



APHA Briefing Note 21/19

New type of APHA-approved TB unit in England – Approved Finishing Unit (Enhanced) with grazing

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians that from autumn 2019, a new type of APHA-approved TB unit with grazing is being introduced in England only.

Background

2. As part of Defra's bovine TB control strategy in the High Risk Area (HRA), approvals are being revoked for Approved Finishing Units (AFU) with grazing in badger control areas that have completed two seasons of culling.
3. Defra recognises the valuable service that AFUs with grazing provide to owners of TB-restricted herds, particularly for breeds of cattle which require a period of grazing for finishing, or to meet retailer specifications.
4. Defra has been working closely with the National Farmers Union (NFU) to develop an alternative approved TB unit to replace AFUs with grazing in badger control areas, preserving outlets for TB-restricted cattle.
5. A call for views exercise with relevant stakeholders was completed in spring 2019 with broad support for the proposal. The new type of TB unit will be implemented in England in autumn 2019.

Approved Finishing Units (Enhanced) with grazing

6. Approved Finishing Units (Enhanced) with grazing (AFUE), will only be approved in the HRA of England. Operators of these units will be able to source cattle from single or multiple TB-restricted and officially TB free (OTF) herds for rearing, fattening and finishing with grazing.

7. AFUEs will be permitted to source the following cattle under licence:

- cattle less than 60 days of age from TB-restricted holdings, TB-dedicated sales (orange markets) and on-farm herd dispersal sales
- cattle less than 12 months of age from **housed** AFUs provided the calves entered the AFU at less than 60 days old

8. AFUEs must source and rear/finish cattle in defined batches. The operator will be responsible for deciding what constitutes a batch and must keep appropriate records, ensuring that batches of animals undergo the required TB testing before being allowed out to graze on the unit.

9. Animals 42 days of age and older moving into the unit must have completed a TB skin test with a negative result.

10. Prior to being allowed out to grazing on the unit, animals will need to complete two consecutive TB skin tests with negative results. The pre-movement test used to move the animal onto the unit (if applicable) can count as one of the two clear tests prior to grazing.

11. It is important that OVs record the batch on the test chart so that TB testing requirements can be audited.

12. Routine TB testing of all cattle in the unit will be at 90 day intervals as for existing AFUs with grazing. No tracing tests will be undertaken in AFUEs.

13. Animals will only be permitted to move off AFUEs under licence to slaughter either directly, via a housed AFU, or via an approved collection centre or slaughter gathering for TB-restricted cattle.

14. The biosecurity requirements for AFUEs are much stricter than those for AFUs with grazing. Operators of AFUEs will need to work with their private vet (PVS) or OV at their own cost to develop a written contingency plan in the event of a TB breakdown in the unit, and a written biosecurity protocol. Template documents are available on GOV.UK and once completed will need to be approved by APHA as part of the application process and before approval for the unit can be issued.

15. Operators of AFUs with grazing in the HRA can potentially convert to AFUEs in consultation with APHA, and as long as all the conditions for approval and operation are met.

Action for OVs

16. PVS/OVs may be approached by clients making an application for an AFUE to assist with completion of the contingency plan and biosecurity protocol templates. PVS/OVs will need to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions for approval and operation of the unit (available on GOV.UK), and work with the operator to complete the contingency plan and biosecurity protocol templates, also available on GOV.UK.

Communications with Keepers

17. APHA has written to AFU operators in the HRA advising them of the option of this new type of approved TB unit.

18. Defra has communicated the change to a range of relevant stakeholders and information is available on the TB hub website and GOV.UK.

Relevant Documents

18. TR566 Terms and Conditions for Approval and Operation of an Approved Finishing Unit (Enhanced) with grazing in England

19. TR565 Application for an Approved Finishing Unit (Enhanced) with grazing in England

20. TR567 Biosecurity Protocol for Approval and Operation of an Approved Finishing Unit (Enhanced) with grazing in England

21. TR568 Contingency Plan for Approval and Operation of an Approved Finishing Unit (Enhanced) with Grazing in England

22. All of these documents can be downloaded from GOV.UK

Further Information

- A detailed Q&A on AFUEs is available on the TB hub <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/>
- GOV.UK
- APHA Tel - 03000 200301
- APHA Email TB Advice - TB.Advice@apha.gov.uk

Issued: 30 August 2019

