



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 22/21

Improvements to Reducing Bovine TB Reactor Removal Timings

Date issued: 03 June 2021

Purpose

To notify Official Veterinarians of reactor removal timings.

This briefing note has been updated to clarify the data provided regarding the removal of reactors within 10 working days

Background

The TB Customer Service Centre has had several challenges over the last 12 months that have impacted on Reactor Removal targets.

Staff have had to work from home, at times there has been reduced abattoir capacity due to both plant shutdowns and reduced availability of FSA staff. There has also been unprecedented spikes in demand for reactors needing to be removed during some months and this has resulted in delay in removing animals.

During the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 28,431 animals were removed in England with 71% being removed within 10 working days, with the average being 9.62 days. This included animals that were held on farm to calve or had issues with passports etc. During recent months the percentage removed within 10 days has been – England - March 51.8%, April 55.7% and May 59.0%. Wales – March 77.1%, April 86.8% and May 89.3%. In England when reactors that have been delayed due to reasons outside the control of APHA are removed from the data the percentage of animals removed within 10 working days has been March 63%, April 90.8% May 94.9%.

There has been a considerable amount of effort focussing on reducing the time to remove reactors although there are still some restrictions in abattoir capacity. In the last 2 months there has been a significant improvement in the time taken to contact farmers to arrange valuation and removal of reactors. The majority of farmers are now being contacted within 5 days of disclosure of reactors, which includes the time that OV's have to input test results (24 hours) and the subsequent actions required to confirm animals to be removed.

As Covid restrictions ease the TB Customer Service Centre will continue to work closely with Farmers, FSA and abattoir staff to return to a more rapid removal of reactors.

Further Information

APHA will continue to brief Veterinary Delivery Partner (VDP) companies regarding reactor removal times.