



APHA Briefing Note 16/18

ALTERNATIVE MULTI-DOSE TB TESTING SYRINGE

Purpose

1. Clarification on the position of Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) regarding an alternative model of multi-dose TB testing syringe ('gun').

Background

2. It has been brought to the attention of APHA, by various sources, that articles have been published in the recent editions of Vet Times and Veterinary Record about new TB testing guns available in the UK market. This new model is known as 'V-grip' and is manufactured by NJ Phillips.
3. In these articles the author states that: *"UK vet practices carrying out Government bTB testing work have access to a new tuberculin gun."*
4. The author further states that: *"There is no official requirement to use a single make of gun for TB testing work, so with tightening margins for work in this arena it makes sense for practices to explore valid cost-saving options."*

Position of APHA as the Competent Authority

5. APHA has reviewed the information contained within the above articles and sought views from policy teams in all three administrations (England, Wales and Scotland).
6. In principle, APHA does not endorse any specific type, design or model of TB testing syringes as long as they can all consistently deliver 0.1 ml of tuberculin intradermally, leading to the formation of a skin nodule ('bleb') shortly after injection. However, before any novel TB testing equipment can be used in the field, APHA as the Competent Authority in GB needs to be satisfied that any alternative design is fit for purpose.
7. APHA has not been approached by the manufacturer of the V-grip multi-dose injecting syringes, neither has the veterinary practice who trialled this new

equipment consulted APHA to consider it for use during official tuberculosis skin testing.

8. APHA has not yet been provided with any data on the performance characteristics (e.g. accuracy, repeatability) of the V-grip multi-dose injecting syringes, especially in relation to the currently approved models.
9. APHA is concerned about alternative TB testing equipment being used without its prior knowledge or approval.
10. The current tuberculin skin testing instructions for Official Veterinarians and APHA TB testers state that one pair of **McLintock or dental type syringes** calibrated to administer 0.1ml must be used to inject tuberculin.
11. Consequently, for the time being, the use of V-grip syringes for tuberculin skin testing is in breach of the standing tuberculin skin testing protocol.
12. Official Veterinarians, who during audits are found using these V-grip multi-dose injecting syringes while carrying out official tuberculin skin testing will have their audit result recorded as non-compliant.
13. APHA is open to review its current position once it has had the opportunity to evaluate any robust evidence available that supports the suitability of the new multi-dose syringe for the purpose of carrying out tuberculin skin tests.

Further Information

- OV instructions on Skin Testing: Equipment:
http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/TB_Instructions/Skin_Test/Equipment.html
- Contact details for relevant APHA team: TBLTD@apha.gsi.gov.uk

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