

## Bovine tuberculosis

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### This guidance is for England

England is currently divided into three risk areas: the 'high risk area' (HRA), the 'edge area' and the 'low risk area' (LRA). The surveillance, breakdown management and disease-prevention policies differ in each area. A map of the different bovine TB risk areas in Great Britain can be found on the TB Hub website.

All cattle on unrestricted farms that are within the HRA and edge areas are subject to pre-movement testing. This also includes higher-risk herds in the LRA. All cattle moved on to unrestricted farms in the LRA are subject to post-movement testing. Subject to meeting certain criteria, free pre-movement testing may be available for sales of at least 20 cattle from unrestricted cattle in the LRA. Further details are available in the Government TB Information Note 03/16.

Farmers in England may submit blood samples for bTB testing to an APHA laboratory. This is at their own expense and subject to prior APHA approval. There are a limited number of scenarios in which the private blood test is available outside of the Government-funded testing programme; see TB Information Note 04/16.

### General rules

Cattle in the HRA and edge areas are subject to annual or six-monthly herd surveillance (skin) testing. Cattle in the LRA are subject to four-yearly herd surveillance (skin) testing, with the exception of higher-risk herds on annual testing.

Movements of cattle from the premises they are on (if not a bTB restricted herd) are required to have been tested negative for bTB in the 60 days prior to the movement.

Moving to grass keep will involve a movement to other premises and testing will be required before the movement, and on return, if the cattle have stayed on the keep for more than 60 days.

Your routine bTB test also counts as a pre-movement test and you can, with the consent of a veterinary inspector, adjust the time of year that this is carried out to fit in with the farming practice and the disposal of stock.

## Exemptions to the rules

- calves less than 42 days old at the date of the movement
- cattle that are subject to annual bTB testing for public health reasons only - for example, open farms or those required to test for dairy hygiene
- cattle at an approved semen collection centre
- cattle moved direct to a slaughterhouse or slaughter market
- cattle moved to an exempt or approved finishing unit
- cattle moved to an exempt market (an exempt market is one where cattle can be moved only to an exempt finishing unit, a slaughterhouse or returned home (unless in the LRA)
- cattle moved to an approved 'collecting centre' for bTB restricted cattle
- movement of cattle for veterinary treatment and return to their premises of origin, or that are killed or go direct to slaughter
- movement of cattle from herds that are in a four-yearly testing area (provided they are not classed as a higher-risk herd)
- any movement under the authority of a licence
- cattle moved to an agricultural show that does not involve a stay of more than 24 hours or housing of the animals at the showground and returned to their premises of origin, or that move directly to slaughter from the show

## Test records

As soon as practicable after the results of the test have been read by an inspector or approved veterinary surgeon, the keeper of the animals must be given a written record of the results.

The keeper of any animal that has been tested shall:

- retain the records of the results of the test for three years and 60 days from the date of the injection of tuberculin
- produce such records when requested by an inspector
- enter the test details into their own farm veterinary medicine record

Farmers are advised to take a copy of the clear results of the test (undertaken during the previous 60 days) with them when presenting cattle moved off a farm for sale at market.

## Testing intervals

Details of bTB testing intervals are available on the GOV.UK website.

## Cost of testing

Herd owners are expected to cover the costs of the licensed veterinary inspector's time to carry out pre- and post-movement tests. The Government will continue to fund the provision of all routine bTB surveillance testing. In qualifying circumstances the Government will pay for pre-movement testing of cattle moving from farms in the LRA.

## Further information

Further information on bTB can be found on the GOV.UK website. GOV.UK also has specific information on pre- and post-movement testing, including requirements for cross-border movements within Great Britain.

Also of interest is the the TB Hub website, which contains many practical guides.

## Penalties

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

## Key legislation

Animal Health Act 1981

Tuberculosis (England) Order 2014

Last reviewed / updated: August 2020

## In this update

Map of bovine TB risk areas added

## Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to legislation can be found on each link's 'More Resources' tab.

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