



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 51/21

### New TB Advisory Service in England

Date issued: 13 December 2021

#### Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OV) and Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATT) working in England that there is a new TB Advisory Service (TBAS) operating in England.

#### Background

2. The previous TBAS which ran from 2017 to 2021 was delivered by Origin Group (Westpoint) and provided biosecurity advice to cattle farmers in the High Risk and Edge Areas of England.
3. TBAS was part of the Countryside Productivity scheme funded by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The scheme was administered by the Rural Payments Agency using EU funding.
4. The contract for the previous TBAS came to an end in Summer 2021 and a tender exercise was completed by Defra to identify a new provider to deliver a three-year contract. Unlike the previous TBAS, the new service is funded by Defra.

#### New TBAS in England

5. The overall aim of TBAS is to work with farmers to reduce the incidence and severity of TB breakdowns in England, supporting delivery of the government's Strategy for achieving Officially TB Free status by 2038.
6. The new TBAS, delivered by Farmcare Solutions Ltd, covers the **whole of England** (not just the High Risk and Edge Areas as previously) and offers free advice to keepers of farmed non-bovine animals (camelids, captive deer, goats, pigs, and

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sheep) as well as cattle. Keepers that received advice from the previous TBAS are eligible to use the new service.

7. TBAS provides free, practical, bespoke one-to-one on-farm and telephone advice on biosecurity to improve resilience to TB in infected herds/flocks and to protect uninfected herds/flocks from infection. Advice also covers how to reduce TB risk from movements of animals, as well as specific advice on trading options for TB-restricted holdings.
8. Free on-farm advice visits are delivered by trained veterinary advisers who complete a farm walk with the keeper to assess biosecurity and make recommendations to improve the herd/flock's resilience to TB. Where appropriate, a badger survey of the farm is completed.
9. Following the initial visit, the keeper receives a TBAS report with practical and affordable recommendations to improve biosecurity. The keeper is encouraged to share the report with their private vet and implement the recommendations. A free follow up visit is completed 6-9 months after the initial visit to check progress with implementation of the recommendations and provide further advice. TBAS also provides free, bespoke telephone and email advice.

## Action

10. OVs and ATTs are encouraged to signpost farmers to the free advice provided by TBAS in England.
11. TBAS is taking on new veterinary advisers to deliver on-farm advice visits in England. New advisers will first need to complete the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) 4-hour online training course on bovine TB at their own cost and become a BCVA-Accredited TB Veterinary Adviser (BATVA). The online course costs £10 for BCVA members and £55 for non-members. All subsequent TBAS-specific training for advisers is provided by TBAS free of charge.
12. The BATVA online training course was developed by BCVA to support vets completing Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHECS) TB Accreditation and Entry Level membership with their clients. TBAS has adopted the BATVA online training course as a pre-requisite to its training package for new and existing advisers.
13. If you are an OV interested in becoming a TBAS adviser, please contact TBAS using the details below.

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## Further Information

14. TBAS contact details:

Website: <https://www.tbas.org.uk/>

Email: [info@tbas.org.uk](mailto:info@tbas.org.uk)

Phone: 01306 779410

15. Further information about BATVA training can be found on the BCVA website:

<https://www.bcva.org.uk/content/bcva-accredited-tb-adviser-training>

16. Further information about CHECS TB Entry Level membership and CHECS TB Accreditation can be found on the CHECS website:

<https://cheecs.co.uk/diseases/bovine-tb/>

17. Information about all aspects of bovine TB can be found on the TB hub website:

<https://www.tbhub.co.uk/>

18. Information about TB in non-bovine animals can be found on the TB hub website, including updated information about TB in camelids:

<https://www.tbhub.co.uk/tb-in-non-bovine-animals/camelids/>