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Different approaches in the fight against TB

Combating TB in cattle remains perhaps the greatest single delivery challenge facing the field of animal health and welfare in Great Britain today. Yet while those working within the sector are committed to eradicating the disease, the devolution of policy making responsibilities has, perhaps inevitably, seen some divergence of approach in tackling the issue.

In recent weeks there has been a spate of policy announcements by all three administrations, and this edition of the OV Newsletter is focused on bringing you news of these significant changes.

In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government’s Health Check Wales target of testing every herd by the end of 2009 is nearing completion, and has provided a comprehensive picture of the disease. This has supported the decision to keep the whole Principality on an annual testing regime in 2010. The Intensive Action Pilot Area in Pembrokeshire has been supplemented by the establishment of an Intensive Treatment Area in North Wales, in response to the discovery of a pocket of infection. Perhaps most importantly, a big step forward has recently been taken towards implementing wildlife control as part of a holistic disease management strategy.

By contrast, the very different disease situation in Scotland has allowed Scottish herds to remain on four-yearly testing intervals, and has seen the EU unanimously backing the granting of official TB-free status.

During October, the TB Eradication Group for England released its inaugural progress report, which has resulted in Defra announcing significant changes to the way TB will be managed in England. Perhaps most significantly, a new approach to determining testing intervals has been announced that will see testing frequencies increase as the current regime of parish-based testing reverts to a risk-based approach. Inconclusive reactor policy has also been altered to allow only one retest. What’s more, there have been changes to movement restrictions, which seek to ease pressure on farm businesses struggling with the impact of TB. All of these key changes take place against the background of the Badger Vaccine Deployment Project - the Defra project initiated to implement a long-term strategy of disease control through wildlife vaccination.
Wales TB Eradication Programme Update

The Welsh Assembly Government is a step closer to implementing a wildlife strategy as part of its comprehensive bovine TB eradication programme.

Following consideration of the responses to a 14-week public consultation, the Minister has laid the TB Eradication (Wales) Order 2009, which will give the Assembly Government the powers to use culling and vaccination of badgers as a part of the eradication programme.

Of the 741 responses to the consultation, the issue of culling as a part of a badger control strategy attracted the most feedback. Culling was opposed by 50% of the total respondents, while 49% agreed that it could have an impact on TB eradication if carried out alongside cattle measures. 408 responses were identifiably from Wales, while 155 were from countries outside the UK. Of the Welsh responses, 88% agreed that culling needed to be considered as part of a badger control strategy.

The new legislation does not, in itself, mean the start of a badger cull, but it completes an important part of the preparatory work. Environmental considerations are currently being taken into account, and work is underway to define the exact boundaries of the Intensive Action Pilot Area.

Alongside a possible badger cull, the Assembly Government is working in north Pembrokeshire with Animal Health, local private veterinary practices, and a group of local farmers, to look at additional cattle measures to implement in the Intensive Action Pilot Area. A paper outlining proposed measures can be read on the Welsh Assembly Government website: http://Wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/research/090501annex3en.pdf

In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government has announced an annual test of all cattle next year and an end to using parishes to determine testing intervals in Wales (see ‘Routine TB Testing intervals for 2009/10’ below).

Also, Animal Health DVMs are chairing TB Regional Eradication Delivery Boards to develop local policies and initiatives to combat the disease. Initiatives being considered by the North Wales Board include a biosecurity Intensive Treatment Area in the Wrexham and Overton area (see page 20 – ‘Developing a regional solution for Bovine TB in North Wales’). A training date has been arranged for the private vets within the ITA, and a meeting will then be held to discuss the biosecurity assessments with the farmers involved.

In the Carmarthen division, Animal Health removes approximately 1,000 cattle per month as a result of TB. Local veterinary practices have been asked to complete a pro-forma when reactors are disclosed, and to provide herd owners and keepers with a checklist to minimise delay in the valuation and slaughter of reactor animals.

The Cardiff Board has developed a ‘Target TB Test Timeline’ document which has been adopted for use by vets across Wales when explaining the reactor removal process to new breakdown herds. This is designed to help farmers know what to expect and when during a TB crackdown.

One of the main focuses is on the enhancement of communication between Animal Health, the Welsh Assembly Government, local veterinarians and farmers. A successful meeting was held recently for local vets to improve communication. The secretariat of the board has also been out visiting local veterinary practices to discuss testing and other TB-related issues.

Routine TB Testing intervals for Scotland 2009/10

Animal Health recently carried out the annual review of Parish Testing Intervals (PTI) for Scotland. The PTIs came into effect on 1 September 2009 and the whole of Scotland has remained on 48 monthly testing.

Scotland granted ‘Officially TB Free’ status

Scotland’s application for official TB free status has been approved unanimously by the EU’s Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH).

Scottish Chief Veterinary Officer Simon Hall presented the veterinary justification for Scotland’s case to be recognised as Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF), based on the low incidence of TB in Scottish herds and high standards of animal welfare.

An initial cost benefit analysis carried out by the Scottish Government identified the financial benefits that would accrue through prevention of future disease incursion, and the costs associated with controlling the disease as well as future access to the export market.

There was a general consensus among the livestock industry about the principle of achieving TB free status. It was accepted this would enhance the capability to keep disease out of Scotland, provide a platform for Scotland to move forward as a provider of quality livestock and enhance an already established and recognised quality meat brand.

The final disease controls required to maintain this status are still to be decided, however the Scottish Government will continue to work with the livestock industry to ensure new controls have minimal impacts on trade.

Routine TB Testing intervals for 2009/10

The Rural Affairs Minister, Elin Jones, has announced that all cattle herds in Wales will be tested for bovine TB in 2010. Wales will not be returning to calculating bovine TB intervals on a parish level. This decision has been informed by the success of the ‘TB Health Check Wales’, in which all cattle herds in Wales are being tested within a fifteen month period. The TB Health Check Wales started in September 2008 and will finish in December 2009. Health Check Wales data will be used to determine the geographical basis for the testing regime from 2011 onwards. Animal Health has written to all cattle owners in Wales notifying them of the changes.

Consultation on pre-movement testing exemptions and compensation (Wales)

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently undertaking a public consultation on the Tuberculosis and Brucellosis (Wales) Order 2010. This legislation is designed to change the rules on a number of TB related issues. The main areas of policy addressed in the consultation are changes to existing exemptions to pre-movement testing and linking the level of compensation payable to farmers when an animal is slaughtered for bovine TB to good farm practice.

To see the consultation visit: www.wales.gov.uk/bovinetb.
TB Eradication Group for England: announcement

The TB Eradication Group (TBEG) for England - set up in November 2008 to advise the Secretary of State on bovine TB and its eradication - has presented its first Progress Report.

The membership of the group includes representatives from Defra, Animal Health, the farming industry and the veterinary profession, and it is convened and facilitated by Defra.

The report outlines the Group’s progress in developing a Bovine TB Eradication Programme for England; the risk-based approach it is taking to identify and assess new policies; and the changes to be made following recommendations to the Secretary of State. These recommendations are:

- To change the basis on which testing frequencies are set from a parish-based to a risk-based approach;
- To establish an interim approach to setting testing frequencies, which is intended to be a move in this direction (see ‘Changes to Parish Testing Intervals [PTI] in England’ below);
- To change the inconclusive reactor policy to allow only one retest (to be implemented on 1 January 2010); (see ‘Change to TB testing – Inconclusive reactor [IR] policy’ below);
- To provide a dedicated sale for TB restricted cattle and a dispersal sale option for owners of TB breakdown herds (implementation in October 2009);
- To revise testing requirements for entry to Approved Finishing Units [AFUs], thereby encouraging more AFUs to be set up (implemented in October 2009);
- To encourage the setting up of new Approved Quarantine Units [AQUs] for calves as a trade outlet for animals currently killed on-farm (implemented in October 2009); and
- To agree in principle a new approach to tackling unconfirmed breakdowns, and change to the terminology around breakdowns.

The Group’s recommendations that have already been implemented by Animal Health are as follows:

- Subject to a veterinary risk assessment, the general movement licence can be used to allow movements of unrestricted cattle onto a TB breakdown herd for the duration of a breakdown (see ‘Changes to TB movement restrictions’ on page 9);
- Permission to move cattle over longer distances to help facilitate restocking;
- Movement of untested calves (less than 42 days old) direct to slaughter via approved collection centres will be permitted, so reducing the number that have to be killed on-farm.

Further information can be found at:

Change to TB testing – Inconclusive reactor (IR) policy

From 1 January 2010, there will be changes to the way in which inconclusive reactors in England are dealt with. From that date, cattle will be compulsorily removed as reactors if they give inconclusive results at two consecutive skin tests. In addition, the method used to interpret the tuberculin skin test at severe interpretation will be modified in both England and Scotland. Animal Health will be writing to panel 1 [a] OVs to explain the changes in more detail.
Defra is in the first stages of setting up a Badger Vaccine Deployment Project (BVDP) to develop practical know-how for vaccinating badgers and provide an opportunity to learn how best to address any practical difficulties. It will take place within six 300km² catchment areas where there is a high incidence of bTB, with badgers being vaccinated on some 100km² (25,000 acres) of cattle land in each area.

The six areas are drawn from the worst affected parts of Staffordshire (Eccleshall area), the Herefordshire and Worcestershire border (North of Bromyard, East of Tenbury Wells), Gloucestershire (Cotswolds, north-east of Cheltenham and north-west of Stroud, towards the Severn Valley) and Devon (East and West of Tiverton).

The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA - formerly the Central Science Laboratory) is responsible for signing-up volunteer landowners to participate within these regions to define the actual areas to be vaccinated.

The BVDP will inform the plans for future use of both injectable and oral badger TB vaccines. In particular, the programme seeks to achieve an increase in farmer confidence in TB vaccines, an understanding of logistical issues around the use of a vaccine - including the best way to deploy it in an area - and an understanding of training needs. The project will also establish an understanding of the costs of vaccination to help determine whether or not an injectable badger vaccine is a viable long term option.

It is anticipated that a licensed vaccine product will be available by the summer of 2010, and delivery of the programme is expected to begin around this time. For this reason FERA will be training contractors in the delivery of the vaccine, and seeking participants for the project, in 2009.

Recruitment and vaccination in the deployment areas will be phased in over three years to allow time to train contractors.

Participation is voluntary and individual landowners in each of the selected areas will not need to take any action except to grant permission for contractors to vaccinate badgers on their land.

The project will see badgers trapped, injected, temporarily marked and then released over a given period of nights, between May and November. This will be repeated each year for at least five years in each area. The vaccine will probably not benefit already infected badgers - these need to die off naturally for the disease pressure on cattle to be reduced, and it is not uncommon for badgers to exceed four years of age. It will be necessary to vaccinate on an annual basis to ensure as many cubs as possible are vaccinated when they emerge in late spring each year.

For further information: www.defra.gov.uk/animath/tb/vaccination/index.htm
Changes to Parish Testing Intervals (PTI) in England

Animal Health is currently in the process of carrying out the PTI review for England, with the new PTIs coming into force on 1 January 2010.

The TB Eradication Group (TBEG) has examined the way in which PTI reviews have historically been carried out. Since 2005 Animal Health has calculated routine TB testing frequencies by identifying the percentage of cattle herds infected within a parish over the previous six-years, and by taking into account the length of each breakdown. All TB breakdowns with visibly lesioned and/or culture positive reactors are included in this calculation regardless of their origin. By its very nature this method is ‘reactive’ and, in some areas of expanding or emerging TB incidence, has trailed the spread of infection.

On the Group’s recommendation a different approach is being implemented in 2010. In England, TBEG have recommended that a proactive approach to TB testing frequencies is developed and, until this is agreed, that an interim assessment be implemented for 2010, which takes a significant step towards a more epidemiological and proactive risk-based approach.

The approach in 2010 is still based on the calculation used in previous years, however, in addition, Defra and Animal Health have applied veterinary knowledge about the epidemiology of TB to ‘smooth out’ any inconsistencies and come up with a more coherent TB surveillance picture. This assessment was also based on a range of recent TB epidemiological data and its overall rationale has been as follows:

- All counties in the South West of England and the West Midlands have been placed on annual TB testing, as this represents the expanding area of endemic high TB incidence in England. No ‘islands’ of lower testing frequency parishes may be allowed within this annual testing area.
- The northern and eastern edges of the core annual testing area must be separated from the low incidence regions of England by a wide, continuous ‘buffer zone’ of two-yearly routine testing intervals. This means that annual and four-yearly testing areas will not be allowed to adjoin. Where TB incidence and other data may warrant it, this zone will encompass entire counties adjoining the core area (e.g. Derbyshire, West Midlands, and Warwickshire). Otherwise, the buffer zone will be two parishes in depth, spanning a ‘strip’ approximately 10km-wide.
- Within this two-yearly testing buffer zone individual parishes may be placed on annual testing if indicated by the traditional 2009 testing frequency calculation or at Animal Health’s discretion.
- For counties that span the buffer zone to the east (including Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire), where a parish is placed on annual testing under the traditional calculation or Animal Health’s discretion, it has also been surrounded with a two-yearly testing buffer two parishes wide.
- The area in the East Sussex coast roughly bounded by Brighton, Lewes and Eastbourne, which has traditionally sustained a low but endemic incidence of bovine TB, will all be placed under annual routine testing and surrounded by a belt of two-yearly testing parishes.
- The rest of the north and east of England, where the incidence and risk of TB has historically been very low and there is no evidence of a wildlife reservoir of TB, will remain on background four-yearly routine testing. Any individual parishes in this area that have suffered recent incursions of TB due to movements of infected cattle - as indicated by the outcome of the traditional 2009 calculation or under Animal Health’s discretion - will be placed on more frequent testing without buffering.

The attached map depicts the outcome of the methodology described above. Please note, however, that this is not the final version and the map may change following further veterinary discretionary changes to PTIs.

For OVs in some parts of the country this will mean a significant increase in testing, with more parishes being on annual and two-yearly testing than in previous years. This will also lead to an increase in pre-movement testing. Those OVs most affected should have been contacted by Animal Health with revised worklists, which will detail some of the required testing in their area in 2010.
TB testing: clarification of what should be tested under routine herd tests

Animal Health has recently written to all practices to clarify which cattle should be tested as part of a Routine Herd Test (RHT) for TB.

For clarity, RHTs must include (updated wording is highlighted in bold):

- Breeding bulls (i.e. entire male animals over 12 months of age, unless exempted by the Divisional Veterinary Manager or Regional Veterinary Lead).
- Females which have calved.
- Young bovines, which will be used for breeding and purchased since the last herd test (except calves under 42 days of age).
- Pet cows and other non-commercial cattle resident on the holding.

We have also taken the opportunity to clarify the requirement for scheduling of RHTs for finishing herds. As we need to ensure that these herds have a record of the TB surveillance/control testing regime, you may find that herds which have previously not had a test scheduled will now receive a Test Notification Letter and appear on your worklist. Please follow the usual process of establishing if any eligible stock are present (as above) and informing your local office if there are no eligible stock.

Changes to TB movement restrictions

The TB Eradication Group for England has approved revised licensed movements for TB restricted herds (see page 4). These are designed to better support TB affected farm businesses whilst maintaining risk-based controls to prevent disease spread. The options will not be available to every farm on every occasion, as decisions will be based upon a risk assessment, but this is an opportunity to help farmers under restriction. These movements will not be permitted for herds under restrictions for an Overdue Test.

TB tests and pre-movement tested cattle

If, when undertaking a TB test, you are presented with cattle that have recently been purchased and tested within the last sixty days DO NOT test these animals. Instead they should be excluded and tested with the rest of the herd on the next test date. If there is doubt as to whether the cattle have been tested in the last 60 days, please discuss the issue with your local Animal Health office.

Revocation of TB movement licences due to overdue tests

General licences for both movements to slaughter and movements on to the premises of unrestricted stock will be revoked when breakdown testing becomes more than 30 days overdue.

Animal Health offices will allow a five day period before issuing the Revocation Notice in order to allow time for any test charts to be submitted to the office. Please can we ask that all test charts are submitted promptly in order to reduce the inconvenience to your clients should their general licences be revoked.

Movements between restricted premises

The movement of cattle off a TB restricted premises to another herd under TB restrictions has only been possible under licence and if the herd of destination is either within the same Animal Health office boundary or within the boundary of an adjoining Animal Health office. Movements across greater distances may now be allowed under licence, but are dependent on the outcome of a veterinary risk assessment which must consider the impact on the destination of the movement, including:

- PTI of the parish;
- TB history of the parish;
- The possible impact on contiguous premises including through shared watercourses.

Approval would only be granted in low-risk situations.
Since 7 September 2009, bovine animals intended for intra-Community trade have been subject to a stricter ‘intra-Community trade’ interpretation of pre-export tuberculin testing. OVs must ensure that any bovine animals tested for intra-Community trade are subjected to the ‘intra-Community trade’ interpretation.

Full details of the new rules have been sent to all OV practices on the TB testing or farm animal export panels. A Customer Information Note, CIN AE/09/82, giving full details has also been published on the Defra website at: http://defraweb/animalh/int-trde/cins/2009/0982.htm

If you carry out any pre-export tuberculin testing, please ensure you are familiar with the new rules.

If you require further information, please contact Central Operations Unit for Exports at Carlisle, tel. 01228 403600.

New rules for tuberculin testing of bovines for export to other EU member states

Movements of unrestricted cattle onto restricted premises

Movements of unrestricted cattle onto TB restricted premises may, after a satisfactory risk assessment, be carried out under a general licence (TB20) which allows unrestricted stock to be purchased without prior notification to the Animal Health Office. This licence will remain valid for the duration of the breakdown unless:

- Testing becomes overdue;
- The disease risk is increased on the premises or in the location of the premises

If the TB20 Licence is not appropriate, a specific licence (TB15) may be used where issued by Animal Health.

TB Testing: Reporting refusals

Animal Health has a policy of ‘Zero Tolerance’ on overdue bovine TB tests. This is essential for disease control and to prevent prospective purchasers from importing diseased livestock into their herds. If you are unable to arrange a test with your client by the due date, please report this to your local Animal Health using the TR247 – Refusal to test: Initial Report Form. However, if you are unable to undertake a test by the due date because of practice resources, please discuss this with your local Animal Health office in the first instance.

Definition of dates for validity of a pre-movement TB tests

There has been some confusion reported over when the validity of a 60 day pre-movement TB test ends. For clarify, the date of injection of tuberculin is classed as day 0 of a TB test.

Similar confusion has existed regarding cattle under six weeks (42 days) old, which are exempt from pre-movement testing. The date of birth should be taken as day 0 when counting up to the six weeks/42 days of age.
Reporting TB Reactors promptly

OVs must report newly disclosed TB Reactors without delay. Regrettably our target of being notified of reactors within one day is currently not being met. The following options may be used if you are unable to fax the full TB52 test chart straight away:

Fax a completed ‘OV Notification Pro-forma of Reactor Animals’ (TR248) to your local Animal Health Office by noon on the day following the disclosing test.

If you are unable to complete the pro-forma, simply phone your local Animal Health Office by noon on the day following the disclosing test with the following details:

- The name of the herd owner, the herd type and the location of the reactors;
- Whether the herd is commercial or pedigree;
- The test date and type;
- The total number of animals in the herd, the number of reactors and IRs;
- The animal details and test results.

Please submit the original form TB52 as soon as possible - within five working days of the test at the very latest – even if you have already submitted a TR248. Without this we are unable to arrange removal of the infected cattle. Please ensure that you carry blank TB2 restriction notices with you on every occasion you are testing cattle, and complete one for a new breakdown on the same day as the test failure. Give the original to the owner of the cattle and send a copy with the test chart. Include all premises used by the cattle herd. It is not necessary to serve a TB2 when the test is a Short Interval Test because the herd is already restricted. Doing so can cause confusion when cancelling restrictions on premises subject to multiple TB2s.

Please remember that you must submit all clear test charts to the appropriate Animal Health Office within five working days of finishing the test.

You are also reminded that it is important to retain a copy of each test chart for a suggested period of twelve months. They may, of course, be retained electronically so this should not be an issue for those using VeBus or TB Master.

The herd owner should be issued with an Owner Checklist TR247 following the disclosure of reactors. This document is an aide memoir of the responsibilities that lie with the owner following the disclosing test, with particular reference to:

- The isolation and correct identification of reactor animals;
- The preparations required prior to the valuation visit and removal of reactors;
- The cleansing and disinfecting that must be undertaken following reactor removal.

Gamma Interferon Review

The first review into the use of gamma interferon as a diagnostic test for bovine TB since its introduction in October 2006 has been published jointly by Defra, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government.

The review set out to evaluate the policy and consider if, and how, it should be revised. The main conclusion is that there is no evidence to support a radical change of approach in the way the gamma interferon test is used within UK to supplement and enhance the primary TB diagnostic test – the skin test. The Welsh Assembly Government will be reviewing the use of gamma interferon as part of its TB Eradication Programme.

The full report can be found at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/pdf/gamma-review090710.pdf

TB Time and Motion Study

The BVA and Animal Health, in collaboration with the BCVA, conducted a TB Time and Motion Study during June and August as part of the OV Reform Programme. This sought to provide an up-to-date assessment of how long each element of an on-farm test takes to complete.

A big thank you to all practices for their responses to phase one of the study. Due to the number of returns received it has been decided that the second phase, planned for November and December, will no longer be necessary.

We will be using the statistics gathered in the summer in ongoing discussions with BVA and BCVA over the review of fees paid to OVs for their work done on behalf of Animal Health.
At the end of September 2009 there had been 149 confirmed premises affected by BTV8 in England and Wales. However, no circulating bluetongue disease was found in the UK in 2008 or, to date, in 2009; infection in all 149 confirmed cases predated 2008.

Through a partnership approach with industry and the veterinary profession, disease control during the last year has been highly successful - particularly in the South of England where vaccination levels of 80% - 90% have been achieved. As a whole, vaccine uptake across England and Wales in 2008 was sufficient to protect approximately 60% of susceptible animals, with the lowest levels being found in the North of England at around 20-30%. With voluntary vaccination in England and Wales (vaccination is compulsory in Scotland) and vaccine sales now subject to free market forces, precise figures for vaccine sales in 2009 are difficult to establish.

Despite the recent vaccination successes it is important not to be complacent as the threat of bluetongue remains. Vaccination played a key role in keeping Great Britain free from circulating disease last year, and it is vital that livestock keepers continue to vaccinate to protect their stock against BTV8. Recent cases of BTV1 and BTV8 have been detected in France, however data from France suggests their vaccination campaign is going well, and cases of both BTV1 and BTV8 are well down on this time last year. Therefore, at present, the threat of BTV1 incursions from Europe remains low.

There is concern however that there has been a drop in the number of suspect cases being reported compared to this time last year. Even those who have vaccinated against BTV8 need to be on guard against the risk of other bluetongue serotypes. All livestock keepers and vets must remain vigilant, and report any suspect clinical signs of disease to their local Animal Health office.

A video outlining why farmers can’t afford to be complacent about bluetongue in 2009 - featuring farmer Robert Law and Defra’s Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Alick Simmons - can be viewed on the Defra website at: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/farmers/index.htm

Details of recent cases are on the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/bluetongue/latest/index.htm
Bluetongue

Bluetongue winter surveillance

A programme of winter surveillance for bluetongue is scheduled for November. The European Commission has agreed the proposed survey design produced by Defra and VLA epidemiologists, and the criteria for the animals and herds to be sampled across Great Britain. Enhanced surveillance will be required in the South and South East.

Testing will be by pan-serotype PCR at VLA Weybridge with any positive samples further tested at the Institute of Animal Health at Pirbright to confirm serotype.

The terms of eligibility for sampling have been set as:

- Animals should be between the ages of six and 12 months
- Animals should not have been on the holding for less than six months
- As far as possible, unvaccinated animals should be selected.

Bluetongue in Europe

On 8 September the European Commission summarised the number of BTV outbreaks in European sheep and cattle over the past three years.

As can be seen from the figures below, Europe as a whole is experiencing far fewer outbreaks in 2009 than in previous years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of confirmed outbreaks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>2,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>63,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>39,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10 (to Sept. 09)</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the drop in cases it is important to remain vigilant. Vector borne disease epidemics often follow a pattern of waves of disease from one year to the next, as infection levels depend on numbers of susceptible animals and numbers of vectors.

While vaccination and previous infection have clearly reduced the number of susceptible animals in some areas, it is widely accepted that at least three years of continual vaccination would be required to eradicate disease (based on the experience of Spain and Portugal with BTV4).

The other important message is that the majority of these outbreaks were due to BTV8 but BTV1 is currently circulating in Spain, Portugal and France and may yet increase in distribution and incidence as BTV8 did.

Suspect adverse reactions to bluetongue vaccine

There continue to be rumours and concerns about suspect adverse reactions to bluetongue vaccine. However, a European Medicines Agency (EMEA) review of field safety data collated from vaccination campaigns in 2008 shows a good safety record for vaccines used in EU member states; the frequency of adverse reactions is recorded as being fewer than one in 10,000. The report can be viewed at: www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/vet/press/pos/65201908en.pdf.

Any suspicions of a suspected adverse reaction to bluetongue vaccine should be reported to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate for investigation using the “Yellow Form” (MLA 252A). This can be downloaded from the VMD website at: www.vmd.gov.uk/General/Adverse/mal252.pdf.
Individual multiple pick-up approvals no longer required in England and Wales

There is no longer a requirement for holdings in England and Wales to have specific prior approval from Defra or the Welsh Assembly Government to operate as a multiple pick-up/drop-off site.

Previously many OVs will have been paid by Animal Health for assessing and approving these sites. Please do not carry out any further approval visits for multiple pick-up / drop off sites, as it will be unnecessary and cannot be charged for. These changes came into effect on 13 July 2009. Any outstanding claims for approval visits carried out before this date will, of course, be honoured.

There are still conditions which farmers and transporters must follow to minimise the risk of disease spread. All pick-ups and drop-offs can be made providing that they take place on the perimeter of holdings either by tail-gating, use of pens or temporary pens.

Full rules can be found in the General Licences for the movements of animals on the Defra website (see Annex B to the General Licence for specific conditions). It is the responsibility of keepers to ensure that these rules are adhered to.

For more information: www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/movements/cattle.

A new Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland

Simon Hall has been appointed Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland. Previously Veterinary Head of International Animal Health at Defra, Simon spent six years in mixed veterinary practice in Devon and Gloucestershire before joining the State Veterinary Service in 1990.

This was followed by a role as a veterinary policy adviser in animal welfare in 1997 at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), and a move to the national control centre for Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001.

Since then Simon has worked at Defra in the field of international trade, managing disease risks through import controls and supporting the British economy by facilitating exports of animals and animal products. This work has included many successful negotiations in the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH).

Simon’s predecessor, Charles Milne, left the CVO Scotland post to become Director of the Food Standards Agency in Scotland.

Lead poisoning in livestock

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and VLA have produced a leaflet to help raise concerns regarding lead poisoning in livestock. Lead poisoning in livestock has been highlighted as being the most frequent cause of on-farm incident reported to the FSA. This advisory leaflet highlights issues regarding lead poisoning and suggests appropriate actions that farmers can take to prevent cases from occurring. The leaflet states that the majority of cases are avoidable if certain simple measures are undertaken by farmers.

This leaflet will be distributed to farmers and advertised via the agricultural press. It is also available from the FSA at: www.food.gov.uk.
The Government has announced over £100m of investment in the redevelopment of the UK’s world leading animal disease research laboratories at Pirbright in Surrey.

This decision follows extensive reviews of the UK’s needs for animal health research in relation to animal welfare and global food security. The redevelopment at Pirbright will enable implementation of recommendations arising from the Anderson Review into the 2007 foot and mouth disease outbreak.

The Pirbright based Institute of Animal Health’s (IAH) success in combating bluetongue is an example of the importance of its strategic research capability. IAH researchers accurately predicted the time and location of the arrival of this devastating disease in the UK. This enabled effective preparation and preventative vaccination (again based on IAH research) in 2008. An independent report by consultants DTZ estimated that IAH work on bluetongue virus potentially saved the UK economy £485m and 10,000 jobs in 2008 alone.

The Pirbright redevelopment is expected to be completed in 2013.

Novel H1N1 flu in pigs

Two incidents of novel H1N1 influenza A (‘swine flu’) have been confirmed in pigs. On both occasions farm workers had shown flu like symptoms about a week prior to the animals becoming infected.

In Canada, clinical signs of respiratory disease similar to that of traditional swine influenza virus were reported in a farrow/finishing operation of 220 sows. About 25% of the pigs were affected by the disease, but all recovered over a 10-14 day period.

In Argentina, suckling pigs and growers were affected with mild clinical signs. About 30% of the pigs were affected, but again no mortality was seen.

Diagnosis for both types of flu in pigs is made by taking nasopharyngeal swabs from acutely infected pigs. The virus is best detected in animals 24 to 48 hours after onset of clinical signs.

Code of practice for influenza in pigs

The pig industry has produced a Code of Practice for pig keepers in relation to influenza in the animals. This contains advice on how to reduce the risk of influenza infection entering a pig herd and minimise onward spread if introduction does occur.

The Code relates to all influenza viruses in pigs and pulls together existing best practice advice. The Code is based on good biosecurity and herd health management.

It is available at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/swine-flu/pig-keepers.htm

HPAI H5N1 epidemiological risk assessment

Defra has published a qualitative risk assessment on the role of non-migratory wild birds and mammals in the epidemiology of H5N1 HPAI. It concludes that:

- In 2008 and 2009 there have been fewer reports of wild bird infections than previous years, no evidence of change of virulence and no evidence of change in species susceptibility.
- In the last two years, there has been no increased geographical spread of H5N1 HPAI in domestic poultry, particularly not in the domestic poultry in the EU.
- However, South East Asia and Egypt remain the main focus of infection in domestic poultry, especially backyard poultry.
- Non-anseriformes, non-charadriformes, non-poultry avian species (‘other’ species) and mammals appear to play a negligible role in the epidemiology of H5N1 HPAI. Exposure of such ‘other’ avian species and mammals may result in high mortality and usually as a result of localised introduction and exposure to the virus, not horizontal transmission.
- Testing of apparently healthy wild birds would not significantly improve our understanding of the epidemiology of HPAI, nor serve as an early warning system for increased risk.

Further information: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/riskassess.htm

£100M investment at Institute for Animal Health

The Government has announced over £100m of investment in the redevelopment of the UK’s world leading animal disease research laboratories at Pirbright in Surrey.

This decision follows extensive reviews of the UK’s needs for animal health research in relation to animal welfare and global food security. The redevelopment at Pirbright will enable implementation of recommendations arising from the Anderson Review into the 2007 foot and mouth disease outbreak.

The Pirbright based Institute of Animal Health’s (IAH) success in combating bluetongue is an example of the importance of its strategic research capability. IAH researchers accurately predicted the time and location of the arrival of this devastating disease in the UK. This enabled effective preparation and preventative vaccination (again based on IAH research) in 2008. An independent report by consultants DTZ estimated that IAH work on bluetongue virus potentially saved the UK economy £485m and 10,000 jobs in 2008 alone.

The Pirbright redevelopment is expected to be completed in 2013.
Defra has announced a series of welfare advisory campaigns for 2009-10 covering the cattle, sheep, pig and poultry sectors.

Managing the dairy cow around calving

The on-farm seminars and discussions will highlight both the welfare and economic benefits of correct management during the dry period, and the transition to freshly calved. Advice on cow survival at calving, with the emphasis on calving skills and when to seek veterinary advice, will be provided, along with basic husbandry and building design.

Rearing more lambs – better welfare and improved returns

A series of workshops scheduled to take place in January 2010 will focus on the period from eight weeks before lambing to six weeks post lambing. Correct nutrition, good husbandry and disease control are the main areas to be covered.

Broiler Directive workshops

A series of regional events will be held to explain the requirements of the new welfare legislation for broilers. This will apply specifically to conventional broiler chickens and includes requirements for the keeping of rearing chicks from the time they are brought on to production sites through to slaughter. The rules include a new provision for checks at slaughterhouses on mortality rates, which will enable concerns on poor welfare to be fed back to the producer and Animal Health. The husbandry requirements needed to comply with the legislation, and the documentation required to accompany chickens for processing, will be covered at these meetings.

Pig tail biting

Scheduled for February-March 2010, these workshops focus on improving the welfare of growing and finishing pigs by reducing the incidence of tail biting - reducing the need for producers to tail dock. A panel of specialists will discuss case studies raised by the audience, enabling each producer to draw practical conclusions that will help solve problems on their own farms.
New Chief Operating Officer

Rob Paul has been confirmed as the new Chief Operating Officer for Animal Health. He takes responsibility for all of the delivery activities of Animal Health, as well as its readiness and resilience for outbreaks of exotic disease. Rob is replaced as Director of Veterinary and Technical Services by Dr Nick Coulson, who has been Defra’s Head of Global Animal Health since 2005.

News

Herdsure® Cattle Health Improvement Service

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) is launching a new testing and consultancy service, the Herdsure® Cattle Health Improvement Service, aimed at establishing and improving herd health.

The Herdsure® Cattle Health Improvement Service helps to provide Practitioners with a range of structured testing and consultancy services that will enable to easily assess and improve the health status of your clients’ herds.

Diseases included in the Herdsure® Cattle Health Improvement Service include (from November 2009) Bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), Johne’s disease and liver fluke. These will be extended to include Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), leptospirosis and neosporosis from mid-2010.

Benefits for veterinary practitioners:

- An additional service to provide to your farmer clients to support health planning.
- Health management strategies with planned and structured approaches to sampling and testing developed by VLA experts to ensure optimal quality of service [see an example of a level of a testing protocol in this pack].
- A unique IT support system used at VLA called the Herdsure® Management System (HMS) which provides prompts and identifies animals to be sampled, so reducing the management role of your busy veterinary practice.

Benefits for farmers:

- Improved herd health through the control of up to six major cattle diseases.
- Better knowledge of cattle health status will lead to improved production and less financial loss.
- User-friendly and straightforward to implement.
- Minimal record keeping due to automatic tracking of progress and prompting when tests are due.

Features of the service:

- Access to a telephone helpline for technical enquiries and consultancy related to farms enrolled on the service.
- Detailed guidance for veterinary practitioners in the form of a handbook.

- A separate handbook for your subscribing farmer clients which explains to them the main features of the service and their role.
- Submission forms with pre-filled ear tag numbers where appropriate.
- Provision of sampling materials for farmers to collect relevant milk and faecal samples. These can then be returned using convenient postage-paid labels. Where appropriate, sample submission forms will also be provided which are pre-filled with ear tag numbers.

For more information: http://defra.gov.uk/vla/services/ser_herdsure.htm
New guidance has been distributed to all veterinary practices carrying out export certification for Animal Health. This follows recent concerns about variation in the interpretation by OVs of the Twelve Principles of Certification, and adverse comments from importing veterinary authorities on the appearance of some British export certificates.

As a result, additional guidance has been agreed between RCVS and Defra on the interpretation of the Twelve Principles. This was published in a joint RCVS/CVO letter in the Veterinary Record (Vol. 164, issue 17 on 25 April 2009). To complement this additional guidance, Animal Health has produced a checklist and summary of instructions for completion of official export certification.

All of this material has been incorporated into two information sheets which have been distributed to practices. The guidance is also available on the Animal Health website at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/official-veterinarians/index.htm

All OVs on export panels should ensure that they have access to this guidance.

If you have any questions about the guidance, please contact the Central Operations Unit for Exports at Carlisle on 01228 403600.

Animal Health is working on plans to introduce training for OVs as a contingency arrangement to assist with carrying out bluetongue investigation and surveillance work at peak times of disease reporting. This would provide OV practices with additional income in the event of increase in bluetongue activity, as well as ensuring Animal Health’s capacity to respond promptly to reports of bluetongue in the event of a surge in suspect cases. A new OV panel, 1r, has been established to cover the extension of appointment for interested OVs, and a training package has been developed for delivery by local Animal Health offices. The training will include clinical signs of disease, sample handling and dispatch, and completion of relevant paperwork. Discussions are currently ongoing with the BVA on the fees for this work; however we are keen to train and appoint OVs to the new OV panel in readiness. Further details have been sent to OV practices.

The support of OV practices has contributed to the success of the TB Testing and Cattle ID Inspections Pilot Exercise, established in June 2008. As a result of feedback, the co-ordination of further types of TB test is being taken forward.

All OVs should ensure that a visit notification form (NV1) is completed and forwarded to the appropriate paying agency, preferably by email, for all herd TB test types.

Contact details are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CII.TB.Admin@rpa.gsi.gov.uk">CII.TB.Admin@rpa.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0117 9590364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td><a href="mailto:LVnotifications@scotland.gsi.gov.uk">LVnotifications@scotland.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0845 1553367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td><a href="mailto:capm.inspectorate@wales.gsi.gov.uk">capm.inspectorate@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>01597 828304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To enable co-ordination of visits, this notification should be made as soon as the date is agreed and ideally not later than seven working days before the test date.

In England and Wales if the paying agency wishes to carry out a cattle identity inspection at the same time as a TB test, it must give 48 hours notice to both the livestock keeper and the OV.
The following issue was raised by a reader in response to the Pet Passport guidance article published in the last issue:

Practices by overseas veterinarians are occasionally challenged and it is regrettably a difficult area to respond to. Essentially, where actual overseas practices are named by callers and correspondents, we would forward details to DEFRA Policy and they may in turn forward a CVO letter to the relevant authority. I have not heard of instances such as these (tick and tapeworm timescale cheats) for some time, but am not convinced that all pet owners would openly admit to us that such practices are used by them - I am not sure on legalities here in terms of the overseas vets’ responsibilities (presumably they would be committing an offence), but know that it is very difficult for any port official to pick up on amendments of this nature.

The Animal Health Pets team has replied:

We would suggest that if you have concerns you request address details of the overseas practice and vet from your client, and then forward them to: quarantine@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk. This information will then be passed on to Defra for investigation. Without adequate information, we are unable to provide sufficient evidence for further action and comment from the relevant overseas authority.

Let us know what you think

If you have any comments on The Official Veterinarian please let us know them. We are always keen to hear your views on this publication. Please e-mail any thoughts, good or bad, to: AHOV. Newsletter@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk

Sole Occupancy Authorities (England and Wales)

Due to recent publicity in the farming press regarding the exemptions from pre-movement testing, some farmers may wish to apply for a Sole Occupancy Authority [SOA] list for their cattle herds. In order to process these without requiring constant clarification from both practice and vet, it is suggested that the following be considered:

- Please ensure all pages of the application have been submitted (i.e. 3 pages of application, 2 pages of OV checklist). Hard copies of these blank forms have been sent to all practices, and file copies [via email] are also available as necessary.
- All applications should be submitted with an application number (made up of OV’s SP number, as per OV Guidance Notes).
- New applications should refer to any previous SOAs previously held. Specifically:
- Copies of old SOAs should be submitted with any new application, and annotated as being cancelled.
- Land on previous SOAs should be specifically identified as either being included or excluded from any new SOA application.
- Please indicate whether additional holdings are to be linked complete or whether it is ‘land at’ or ‘fields at’.

Please give as detailed an address as possible regarding all additional land. Specifically the holding from which any land is to be rented [for Parish Testing Interval purposes], postcodes and any map references.

Ensure you are using the latest version of the form – revised 02/09. Please remember, your claim for this work, on form AH49 ‘LVI Miscellaneous Task’, should only be submitted to your local Animal Health Office at the end of the process, i.e. when you have issued the SOA [form FMAW 10] to your client. The evidence required in support of your claim is a copy of the completed SOA [FMAW 10] which should be attached to the AH 49 claim form. Any AH 49 claim forms submitted without supporting evidence may delay the processing of any payment.

Please remind your client that, if a SOA crosses a TB Parish Testing Interval boundary, the whole holding will default to the ‘highest’ [most frequent] TB testing frequency.

Feedback received to issue 3:

The following issue was raised by a reader in response to the Pet Passport guidance article published in the last issue:

Practices by overseas veterinarians are occasionally challenged and it is regrettably a difficult area to respond to. Essentially, where actual overseas practices are named by callers and correspondents, we would forward details to DEFRA Policy and they may in turn forward a CVO letter to the relevant authority. I have not heard of instances such as these (tick and tapeworm timescale cheats) for some time, but am not convinced that all pet owners would openly admit to us that such practices are used by them - I am not sure on legalities here in terms of the overseas vets’ responsibilities (presumably they would be committing an offence), but know that it is very difficult for any port official to pick up on amendments of this nature.
Liz Rose retired in July after 21 years service. Mick Park was promoted in May to the position of Veterinary Business Partner for Scotland and now works out of Pentland House, Edinburgh. Until we have permanent replacements for Mick and Liz, we have three familiar faces filling the gap: Andy Gibson, Lesley Stringer and Sue Vietch.

Start up of direct PETS portal into Scotland
The direct ferry link between mainland Scotland and Europe has re-opened. The service, previously operated by Superfast ferries, has recommenced under new operators Norfolkline. The first sailing from Zeebrugge to Rosyth took place in May in a newly constructed, purpose built vessel called the ‘Scottish Viking’. The route has been approved by Animal Health to carry pets from Zeebrugge to Rosyth and, once the vessel is kitted out, it will be able to carry up to five dogs, cats or ferrets in adjacent kennels on the car deck. Animal Health will initially be carrying out 100% checks on pets arriving at Rosyth for compliance with pet passport terms and conditions.

New United Auction market
United Auctions’ (UA) opening sale at the newly constructed Stirling Agricultural Centre took place in July. The first sale at the new market was of a single animal, a Highland heifer sold for 10,000 guineas in aid of Breast cancer. Subsequent marts included the sale of store and forward cattle, cast cows and store sheep. The new mart at Hill of Drip, Stirling is replacing the former UA markets in Perth, and Kildean, Stirling. Perth Animal Health office will remain the contact point for all official animal health issues at the new market.

Contact details for other Animal Health offices in Scotland

Galashiels Animal Health Divisional Office
Cotgreen Road
Tweedbank
Galashiels
Scotland
TD1 3SG
Email: ah.galashiels@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01896 758806
Fax: 01896 756803
Nightline: 01896 758806

Inverness Animal Health Divisional Office
Government Buildings
Longman House
28 Longman Road
Longman East
Inverness
Scotland
IV1 1SF
Email: ah.inverness@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01463 728800
Fax: 01463 711495
Nightline: 07000 780126

Inverurie Animal Health Divisional Office
Thainstone Court
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire
AB51 5YA
Email: ah.inverurie@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01467 626610
Fax: 01467 626611
Nightline: 01467 626610
Around Animal Health

WALES

CAERNARFON

Caernarfon Animal Health Divisional Office
Crown Buildings
Penrallt
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
Wales
LL55 1EP
Email: ah.caernarfon@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01286 674144
Fax: 01286 674626
Nightline: 01286 674144

Developing a regional solution for Bovine TB in North Wales

The TB control priority for north Wales is stopping the disease from becoming endemic locally. However the TB Health Check Wales has uncovered nearly 100 new cases of TB, including 28 new breakdowns in herds in north Wales that were not otherwise due to be tested until at least 2010. Six cases of TB have also been found as a result of TB Health Check Wales in Anglesey, an area thought to be relatively free of the disease.

In response to this, the North Wales Regional Eradication Board proposed the establishment of a biosecurity Intensive Treatment Area in the Wrexham region. A similar project carried-out in South West Wales in 2007 resulted in improved biosecurity awareness with potential benefits in reducing incidents of bovine TB.

Bovine TB herd breakdowns have increased in the last few years in the Treatment Area around Wrexham. In such areas where TB is relatively uncommon but is at risk of becoming established, improvements in biosecurity are likely to reduce the risk of infection being introduced into clean herds. More than 200 farms in the area have been eligible for participation in the project.

Veterinary practices with clients in the area have invited them to participate. Vets visit the participating farms to conduct a questionnaire with a view to identifying key areas where biosecurity can be improved. The aim is to provide practical advice that farmers can take to reduce the risk of introducing TB into the herd.

Data is collected electronically for analysis. Risk factors identified are assessed by allocation of a points scoring system relative to the perceived risk of a particular factor being involved in the introduction of the infection into the herd.

The questionnaire will be repeated in 2010 to assess changes in husbandry practices on the farms as a result of the advice given and the likely impact on TB risk to the herd.

The Intensive Treatment Areas covers the unitary authority of Wrexham and south to North Powys (Montgomeryshire).

Contact details for other Animal Health offices in Wales

Cardiff Animal Health Divisional Office
Government Buildings
66 Ty Glas Road
Llanishen
Cardiff
Wales
CF14 5ZB
Email: ah.cardiff@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 02920 768500
Fax: 02920 768510
Nightline: 02920 768500

Carmarthen Animal Health Divisional Office
Ty Merlin
Heol Glasdwr
Parc Pensarn
Carmarthen
SA31 2NJ
Email: ah.carmarthen@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01267 245400
Fax: 01267 245500
Nightline: 07000 780144
ENGLAND

SOUTH WEST REGION

South West Animal Health Regional Office
Clyst House
Winslade Park
Clyst St Mary
Exeter
Devon
EX5 1DY
Email: ah.southwest@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01392 266373
Fax: 01392 266375
Nightline: 01392 266373

Taunton Animal Health office

Supervised TB tests

A reminder to all our recently appointed OVs who attended the large animal panels (1a – d) training day at Taunton in April. Your practices have been contacted requesting dates be provided for one of our Veterinary Officers to meet with you and carry out your required supervised TB test. For quality assurance purposes it is essential that your supervised TB test is carried out within six months of your training and initial, provisional appointment to Panel 1a. If you have not already done so, please ensure that you have made arrangements for your supervised test, as it may affect your appointment to Panel 1a if it is not carried out within the six month period.

For other OVs, please note that whilst supervised TB tests for newly trained and appointed OVs will be our priority, any other supervised TB tests will also continue to be arranged and carried out as circumstances require. In connection with this, a big thank you to all OVs and practice staff that have already assisted with this programme. The fact that it has been so well received is testament to the cooperation and understanding that you have shown to both the veterinary and administrative team at Taunton. It is very much appreciated.

OV contacts at Taunton

OV (LVI) Claims and Practice changes: Sally Smith, phone 01823 348483.
Training and supervised TB tests: Saul Millard, phone 01823 348431.

NORTH EAST REGION

North East Animal Health Regional Office
Quadrant
Newburn Riverside
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE15 8NZ
Email: ah.newcastle@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 0191 2295400
Fax: 0191 2295413
Nightline: 0191 2295400

Contingency Exercise 2009

During December the North East Regional office staff will test their arrangements for dealing with an outbreak of avian influenza disease in poultry. The two-day exercise, which will feature a simulated ‘outbreak’ on premises used on both sides of the border, will be jointly run with the Galashiels Animal Health office. Defra’s Food and Farming Group, the Scottish Government, the Government Office of the North East and local authority staff.

It is intended that Contingency OVs will be involved in the exercise. Communications with OV practices will be included, although you may not be aware of anything happening at the time as external communications during exercises have to be very carefully managed to avoid the risk of inadvertent ‘leaks’ damaging international trade links.
Keep TB out of South East!' Campaign

As part of their SEEDA-funded Livestock Health South East (LHSE) project, the South East Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy (SFFS) Board launched a ‘Keep TB out of the South East!’ campaign last spring.

To support the campaign and the OVs, Animal Health’s South East Region organised a series of four veterinary meetings across the Region. The aim of these meetings was to give OVs the same messages we intend to give to the livestock producers throughout the campaign, and to update them on the latest bTB situation, policy and science. Local Authorities were also invited and attended these meetings.

The SFFS campaign started officially in May with a full page feature in the South East Farmer. Following this, a series of farmers’ meetings took place, with speakers from the NFU, Animal Health and OVs. The key messages of the campaign were stressed to make farmers aware of the key role they play in keeping the South East of England free from bTB. Risk behaviour examples were shown and practical biosecurity advice was given, as well as the latest news from policy.

These meetings were well attended and certainly elicited interesting discussion. Farmers’ views were very valuable and all were represented. In particular, some farmers felt they had little option but to buy cattle in high risk areas, which is the main risk behaviour. Having a better understanding of the risk, however, it was felt that many would make an effort to avoid such sourcing in future.
ENGLAND

Contact details for other Animal Health regional offices in England

North West Animal Health Regional Office
Barton Hall
Garstang Rd
Barton
Preston
Lancs
PR3 5HE
Email: ah.northwest@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01772 861144
Fax: 01772 861798
Nightline: 01772 861144

Yorkshire and Humber Animal Health Regional Office
Government Buildings
Otley Road
Lawnswood
Leeds
Yorkshire
LS16 5PZ
Email: ah.yorksandhumber@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01132 300100
Fax: 0113 2610212
Nightline: 0113 2300100

East Midlands Animal Health Regional Office
Saffron House
Tigers Road
Wigston
Leicester
LE18 4UY
Email: ah.eastmidlands@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01162 787451
Fax: 0116 2770153
Nightline: 0116 2787451

West Midlands Animal Health Regional Office
Beacon House
Staffordshire Technology Park
Dyson Way
Stafford
ST18 0AR
Email: ah.westmidlands@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01785 231900
Fax: 01785 231901
Nightline: 01785 231900

Government Buildings
100 Southgate Street
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 2BD
Email: ah.eastofengland@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01284 778150
Fax: 01284 705684
Nightline: 01284 778150

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES

International trade offices

International Trade Centre for Exports
Hadrian House
Wavell Drive
Rosehill Ind Estate
Carlisle
CA1 2TB
Email: centralops.carlisle@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 01228 403600
Fax: 01228 591900

International Trade Centre for Imports
Government Offices
Beeches Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 2RU
Email: ah.chelmsford@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 01245 454860
Fax: 01245 351162
Nightline: 01245 353632