

Intermediate TB Area North Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. Where is the Intermediate TB Area North?

Please refer to Annex 1 below which shows the location of the Intermediate TB Area North (ITBAN).

2. What is the bovine TB disease picture in the ITBAN?

There were 63 new TB incidents in all of 2017, which represents a 75% increase on the previous 12 months (36 incidents) and the highest annual figure since 2013 (66).

3. What is the current trend in bovine TB disease incidence?

Statistics published by Defra on 17 October 2018, have shown that in the ITBAN there has been a 11% fall in new herd incidents and a 4% decrease in disease-restricted herds in the 12 months to July 2017 compared with the previous 12 months.

4. If levels are decreasing, why are you implementing these additional measures?

We are continuing to closely monitor the disease in the ITBAN and, while the reduction in new incidents is encouraging, we are still concerned about the level of disease in the area, particularly given its proximity to the Low TB Area.

The additional contiguous testing is demand led, based on the number of new OTFW breakdowns in the area. The implication of this reduction is, therefore, there will be fewer herds affected by the additional contiguous testing.

The benefit of the approach we are taking is that we are able to act quickly to target additional testing in the herds at greatest risk of having a TB breakdown, getting ahead of the disease before it has chance to spread.,

5. Why do you see this as a problem?

As part of the TB Eradication Programme it is a long term objective of the Welsh Government to achieve officially TB free status in Wales. The significant increase in the number of new incidents in the ITBAN is a serious concern and goes against the ambition of achieving officially TB free status in Wales. The ITBAN is adjacent to the Low TB Area, which we must protect if

we are to reach our target of declaring the first area in Wales as Officially TB Free by 2023. It is important therefore that cattle keepers continue to take action to protect their herds from bovine TB.

6. What measures are you introducing?

In order to enhance surveillance in the ITBAN, to detect infection quickly and slow the rate of new TB incidents, we are introducing additional enhanced contiguous testing ('CON testing'), in herds surrounding a TB breakdown.

Herds neighbouring TB breakdowns in the ITBAN will be subject to a contiguous test, a 'contiguous 6' test (six months after the initial test), a further 'contiguous 6' test (after a further six months) followed by a final 'contiguous 12' test, 12 months later.

The keepers of herds that test negative to a contiguous test will be offered the opportunity to receive a specialist, Government subsidised, "Keep it Out" style Cymorth TB visit from their local veterinary practice. The visit will give bespoke advice on biosecurity, trading policy and the local epidemiology. Farmers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these visits.

7. When will the measures be introduced?

From 13 November 2018, enhanced TB surveillance in contiguous herds in the ITBAN will begin. This measure is likely to be the first phase of interventions in the ITBAN; other measures to reduce TB incidence in the area, are currently being considered.

8. How long will these measures last?

The measures will be in place for a minimum of 2 years and will be reviewed after 12 months to consider whether progress has been made in reducing incidence levels in the area.

9. What is the aim of additional contiguous testing?

The aim of this measure is to get ahead of the disease, by detecting and removing new infection as quickly as possible, thereby limiting the impact of introduced disease and preventing the establishment of disease in the cattle and wildlife population. Additional contiguous testing will increase the frequency in the short-term of surveillance testing in areas of increased incidence.

10. Who will be responsible for paying for the additional contiguous testing?

The Welsh Government will be paying the testing costs of the contiguous testing regime.

11. What is the aim of a Cymorth TB ‘Keep it Out’ visit?

The aim of a Cymorth TB ‘Keep it Out’ visit will be to provide bespoke advice on practical measures farmers can take to reduce the risk of TB entering their farm. ‘Keep it Out’ visits are being made available to farmers in the ITBAN, whose herds test clear to a contiguous TB test. The emphasis will be practical advice around biosecurity, the local epidemiology and trading policy.

Those herds which suffer a TB breakdown, either during a contiguous, or other, test will be offered a routine Cymorth TB breakdown visit as is usual.

Farmers are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of these subsidised visits.

12. I am a farmer in the ITBAN, how will these changes affect me?

If your herd neighbours a TB breakdown in the ITBAN, your herd will be subject to the new additional contiguous testing regime. At present, herds neighbouring OTFW breakdowns require a contiguous test and a contiguous 12 test. The new measure will require an additional two contiguous tests at six month intervals.

13. What can I do to protect my business?

You can protect your business from TB by taking calculated steps to reduce the risk of your business being affected by TB. Official Veterinarians will be able to provide bespoke advice on informed purchasing and biosecurity during your Cymorth TB ‘Keep it out’ visit.

Informed purchasing/Risk Based Trading

Buying in cattle always carries the risk of introducing disease. For example, there are high levels of breakdown recurrence in the 18 months following a TB breakdown. Purchasing from a herd which is in this post-breakdown period is likely to increase the risk of buying in a TB infected animal.

For Risk Based Trading to work, information needs to be exchanged between sellers and buyers so that buyers have a better understanding of the risk of introducing disease to their herd. Requesting information at the point of sale allows buyers to make more informed buying decisions and to take sensible precautions in the introduction of new animals.

Biosecurity

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity means using preventive measures to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to protect your herd and neighbouring herds.

What are the key risks?

- Livestock movements;
- Contact between different livestock populations at farm boundaries;
- Movements of machinery, vehicles and people on and off the farm;
- Fallen stock disposal;
- The farm environment/location.

What are the benefits of maintaining good biosecurity?

- Helps to keep diseases out;
- Reduces the potential spread of disease;
- Helps to keep animals healthy;
- Can cut costs of disease prevention;
- Can improve farm production efficiency;

What can you do?

Reduce the risk of infection arriving on your farm and limit the spread of infection by establishing a series of barriers to disease.

- Measure – use records to identify how much disease you have on the farm;
- Manage – plan with your vet to put control measures in place, and
- Monitor – regularly review the measures and adapt them if necessary.

Speak to your vet – good biosecurity and health planning discussions with your vet will help you to minimise the risk of introducing disease onto your farm and enable you to more easily manage and control disease and prevent its spread.

Further information and useful contacts can be found in the booklet, Bovine TB, Reducing the risk in the Intermediate Area North (ITBAN). Links to this information are below:

<https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/181016-bovine-tb-itban-booklet-cy.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/181016-bovine-tb-itban-booklet-en.pdf>

14. Are there any other measures planned for the Area?

Consideration is currently being given to further additional measures which could be applied in the area to drive down the disease.

15. I am on the Welsh/English border do these rules apply to me?

Yes, if you have a Welsh CPH. The new measures will not change the way our cross border farms are managed and if farms on the border have a Welsh CPH then they will also need to comply with the new measures. In cases where there is a cross border TB breakdown, APHA will manage that breakdown on a case by case basis.

The TB Advisory Service (TBAS) are offering subsidised visits on the English side of the border.

16. Are the rules still the same regarding Pre (PrMT) and Post-movement testing (PoMT)?

Yes. All cattle in Wales need to have a PrMT unless they are moving from or within the Low TB Area and higher risk herds in the Low TB Area also need to PrMT.

Herds subject to Contiguous Testing in the ITBAN will still need to PrMT,

Cattle in Wales only need a PoMT when they are moved from an Intermediate TB Area or High TB Area in Wales (or from England's Edge Area, High Risk Area, or Northern Ireland) into the Low TB Area.

The PoMT is only required for moves from a higher disease area into the Low TB Area.

17. Why do you require additional contiguous testing, surely the test is more accurate than you are suggesting?

The additional testing will provide an opportunity to identify infected animals at the earliest opportunity, minimising the likelihood of the disease going on to infect other cattle in the herd and potentially wildlife in the area. A reactor to the skin test, even if there are no lesions typical of TB at post-mortem examination, is likely to be truly infected with the disease.

However, the sensitivity of the skin test is only around 80%, which means only 80 out of 100 infected animals are likely to test positive at the standard interpretation of the test. Some animals only partially react to the test (inconclusive status). A significant proportion of these animals go on to become reactors at a later test (or during their lifetime).

The earlier that infected cattle can be identified and removed the less likely they are to spread infection to the rest of the population.

It is important for the long-term health of the herd that such animals are removed, as soon as possible.

18. Will you look at wildlife in the ITBAN as part of the controls?

Yes, if herds meet the criteria of being under TB restrictions for 18 months or more and Welsh Government views that badgers are implicated in the persistence of disease.

19. Will the Badger Found Dead Survey continue as part of a regionalised approach?

An All Wales Badger Found Dead Survey commenced on 1 September 2017, this includes genotyping of positive results where applicable.

Analysis of the Current Badger Found Dead Survey results has been undertaken, however the low numbers of submissions in the ITBAN mean that it is very difficult to draw any solid conclusions as to what role, if any, wildlife is playing in this spike in incidents.

It is therefore imperative that anyone finding a dead badger carcass either in the ITBAN itself or elsewhere in Wales should phone **0808 1695110** for further information and instructions.

20. Is there a correlation between infected badgers found and TB breakdowns in Wales?

Yes, analysis of the molecular types of bovine TB in badgers from the 2005/06 Badger Found Dead Survey were found to be common with *M. bovis* in cattle in the area. The survey report concluded that tuberculosis in badgers in Wales is closely associated with the disease in cattle, indicative of transmission of infection between the two species.

21. How do I arrange for my herd to be CHeCS accredited?

If you are interested in joining the Cattle Health Certification Scheme for TB, discuss with your vet and contact one of the scheme providers:

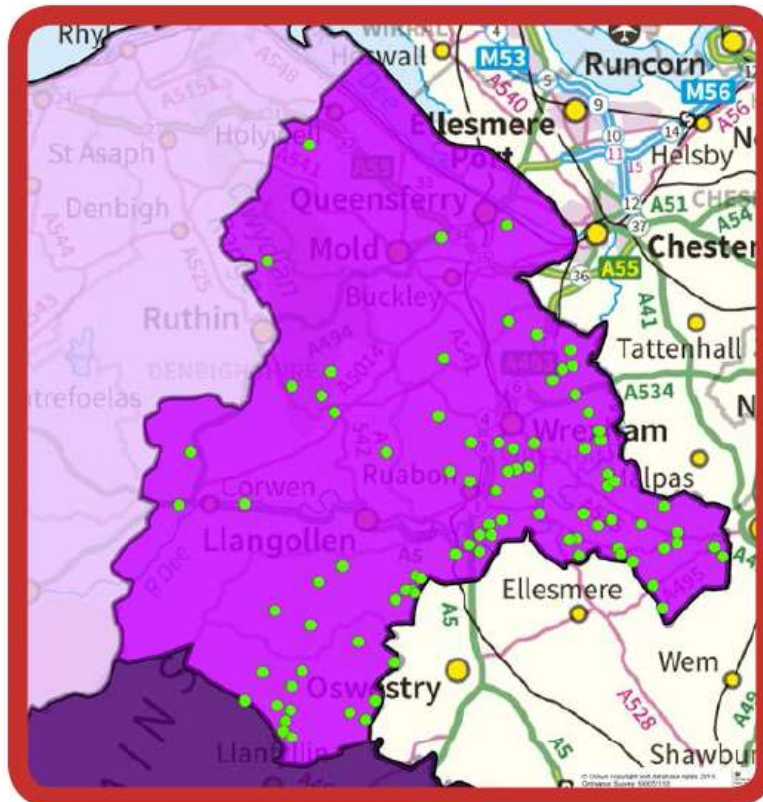
HiHealth Herdcare: 01314 402628

Premium Cattle Health Scheme: 01835 822456

<http://www.checs.co.uk>

Annex 1

Intermediate TB Area North (ITBAN)



- High TB Area East
- High TB Area West
- Intermediate TB Area North
- Intermediate TB Area Mid
- Low TB
- ITBAN Breakdown July 2017 to June 2018