

Factsheet – Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB)

This factsheet is a part of a series that examines factors influencing the sustainability of the dairy industry. We examine how managing bTB not only impacts animal health and welfare, but also your environmental footprint and business sustainability.

Overview

As well as significantly impacting animal health and welfare, lost productivity and livelihoods, bTB affects your environmental impact and overall business sustainability.

Identifying and taking steps to reduce the greatest risks to your business gives you peace of mind that you are doing all you can to protect your own herd, livelihood and the environment.

Management Plan

Having a plan in place will ensure you manage statutory testing requirements efficiently, minimise the impact on milk yield during a bTB incident and have a viable option for surplus calves.

Actively engaging with your private vet is key to minimising the impact of bTB, however, there are many steps that you can take to:

Reduce the likelihood of a bTB incident

Biosecurity 5-point plan:

✓	Stop potentially infected cattle from entering your herd. e.g. by researching the bTB status of any farms you are thinking of purchasing from. Isolation and post-movement testing of incoming cattle can provide additional reassurance
✓	Reduce the risk from neighbouring herds. e.g. by putting in place effective barriers to prevent your cattle having nose-to-nose contact with neighbouring cattle. Avoid co-grazing or sharing machinery/vehicles
✓	Restrict contact between badgers and cattle. e.g. by ensuring that badgers cannot access cattle housing or feed/bedding stores, limit cattle access to active setts or latrines, using electric fencing if necessary
✓	Manage cattle feed and water. e.g. by restricting badger access to feed and water troughs. Clean troughs out frequently and empty or cover troughs when not in use. Don't feed on the ground at pasture and clean up spillages at feed hoppers. Prevent badgers accessing silage clamps
✓	Minimise infection from cattle manure. e.g. by storing manure/slurry for as long as possible (ideally 6 months) before spreading on farm. Only spread manure on arable land or pasture that is not going to be grazed by cattle for at least 2 months. Don't spread manure from other farms unless you are assured of their bTB risk status

Minimise the impact of a future bTB incident:

If your herd is currently TB free, consider the impacts that a bTB breakdown would have on your business.

?	How would I manage surplus calves? Could I set up a TB isolation unit? Alternatively, is there an approved finishing unit (AFU) that would take my calves?
?	Could I alter my management practices to minimise the impact of dealing with surplus calves?
?	Would my milk sales be impacted by a TB breakdown?
?	Do I have a financial plan in place?

Manage an ongoing outbreak to return to OTF status as soon as possible

If your herd is currently under TB restriction, the following will minimise the time until OTF status is restored.

- ✓ Work with your case vet and private vet to identify higher-risk animals within your herd and find a way to manage them.
- ✓ Ensure your holding register is up-to-date and accurate and matches the official register.
- ✓ Once your herd has had its clearing test, restrictions cannot be lifted until you have confirmed cleansing and disinfection has taken place. In GB this is done by completing a Cleansing and Disinfection form (BT05) included in the Reactor Pack or available online. In Northern Ireland an inspection by a DAERA Veterinary Officer is required.

Where to go for more information

England & Wales:

- The <https://www.ibtb.co.uk/> website allows you to check the bTB status of any farms you are thinking of purchasing from. You can use the 'AFU Finder' option to locate your nearest AFU.
- More advice can be found on the TBhub - <https://tbhub.co.uk/>.

Northern Ireland:

- DAERA's Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Control Programme can be found here - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/bovine-tuberculosis-tb-control-programme>

Scotland:

- Scotland has been Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) since 2009. More information for Scottish farmers can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/testing-for-tb-in-your-herd/testing-for-tb-in-your-herd-what-this-means-to-you-scotland>.
- More advice can be found on the TBhub - <https://tbhub.co.uk/>.

The Dairy Roadmap

The Dairy Roadmap is brought to you by:



The Dairy Roadmap aims to improve the environmental sustainability of the UK dairy sector whilst ensuring the continued prosperity of the industry, and the provision of safe, affordable, nutritious and sustainable produce for years to come.

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