



APHA Briefing Note 18/17

DNA tagging of inconclusive reactors in persistently infected herds in Wales

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) in Wales that APHA will request the application of DNA tags to inconclusive TB reactors (IRs) in some herds where the TB breakdown is classified as persistent.

Background

1. If a herd remains under TB restrictions beyond 18 months the TB breakdown will become classed as “persistent”. At this point additional TB control measures are implemented to help eliminate infection and reduce the risk of wider disease spread. An Individual Herd Action plan is developed in consultation with the farmer, their own vet (at the farmer’s expense), the APHA case vet and Welsh Government.
2. One of the additional measures that will be considered is to increase the sensitivity of the TB skin test through the removal of any animal that becomes an inconclusive TB reactor (IR). This is supported by epidemiological evidence confirming a high likelihood of these animals becoming reactors later in the course of a persistent herd breakdown. Where this measure is to be applied to a persistent breakdown herd, all IRs disclosed during the course of the breakdown will automatically be removed, slaughtered and not re-tested. DNA tags are to be applied to these animals, in order to reduce the likelihood of fraudulent activity occurring between the time of disclosure and removal of the animal from the holding.

3. Where this is applicable APHA will annotate the testing instructions to indicate that any animals disclosed as IRs must have DNA tags applied at the point of disclosure in the same way that they are applied to TB reactors.

Action for OVs

4. OV_s are asked to ensure that DNA tags are applied to IRs when instructed to do so on the test instructions sent by APHA.

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