

Covid-19 Update - TB Advice & Vet Student Placements

Information correct as at 12:00pm on 27.03.2020

- TB Testing will continue as planned for the time being
- Slaughterhouse checks and follow up tests to continue
- Farm vets and OVS are key workers
- Inform APHA if self-isolation means you cannot do your test
- Normal movement restrictions will apply
- Where applicable, pre and post movement testing will continue
- Farms to go under restriction if tests not done on time
- Farms should contact local OV/VPD or APHA with queries
- No reduction in compensation for late test reactors if APHA informed
- Plans to be updated on a regular basis
- Vet students will not be required to do work experience for next 8-12 weeks

There are no current plans to cancel any statutory requirements for TB testing

APHA has produced a series of briefing notes in the last week. More information can be found at: <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/briefing%20notes.htm>.

In summary:

- It is possible that there may be some disruption to TB testing over the coming weeks.
- In the event of a reduced OV/VDP (official veterinarian/veterinary delivery partner) workforce then APHA will take a reactive approach to prioritisation of TB testing.
- There are no plans for APHA field staff to take on additional TB testing as a result of reduced VDP/OV capacity.
- Where possible and if all involved can maintain appropriate social distancing, TB tests should still be carried out, but this is under constant review.
- If there is an issue completing a test, the OV can request the test window is delayed in closing, but this can only happen **once**, and must be approved by APHA.
- This situation should be discussed directly with your own vet/OV and APHA.
- APHA have detailed a list of priority work that will be maintained during this time.
 - England and Wales
 - All routine surveillance TB testing and check testing in response to slaughterhouse cases.
 - Short interval testing (SIT) to manage TB breakdowns, although SIT intervals could be extended to 90-120 days to ease pressure on manpower.
 - ENGLAND - Targeted tests, source and spread tracings, 3km radial testing in the Low Risk Area (LRA) and in the annual testing parts of the Edge Area.
 - WALES - Contiguous testing in the Low and Intermediate North TB Areas and source and spread tracings.
 - Scotland
 - Aim is to maintain TB free status in Scotland.
 - Currently 56% of Scottish cattle herds are exempt from routine surveillance testing.
 - The TB testing priorities are:
 - Completion of forward tracings from TB breakdown farms to farms in Scotland
 - Outstanding post-movement TB tests

- The continuation of all APHA/OV disease TB control activity on Officially TB Free Status Suspended (OTFS) and Officially TB Free Status Withdrawn (OTFW) farms in Scotland.
- If a TB test cannot be completed during the allocated time window the farm will be placed under restriction (and the OTF status of the herd suspended). If APHA agree that all attempts to complete the test were carried out and there was genuine mitigating circumstances due to COVID-19 then APHA may use its discretion to not impact on the finances of an overdue test (see full briefing details for more detailed information).
- Tests that could be put on hold for 3 months if the situation worsens:
 - Contiguous and trace testing
 - Contiguous testing in the HRA of ENGLAND and outside the Low and Intermediate (North) TB Areas in WALES
 - Roll out of new bTB control policies impacting veterinary resource such as implementation of default six-monthly surveillance testing in the HRA counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire from April 2020.

Vet Students:

Vet students do not have to undertake their work experience (EMS) over the next 8-12 weeks

This will have potential impacts on lambing staff.

For further discussion or to help with any questions that you may have, please contact Consultant Support on consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com or 01902 851007 / 07542 403225