



## APHA Briefing Note 22/17

### **Bovine TB update – Reducing the risk of resolved inconclusive reactors in England**

#### **Purpose**

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) in England of the new resolved inconclusive reactor (IR) policy being introduced in England from 1 November 2017.

#### **Background**

2. Following a public consultation, Defra announced in December 2016 that enhanced cattle controls for bovine TB (bTB) will be introduced in England as part of the Government's comprehensive eradication strategy.
3. Most of the measures were introduced on 1 April 2017; however some are being phased in over the course of 2017/18.

#### **Resolved IR policy from 1 November 2017**

4. All IRs in the High Risk Area (HRA) and Edge Area (and in TB breakdown herds in the Low Risk Area) that have a negative result on re-testing will be restricted for the rest of their life to the holding in which they were found.
5. The only permitted off movements for such animals will be to slaughter either directly or via an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU) under a licence issued by APHA.

6. Movements of resolved IRs to AFUs can occur directly or via a TB Dedicated Sale (Orange Market). Movement to slaughter can occur directly or via an Approved Slaughter Gathering.
7. Resolved IRs can move off the holding for veterinary treatment under a licence issued by APHA. After treatment the animal must return directly to the home holding or directly to slaughter.
8. Resolved IRs will be restricted following their clear re-test and keepers will receive a restriction notice in the post.
9. Resolved IRs will be restricted for life to the holding in which they were found, and this holding must have a permanent County Parish Holding (CPH) number. If a resolved IR is residing at temporary grazing when it re-tests clear, it will be restricted to the permanent CPH associated with the temporary grazing. Once the resolved IR moves back to the permanent CPH, it must be restricted to that CPH and cannot move back to a temporary CPH.
10. It is the keeper's responsibility to ensure that a resolved IR is restricted for life to the holding in which it was found. Whilst not mandatory, it is recommended that the animal is physically identified to prevent accidental movement off the holding.
11. APHA will carry out percentage checks of resolved IRs to ensure that they remain restricted for life. Non compliances will be referred to the Local Authority for investigation and any enforcement action that they deem necessary.
12. To release resolved IRs from life-long restrictions, the option of private interferon gamma blood testing will be available to cattle keepers at their own cost, through their private vet.
13. To apply for approval for private gamma testing, OVs must complete the PRIV01 form available on the APHA Vet Gateway and submit to APHA.
14. Once approval is given by APHA, the blood sample must be collected within 40 calendar days of the injection date (TT1) of the clear IR re-test and submitted to APHA for testing.
15. Animals less than six months of age not eligible for gamma testing as their immune systems are still developing and this can interfere with the test leading to false positive results. If a resolved IR is too young to gamma test, the keeper may apply to APHA to defer the test until the animal becomes old enough. The keeper or their OV must contact APHA to discuss the situation and all cases will be assessed on an individual basis. If approval to test is given by APHA then the OV will have 40 calendar days from when the animal

reaches six months of age to collect the blood sample and submit to APHA for testing.

16. If a resolved IR tests negative to the gamma test then movement restrictions on the animal will be lifted and it can move freely unless whole herd movement restrictions apply.
17. If the resolved IR tests positive to the gamma test, the animal will be compulsorily slaughtered (with compensation paid), movement restrictions placed on the whole herd (if not already in place) and standard TB breakdown procedures followed.
18. A resolved IR in a TB-restricted herd that is undergoing government funded mandatory gamma testing will automatically be included in any whole herd testing as long as it is over six months of age. If the resolved IR tests negative to the gamma test then the restriction on the animal will be lifted, however it will still be subject to whole herd movement restrictions. If the resolved IR tests positive to the gamma test then it will be compulsorily slaughtered with compensation paid, just like any other reactor.

### Further Information

- Detailed guidance for the new resolved IRs policy, including Q&A, is available on the TB Hub website: <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/reducing-the-risk-posed-by-inconclusive-skin-test-reactors/>
- The outcome of Defra's 2016 consultation on enhanced bovine TB surveillance and controls in the High Risk and Edge Areas of England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bovine-tb-controls-in-the-high-risk-and-edge-areas-of-england>
- The strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-officially-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england>
- Further guidance for OV's on private IFN gamma testing is published on the APHA Vet Gateway: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/ifng-testing/index.htm>

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