

## **Guidance for practitioners for the submission of samples from dogs and cats if bovine TB is suspected**

Current animal health legislation requires that veterinarians who examine the carcass of a pet mammal suspected of being affected with tuberculosis must notify APHA without delay. The suspicion of TB in a living pet is not currently notifiable.

In England, Defra policy on paying for TB culture from suspect cases of TB in pet dogs and cats has recently changed. Defra will no longer pay for TB culture for these animals and the reporting private veterinary surgeon can either submit samples privately for culture to APHA at full cost recovery or to another laboratory such as a public health laboratory.

TB culture of samples submitted to APHA will still be available free of charge to the submitting vet if:

- i) the pet cat or dog is kept on a farm with susceptible livestock in England
- ii) the pet cat or dog is kept in Scotland or Wales

and it is agreed there is a reasonable suspicion of TB infection.

In Scotland, private vets may submit suspect TB samples from pet animals to private laboratories (including to SRUC) who will undertake post mortem examinations, histopathology and sampling at the owners/vets' expense. If the private (primary) laboratory suspects *M. bovis*, they will continue to submit their isolates to APHA at Weybridge for identification /confirmation at government expense.

In Wales, where clinical signs of TB are suspected in the live animal, private vets can request a post-mortem, or send tissue samples, to an APHA Laboratory, or to the Wales Veterinary Science Centre, Aberystwyth. All costs will be paid for by the Welsh Government. If samples have been sent to a private laboratory and the private laboratory suspects TB, it can send samples for culture to APHA Weybridge for disease confirmation. In this instance, the Welsh Government will pay only for the costs of culture. For other cases in dogs and cats, where for consequential reasons TB may be a possible cause of death, an APHA Laboratory or the Wales Veterinary Science Centre, Aberystwyth will still carry out a post-mortem, or examine tissues, under appropriately safe laboratory conditions

and complete further laboratory analysis. However, Welsh Government will pay only for the costs of culture, not the post-mortem, for which you will be charged in most cases.

Practitioners should discuss with the duty vet at the local APHA Field services office prior to submitting samples to APHA laboratories. The duty vet will advise whether the case is eligible for free testing. See [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK) to find the location of your local APHA Field services office and contact details.

If eligible for free testing, the duty vet will give you a TB50 form to accompany the samples. Please use form BA.704 for chargeable mycobacterial culture that you submit to APHA.

### **Submission of samples for chargeable mycobacterial culture**

- 1) Please submit samples of fresh tissue (up to 20g) to APHA Weybridge for culture. Do not put the tissue into any transport medium. If the tissue has been frozen please mark the submission form accordingly.
  
- 2) The sample must be dispatched in a leak-proof pot or bag and then double-contained in a larger leak-proof pot or bio-jar, then inside an outer cardboard box to satisfy UN 3373.
  
- 3) The sample must be accompanied by a fully completed submission form (Annex 1) with the name of your nearest local APHA Field services office, the postcode of the owner and your contact email address. Failure to provide a contact e-mail address will result in a £10.00 fee for a hard copy of each report to be sent via Royal Mail.

The box must be labelled clearly:

APHA Weybridge  
TB Diagnosis Section  
Laboratory Services  
Woodham Lane  
New Haw  
Addlestone  
Surrey  
KT15 3NB

- 4) If the animal has died or been euthanased and you wish a post mortem examination (PME) to be carried out for TB diagnosis, please contact your nearest APHA Field services office (see link above for contact details) in the first instance to discuss arrangements for PME. They will advise on whether the examination will be chargeable or free of charge and on the nearest suitable PME site.