified at any time following approval to delay removal, an additional earlier test (a Check Test (CT)) will be instructed. If required, this CT will be carried out immediately after removal of the reactor/DC but not less than 60 days since the last herd test.

4. Communications with Keepers

APHA will inform all keepers by telephone of the potential option to delay removal when contacting them to arrange removal of TB reactors from the farm.

Veterinary Surgeons carrying out TB tests are also encouraged to discuss this option with keepers at the time of disclosure of any reactors.

5. Relevant Documents

TB211 - Veterinary Declaration

TB212 – Owner Declaration

6. Further Information

- Tel: 03000 200301
- Email - TB Advice TB.Advice@apha.gsi.gov.uk

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