



Future of OV Newsletters/Briefing Notes



We are reviewing how APHA provides important information and updates to OVs, with the aim of providing better targeted, more timely information. We welcome any insight or suggestions that you may have, which should be sent to: apha.corporatecommunications@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Veterinary delivery partners now live



On 1 April delivery partner managed OV services (including TB testing) started in Wales, with England following on 1 May.

If any of your clients are unsure who their regional delivery partner is they should visit the APHA online CPH finder at: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/vdp/index.asp> to find their local partner.

Contact details for all delivery partners can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening#veterinary-delivery-partners>

Financial penalties for overdue TB tests in England



OVs will be aware there is a zero tolerance approach in place with regard to the completion of TB tests within notified testing windows. Changes to penalties for overdue TB testing in England from January 2015 were explained in APHA Briefing Note 10/14: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/documents/ov/Briefing-Note-1014.pdf>

On 16 February 2015 Defra issued further advice for cattle keepers on financial penalties for overdue TB tests: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-information-note-advice-for-cattle-keepers-on-cross-compliance-financial-penalties-for-overdue-tb-tests>

In particular, OVs will wish to be aware of a clarification with regard to the policy in England. Previously, the intention was that cattle keepers would be penalised if the reading of the TB test on their cattle was outside the test window. It has now been clarified that only the date of injection of all eligible cattle must take place within the testing window, although the reading of the test must still take place 72 hours after the injection date, as required by EU legislation. The change will be retrospective, so some cattle keepers will have their cross compliance penalties reimbursed.

There is more information for OVs at: <http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/official-vets/changes-to-procurements/index.htm>

A further update on the recent change to RHT eligibility



Following the letter sent to all OV practices last November outlining which animals are now eligible for Routine Herd Tests, we have had some further queries from OVs about whether or not to test all heifers when it is not known whether or not they will be used for breeding in future. It is for the testing vet and the farmer to agree which young heifers (and bulls) are intended for breeding (eligible for test) and which are to be killed (exempt from testing). APHA would expect the farmer to agree to test at least those that are of an age where he has decided to keep them. We would not advocate testing all beef suckler heifers.

With a dairy herd or pedigree beef herd we would expect almost all young females to be kept for breeding, and therefore be eligible for testing, unless the farmer could justify otherwise.

Cymorth TB extended



Following the successful pilot and subsequent review of the Cymorth TB veterinary programme, the initiative will be rolled out across Wales from September 2015.

The scheme offers support to farmers and herd keepers affected by bovine TB, via Government subsidised visits by specialist private vets.

It will be managed by the APHA) and delivered by private vets working through APHA's Veterinary Delivery Partners.

Badger vaccination underway in west Wales



The fourth year of the Welsh Government's five year badger vaccination project has begun in the Intensive Action Area (IAA) in west Wales.

The vaccination project is part of the Welsh Government's wider programme of work to eradicate TB from cattle in Wales. During the first three years of the badger vaccination project over 4000 doses of the vaccination were successfully delivered.

The vaccination work is undertaken in cycles and is expected to continue until the end of October. Most of the vaccination cycles last four weeks - the first three weeks involve liaising with the landowner and preparatory work, with vaccination taking place in the final week.

The work is expected to be completed over seven cycles this year. Vaccination is carried out under licence by Welsh Government employees who have successfully completed Animal and Plant Health Agency course relating to the cage trapping and vaccination of badgers by injection. The reports covering the first three years of the badger vaccination project are available here: <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/disease/bovinetuberculosis/intensive-action-area/badger-vaccination-iaa/>

TB in Camelids Instructions



Instructions for Official Veterinarians to investigate TB in Camelids will be published shortly. These will include details of the new blood testing requirements for TB in Camelids in England and Wales.

Post Mortem examinations coverage



During 2014 a new model for veterinary scanning surveillance was introduced to improve the geographical and species coverage of disease surveillance across England and Wales.

Geographical coverage has been increased by improving access to Post-mortem examination (PME) facilities through carcass transport services which will operate in many regions whilst local diagnostic capability and capacity is built up.

The scanning surveillance network continues to be underpinned by a quality assured diagnostic capability, undertaken by APHA and other expert providers. This remains fundamental to identifying new threats within an environment of varied endemic diseases.

PME coverage has changed in recent months, as additional external providers enter the system, so you may wish to visit the APHA Vet Gateway to identify your local PME provider as there may have been changes in your area (<http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/postcode/pme.asp>)

Surveillance of endemic and imported tick species



The tick recording scheme (TRS), set up by Public Health England (PHE) in 2005 is the only scheme that records tick distributions on a national scale. Tick samples sent to them are identified and provide us with valuable information on the distribution and abundance of the various species present across the UK, their seasonal activity and their host associations.

Ticks and their animal host play important roles in disease transmission cycles so it is important for us to understand these relationships.

The scheme helps PHE to monitor how these may be changing and if they are, to investigate the reasons why this may be occurring. The TRS also allows us to detect the presence of species that are not normally resident in the UK. Data from the TRS informs the agency's assessments of the public health impact of ticks.

All records are available via the [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\)](#) gateway for research and public use.

The main aims of the recording scheme are to:

- promote the surveillance of ticks in Great Britain
- monitor tick distribution and seasonality on a nationwide scale
- determine the diversity of ticks infesting humans and animals
- detect exotic or unusual tick species

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/tick-recording-scheme>

Cattle keepers' guide to safeguarding health launched



The Welsh Government has launched a cattle keepers' Guide to Safeguarding Health handbook.

The handbook provides information on the symptoms of six of the most significant cattle diseases (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis, Johne's Disease, Leptospirosis, Neosporosis and Tuberculosis).

It outlines simple steps how farmers can take to minimise the likelihood of their livestock catching or spreading disease by maintaining good biosecurity and adopting sensible disease prevention measures. This begins with asking for the disease and testing history of an animal and the herd it comes from at the point of sale and includes good health planning with vets.

The guide is available at www.gov.wales/ahwframework or for a hard copy either email WAHFG@wales.gsi.gov.uk or call 0800 5283300.

Export certificates - be careful what you sign!



Several OV's have been caught out by invalid "Application" versions of export certificates presented to them by exporters.

APHA's Centre for International Trade in Carlisle recently introduced an electronic application process for Third Country export certificates which has allowed quicker and more efficient issue of certificates. The exporter fills in an application form and enters details into an electronic version of the export certificate online; these are then emailed to Carlisle. APHA Carlisle converts the application version of the certificate into the official export certificate which is then posted direct to the nominated OV for signature. Unfortunately, despite clear instructions to the contrary, some exporters have mistakenly printed out the application version of the certificate and presented this to an OV for signature.

Application versions must not be signed by OV's and must not accompany exports; they are easily distinguishable from the official version because:

- They are marked "Application only – not to be certified". Earlier versions had a watermark including "Application"
- They are not on official pale yellow paper with Crown watermark
- They do not have a unique serial number entered at top right of the first pages

OV's should check all certificates presented to them for official signature to ensure that they are genuine official documents issued through official channels. Genuine official export certificates for Third Countries will be on official Crown watermarked paper, will have a unique serial number and will always be sent direct to the OV practice address or, by arrangement with the OV, to another address in a sealed envelope. An unsigned official certificate should never be in the hands of the exporter.

If you are unsure about the status of any export document presented to you for official signature, please contact APHA's Centre for International Trade, Carlisle on 01228 403600 for advice.

Horse passports reminder



The Horse Passports Regulations require that all equine animals have a horse passport identifying the animal. Owners of foals need to obtain a passport for the foal by either:

- 31 December of the year in which it was born
- six months after its birth
- whichever is the later of the two

All horse passports issued since 1 July 2009 must contain a microchip number. A passport is needed for each animal and lasts the animal's lifetime. The passport must be with the animal at all times and must be produced every time OV's perform any certification related actions in connection with international movement of a horses (e.g. general health and clinical examination, tests, treatments or vaccinations).

OV's should not certify any horse for export or trade unless they have seen a valid horse passport which matches the horse presented. Furthermore, OV's should ensure that they check the identity of any horse being prepared for international trade every time they perform any veterinary acts associated with such certification to ensure they carry out such acts on the correct animal. OV's should therefore check the identification of the animal presented against the passport each time they examine, test or treat the animal, as well as when they sign the final certificate for the international movement.

OV's should note that having a passport does not necessarily qualify a horse or pony as 'registered equidae'. Registered horses or ponies have passports issued by an approved breed society which maintains a studbook or by an international organisation which manages competitions, such as the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) (as defined in Directives 90/426/EEC and 90/427/EEC).

The following web-link provides details of Passport Issuing Organisations (PIO's) in the UK which manage studbooks. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/horse-passport-issuing-organisations>

If you are presented with passports issued outside of the UK, you may need to do a manual check to ascertain whether they are registered. An easy way of doing this is checking to see if a pedigree or parentage is listed in the passport; this is usually a sign that they are listed in an international stud book. If the breeds or parentage are recorded as unknown, this usually indicates that they are not registered, unless the passport has been issued by a competition body, or the owner can produce a copy of the studbook.