



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 15/15

TB camelid blood testing kits - Options and instructions

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) that APHA is now offering an additional statutory option for parallel and serial camelid TB tests. This will help improve TB blood testing on farm and protect camelid herds from TB. The additional test is currently available for camelids resident in England and Scotland.
2. The situation in Wales remains as before with Starcross VI Centre continuing to offer the original two tests (DPPVetTB and IDEXX tests) in combination.
3. OVs in England, Scotland and Wales are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the latest OV instructions on investigating TB in Camelids:
http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/TB_Camelids_Instructions/Updates/index.htm.

Background

4. As of 23 November, APHA Starcross is offering the Enferplex test as an additional statutory test option along with the current two tests (DPPVetTB and IDEXX) option for parallel (high sensitivity) and serial (high specificity) camelid TB tests.
5. Based on the information from GB and other countries, camelids can be considered incidental, spillover hosts of *M bovis*. In most cases these animals become infected through contact with one of the maintenance hosts and vectors of infection in GB (i.e. badgers and cattle, or environment contaminated by their secretions and excreta). There have been instances of transmission between camelid herds. Therefore camelids can behave as amplifiers (vectors) of *M bovis* infection for other animals with which they come into contact. Natural transmission of the bacterium has been documented between tuberculous alpacas and close human in-contacts and possibly cattle.

6. TB is not a major health problem of South American camelids (llamas, alpacas, vicuña, guanacos) worldwide but camelids are susceptible to TB and infection of camelids in GB has been shown to be most prevalent in those areas endemic for TB in cattle, with the genotype of the infecting mycobacteria usually reflecting the local genotype in cattle and badgers.
7. (*This paragraph was updated on 03/12/2015 with further details of legislative requirements.*) As part of the drive to eradicate bovine TB in camelids, specific legislation was introduced in October 2014 (England only) and in Scotland in October 2015 after consultation with industry. The legislation throughout GB is similar in that there is an obligation to report suspect TB lesions in carcasses found at PME, that testing for TB must be notified in advance to APHA local offices and that treatment for TB is now prohibited. APHA now has legal powers to instruct the testing of camelids for TB without having to seek permission from the owner, who must present the animals for testing as required. OV's are reminded that they should seek approval to test by completing section 1 of the request to test letter (TN184). This applies to private and statutory testing and should assist OV's and APHA in sharing information about cases, thus aiding communication and liaison.
8. Further laboratory testing work has produced empirical evidence to recommend the following:
 - By combining two tests (IDEXX, DPPVetTB, Enferplex 2-spot) we can increase the sensitivity of detecting infected animals in TB breakdown herds using a Parallel Test interpretation - where a sample that is positive to either of two tests is considered a reactor.
 - By combining DPPVetTB and IDEXX tests in a Serial Test interpretation (both tests must be positive to consider the animal a reactor) or alternatively, using the 4-spot Enferplex test, we can offer a highly specific test in cases where disease is suspected but not yet confirmed (e.g. suspicious post mortem lesions, or herds adjacent to infected cattle herds).
9. These new test combinations and advice have been the culmination of cross-industry liaison bringing together Defra, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, APHA, Camelid Associations (BAS, BLS), and Sure Farm Ltd.

For further information

- OV instructions on investigating TB in camelids:
http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/TB_Camelids_Instructions/Updates/index.htm

- The Tuberculosis (Deer and Camelid) (England) Order 2014:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2337/contents/made>
- The Tuberculosis (Deer and Camelid) Slaughter and Compensation (England) Order 2014:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2338/contents/made?article-1-2>
- The Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2011:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/692/schedule/paragraph/2/made>
- The Tuberculosis in Specified Animals (Scotland) Order 2015:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2015/327/pdfs/ssi_20150327_en.pdf
- GOV.UK information for farmers on dealing with TB in non-bovine animals:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-deal-with-non-bovine-tb-in-your-animals>
- Previous OV briefing notes: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/briefing%20notes.htm>

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