Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal Health Regulations – Disease Reporting

Questions arising from 18th May 2021 Laboratory Stakeholder Meeting

Date in format: November 2021

Contents

1. How do Labs access the spreadsheet?

The spreadsheet has been circulated by email and is available on the APHA Vet Gateway.

Please note in response to feedback following the first reporting period the reporting spreadsheet has been updated.

- **The updated version (v2.0) should be used for the next reporting period (July 2021)**
- **If you are yet to submit your report for June 2021 this may also be submitted using the new template, previously submitted reports do not need to be resubmitted on the new template.**

Reports (for diseases which require monthly reporting) should be submitted via email to: MonthlyAHRegs@apha.gov.uk.

The updates to the v2.0 spreadsheet include:

- Clarification added to information required for 'Country' - refers to country where samples were taken;
- New column with heading requiring the details of the 'Number of positive samples' added (data validation built into the reporting template requires this to be an integer that is greater than or equal to the number of positive submissions);
- Requirement to provide where relevant the laboratory's UKAS accreditation number;
- Requirement to indicate whether or not the test used is included in the laboratory's UKAS accreditation schedule (indicate 'not applicable' where UKAS accreditation is not relevant to the laboratory).

Once details of tests used and their accreditation status have been added to sheet two of the spreadsheet, sheet two only needs to be recompleted if the range of tests or their UKAS accreditation has changed since the last monthly report.

2. Will you circulate the slides that have been shown?

The slides used on 18 May 2021 have been circulated via email. They are also available on the APHA Vet Gateway.

3. What is the deadline for providing the monthly report?

The first monthly reporting period (for seven diseases) was for the period 21 April 2021 to 31 May 2021, thereafter the report for each month should be made after the end of that month. Reports should be made as soon as possible after the month end – and within 30 days of the end of the reporting period at the latest.

4. What is the deadline for reporting the 'as soon as practicable' notifications?

'As soon as practicable' reporting for Q fever, avian chlamydiosis, BVDV-2 and PRRSV-2, should be undertaken as soon as possible on detection of disease – we would expect reports to be made within 24 hours of detection, excluding weekends and bank holidays.

5. Is it the same process being used for Salmonella and Brucella reporting?

No. Please use the existing reporting mechanisms for *Brucella* and *Salmonella* in livestock. For *Brucella canis* and *Salmonella* in dogs the process is as follows:

- ***Brucella canis***
  - Both detection of the organism and indirect detection of *Brucella canis* by serology should be reported.
  - In England and Wales: to report *Brucella canis*, you should contact your local APHA Veterinary Investigation Centre (VIC) (use APHA VIC's Penrith, Thirsk, Carmarthen, Starcross, Bury or Shrewsbury). Please note that only the APHA VICs listed on the above link are relevant for reporting purposes (i.e., reports cannot be made to the partner post-mortem providers listed).
  - In Scotland to report *Brucella canis*, please contact the duty vet at your local Field Services Office.
- **Salmonellosis in dogs**
  - Use the existing *Salmonella* reporting procedure.
  - In England and Wales, submit the isolate together with a ZO2/2 form and general submission form to Penrith VIC for full serotyping. If you have any queries contact: foodbornezoonoses@apha.gov.uk.
  - In Scotland, contact the duty vet at your local Field Services Office.

6. What about tests on animals that are under experimental challenge at HO registered establishments - do these results need to be reported?

There is no requirement to report positive tests of animals subject to experimental challenge for that specific pathogen; provided they are held in a Home Office registered establishment, and where required meet the relevant Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO) approvals. However, any positive results from animals at Home Office registered establishments which are not directly attributable to an experimental challenge, for example as the result of pre-screening, should be reported.

7. Do we need to report keeper details?

Keeper details are not required for monthly reporting.

For diseases that require 'as-soon-as-practicable' reporting, the name of the keeper is required – and the owner if different from the keeper, and the name and address of the premises, where sampled animals are kept, is also required for these diseases (these are not required for monthly reporting).

8. Are these individual animal tests or do we include for example the results on a bulk milk BVD PCR?

All positive detections (from the tests as specified in the slides (see Q2)) and also as specified in the reporting template (see Q1)) of these statutory diseases are required; whether the test is undertaken on an individual sample, a pooled sample, or a bulk milk tank sample.

9. Do we need to report monthly even if there are no positives? Are zero/nil returns required?

Where no relevant testing has been undertaken during the reporting month:

- While not mandatory, reporting of nil returns, where no relevant testing has been undertaken, is encouraged. In this instance, please email MonthlyAHRegs@apha.gov.uk with the name of the laboratory and indicate no relevant testing has been undertaken and the reporting month this applies to, you do not need to fill out the spreadsheet.

Where relevant testing has been undertaken during the reporting month, but no positive results have been detected:

- While not mandatory, where possible please complete and submit the spreadsheet. Please provide details of the total number of submissions in which at least one qualifying test was undertaken, and then enter the number of positive submissions/samples as zero for the relevant row.
- Provision of this information enhances our ability to demonstrate this surveillance to trading partners, including the EU that surveillance is being undertaken for these diseases in GB.

10. What about reporting mycoplasma PCR tests that have been carried out in racing pigeons?

Reporting of avian mycoplasmosis is only required in domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus*) and turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*).

11. What about samples submitted abroad, do labs have to report what results they have received from the overseas laboratory? E.g., Q fever reporting

Where the samples originate from an animal located in GB, if a laboratory subcontracted a test to a non-GB based laboratory, the commissioning laboratory in GB should report the result, whether zoonotic disease or monthly reporting (noting there is no legal obligation introduced by the legislative changes to require overseas laboratories to report directly).

There is no requirement to report the results of tests of samples from animals located outside GB.

12. If our lab receives a submission from a different lab and reports the results to them, who is responsible for reporting?

Laboratories should ensure results are report but that the same results are not reported twice, for example the commissioning laboratory should be responsible for reporting results – unless the commissioning laboratory has agreed otherwise in writing with the contracted laboratory (at which point the contracted laboratory is responsible for reporting).

13. Have you consulted with farmers to advise them you will be collecting their positive results?

We have engaged with a variety of industry stakeholders and will continue to do so over the next few months. For monthly reporting no personal data will be shared. We would however recommend that laboratories review their terms of business/sample submission forms, to ensure that the new legal requirements regarding reporting is reflected.

14. Is a single submission, identified in column 1, a single sample or (like in the case of poultry) 100 samples from one farm?

A submission may be a single sample from an individual animal, or multiple samples from multiple animals on the same premises, as part of the investigation of the same disease event.

Following feedback from the initial reporting period, the reporting spreadsheet has been updated (v2.0, see Q1), to clarify these requirements. Hence using the v2.0 reporting spreadsheet for each row reporting test results, the following information is required:

- total number of submissions in which at least one qualifying test was undertaken (voluntary);
- number of submissions with at least one sample testing positive (**mandatory**);
- number of samples testing positive (**mandatory**).

15. It is very time consuming to fill out this spreadsheet. Can we not send you an automated export directly from LIMS?

The mechanism for reporting by automated export from Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) is something that can be explored but this mechanism will not be available in the short-term.

16. What about farms that are using live vaccines where potentially a positive PCR result is the vaccine strain?

The requirement is to report positive laboratory results for the tests specified for each disease. Unless the vaccine is a marker vaccine or differentiating infected from vaccinated animals (DIVA) vaccine, then all positive tests must be reported even if the result may be a result of a vaccine.

17. Will this data be fed into the GB VIDA surveillance data and dashboards?

Data in the Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis (VIDA) database are based on scanning surveillance submissions, which meet defined criteria. The monthly statutory disease reports do not meet the same criteria and therefore will not be included. Anonymised data may be shared within APHA to enhance value of the data to industry. Therefore, although the data will not go into VIDA, the anonymised information may contribute to enhancing scanning surveillance outputs.

18. For avian mycoplasmosis does this include both the ELISA and PCR test results?

As listed in the slides embedded in Q2, results to be reported for avian mycoplasmosis include: detection through tests which indicate the animal or carcase is, or is reasonably suspected to be, infected with *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *M. meleagridis* to include: PCR, DGGE/PCR, culture.

19. For Varroa in bees - how is this reported? Does a keeper report every time they see varroa or is it simply once a year to record they have it?

A tick box has been introduced to BeeBase, the voluntary register for beekeepers in GB managed by the APHA National Bee Unit (NBU) and used by both, the NBU and the Scottish Bee Health Team. This will allow beekeepers and inspectors to report the presence or absence of Varroa.

Due to the widespread nature of Varroa in GB, Varroa 'presence' was the default setting for all BeeBase records when this new field was introduced. Although not officially recognised, there are for example some remote areas in Scotland which remain Varroa free and BeeBase users are advised to update their records accordingly. However, Beekeepers are required to report the existence of Varroa as soon as soon as practicable if they see it and they were recorded as free from Varroa.

BeeBase is a free database for all GB beekeepers and will be the easiest way to report Varroa but an alternative mechanism will be provided for those who do not wish to register on the BeeBase system. Non-registered Beekeepers are encouraged to sign up to BeeBase, but if they do not wish to, they can fulfil the legal requirement to report varroa by contacting in Scotland the Scottish Bee Health Inspectors (BeesMailbox@gov.scot) or in England and Wales while alternative reporting mechanisms are developed to the NBU (nbu@apha.gov.uk).

Although Varroa is known to be widespread, it continues to be one of the most serious pests faced by beekeepers. Reporting Varroa will contribute to the overall pest and disease surveillance work of the National Bee Unit and the Scottish Bee Health Team and supports Defra, Welsh Government and Scottish Government's Bee Health Programmes and we are grateful for your assistance with this new measure.

20. There is no option for country of holding rather than lab postcode. Many labs process samples from England, Scotland and Wales – does this affect reporting requirements?

The updated spreadsheet (v2.0) has now been amended to include an entry enabling the country in which the animal and the holding is located to be recorded, where this information is available.

21. Why are there new reporting requirements? Which legislation makes these diseases notifiable/reportable and which EU legislation is that linked to?

Equivalent legislation has been laid in each of the three GB administrations. Details of the amendments made which brought the new reporting requirements into force are available at:

- England: SI 2021/165 and SI 2021/442
- Scotland: SI 2021/120
- Wales: SI 2021/480 (W.147)

These new reporting requirements are not to align with EU legislation, but rather to comply with a requirement that countries exporting live animals, and germinal products to the EU, have arrangements in place for the notification of certain diseases. This requirement is linked to the EU's Animal Health Regulation which came into force in the EU on 21 April 2021 and specifically Article 6 of the Delegated Act on Entry into the Union.

22. How will you report this data back to the EU?

These disease reporting requirements are domestic arrangements concerning reporting to the Competent Authority. They are not directly linked to international reporting obligations, although the results will be in the public domain and made available on request to trading partners, including the EU.

23. What are the consequences for the farmer of a positive result? Would restrictions be put in place as they are for bTB?

There are no consequences for the diseases where there is monthly reporting (including paratuberculosis/Johnes, IBR and BVDV1); for these diseases the number of positive tests is all that needs to be reported, not the details of the premises.

Any exotic notifiable disease would be dealt with in line with the UK's contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases and any relevant disease control plan.

Action may be required to protect public health, or to investigate the presence of BVDV-2 or PRRSV-2 viruses, which are not (PRRSV-2), or are rarely (BVDV-2), detected in the UK.

24. Is there a requirement to carry out laboratory testing on clinical suspicion of the disease?

The diseases for which reporting is now required are not notifiable and there is no legislation around actions that must be taken on clinical suspicion.

25. Can the data be used to gain further information, for example disease hotspots?

As some of the reportable diseases are of interest to industry sectors, we will be seeking input from both industry and contributing laboratories, on how the data could be used for the benefit of animal health and welfare.

26. You indicate that you want the test numbers, whereas the second part indicates that you want the number of submissions. As many submissions are for multiple tests, please can you clarify which one you require?

Our initial intention was for these to be reported at test level; but with reference to the number of submissions, as a proxy of holdings infected. This gives an indication of the extent of each disease. However, we may need to apply flexibility in the future. It also provides the possibility for guiding industry in the future, for example with regard to control and eradication programmes.

Following feedback from the initial reporting period the reporting spreadsheet has been updated (v2.0, see Q1 and Q14) to clarify these requirements. Hence using the v2.0 reporting spreadsheet for each row reporting test results, the following information is required:

- total number of submissions in which at least one qualifying test was undertaken (voluntary);
- number of submissions with at least one sample testing positive (mandatory);
- number of samples testing positive (mandatory).

27. IBR: we are struggling to understand the logic of reporting positive IBR gE serology results and not positive IBR serology results. Many of the positive IBR serology results will also be indicative of exposure to wild virus.

The test criteria selected for IBR were those considered to be the most likely to be associated with current pathogen presence in a herd/on a holding. It is hoped that the consistent use of specified test types, and specified reporting mechanisms, for each reportable disease will give an indication of disease trends over time

28. Salmonella in dogs: you advise just using existing reporting procedures. The only existing reporting procedures we have in place for Salmonella are for farm animals and require the completion of ZO2 forms. Are you proposing the use of ZO2 forms for reporting Salmonella in dogs, as many of the questions appear irrelevant?

A companion animal ZO2 form is being developed and will be made available as soon as possible. In the interim any queries on reporting *Salmonella* in dogs in England and Wales should be directed to: foodbornezoonoses@apha.gov.uk. In Scotland, please contact the duty vet at your local Field Services Office.

29. Is histology one of the listed tests for reporting Paratuberculosis?

Yes, it is used for diagnosis in a small number of cases, particularly in sheep, goats and camelids.

However, as histopathology is not a specific test for paratuberculosis, we recommend to not include the number of histology tests undertaken (i.e. the denominator data) and include only positive cases, which were not identified by other tests. The same principle should be followed for histopathology (with immunohistochemistry) for other diseases where it is occasionally the primary and only means of detecting disease (PRRS, BVD, IBR).

30. Is milk ELISA one of the listed tests for Paratuberculosis?

Yes, both individual animal and bulk milk ELISA are qualifying tests.

The reported positive results should be based on a positive test result, rather than cow status.

Laboratories should use the test manufacturers recommended cut-off value, to ascertain the cut off for a positive test result. Inconclusive results should not be included in the number of positive submissions/results reported.

Data Protection:
For information on how we handle personal data visit www.gov.uk and search Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

www.gov.uk/apha

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