



THE  
WOOD  
VETERINARY  
GROUP

# FARM NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

## TB Testing – 6 Month Test Intervals

Unfortunately, this is not an exciting piece to sit and write and I hope most of you are currently mowing, rowing up and clamping the rewards of a fabulous burst of grass growth from last week's crazy rain and the lovely warm end to May. However, as with all things bovine TB the battle to control the situation in our county must continue and this is the latest update in the testing plan for our area.

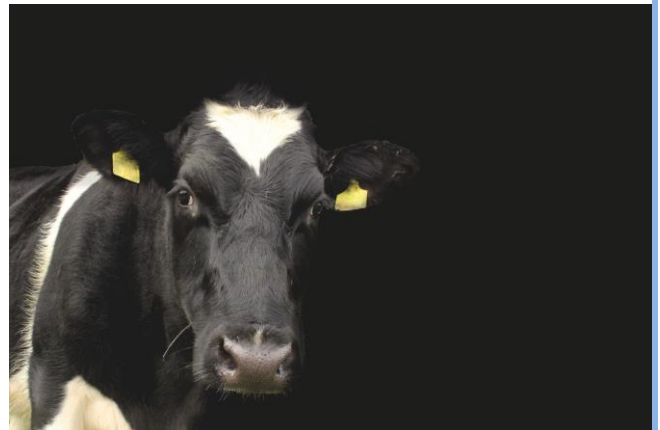
### **\*\* Essential update for ALL cattle units \*\***

Due to Gloucestershire remaining a high risk area (HRA) for bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) breakdowns, APHA have made the decision to amend the testing interval for bTB free farms (i.e. those not already on short interval testing during a bTB breakdown already) from annual to six month intervals. This has previously been actioned in the Edge areas and more recently in northern parts of the HRA and is now being rolled out to the entire HRA zone. The aim of reducing the testing interval is to identify bTB-infected herds much earlier on to minimise the spread of *Mycobacterium bovis* (bTB) around the herd and source farm environment and to other herds from the movement of infected animals between tests. It will also reduce the amount of contiguous and trace testing that is required which can be very disruptive and costly to farms due to their unexpected nature.

Whilst all farms will be notified of the changes by DEFRA we have laid out the key points you need to know to clarify some of the changes with almost immediate effect.

### **From July 2021 all farms will start 6 monthly whole herd tests BUT:**

- Farms that have their annual test scheduled between July 2021 and June 2022 will keep their current annual test window as planned
- Once this test is completed with a clear test result, the herds next test will be in 6 months' time and scheduled by APHA in the normal way in writing
- Any new breakdowns will be automatically under TB movement restriction and move to short interval 60 day tests as is already the case
- Farms that are released from bTB restrictions during this time will then also transition to 6 month interval tests as their longest possible test window rather than progressing back to annual test



Some herds in the HRA will be able to remain on annual testing with "earned recognition". If a herd meets either of the following criteria, they can keep testing every 12 months:

- The herd has existed for at least 6 years and has not had any bTB breakdowns in that time (farm cannot have had any reactors in the 6 years including those with no lesions or negative culture). Only one gap with no cattle on the holding for less than 4 months in the 6 years is permitted
- The herd is registered with private Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS) TB Health Scheme and is already accredited at Level 1 or above (Entry level will not be sufficient)

APHA will notify farms that are eligible for “earned status” and this will be reviewed every 6 months as herds become eligible from continued bTB free status or a new breakdown removes eligibility

### Contiguous and Trace Testing

- Contiguous tests are triggered by a neighbouring farm having a new bTB breakdown, bringing local farms tests forward if their planned test is too far away to catch local spread
- Farms on 6 month interval tests will no longer have to complete contiguous tests unless exceptional circumstances arise
- Lower bTB risk herds eligible for annual testing will still undergo contiguous testing but a negative result would not affect their “earned recognition” to remain on annual testing
- APHA will still trace animals from a new bTB breakdown with lesions or culture positive reactors now residing on 6 month testing farms BUT where possible trace tests will be done at the next 6 month herd test if it is not too far from the scheduled test

### Administration

- Farms can apply ONCE to move their first 6 month test forwards (not back) via APHA but must speak to the practice responsible for their testing first to establish capacity for their chosen window
- Automatic movement restrictions for overdue tests remain the same for annual as for new 6 month tests with associated penalties for basic farm payments
- A farm eligible for “earned recognition” that wish to test every 6 months regardless can notify APHA of this to be tested more frequently

Whilst we understand that this will be very disappointing news for most farms as one test is likely to fall at a more inconvenient time of year than normal, especially for those with high numbers of animals and those grazing cattle during the summer months, it must be seen as a positive step towards meeting the criteria set out in studies looking into gaps in the fight against bTB in our part of the world. If you have queries about these changes, please speak to us when we are on farm or use the really useful online TB Hub website under the Q&A Section.



### Vaccination Reminder – **Leptospirosis**

A significant cause of abortion, milk drop and poor conception rate, it is key to remember to booster herd Lepto vaccination.

Ensure heifers receive a full starter course of:

- 2 doses 4-6 weeks apart prior to turnout

Order your vaccine today – ask about our vet tech vaccination service if you need help getting vaccinations done on time.

### Training Courses

**Want to start DIY AI or expand your existing AI team?**

**DEFRA approved AI Course**

Please speak to the office to register for a place on the course today

[largeanimal@woodvet.co.uk](mailto:largeanimal@woodvet.co.uk) / 01452 543 999

### Reminder of New Bank Details

For those of you who kindly send your payments to us by BACS, please be advised that our bank details have now changed. Please kindly pass on these new details to the person in charge of sending payments. Please see below the new details with immediate effect:

**Bank:** Natwest    **Account Name:** Wood Vet Group    **Account Number:** 55248454    **Sort Code:** 60-60-05