

## **Herd TB statuses and restrictions**

In order to move or trade cattle, herds need to be free from infection and classified as Officially Tuberculosis Free.

### **Restrictions**

In Wales, Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) cattle herds are routinely tested, using the Single Intradermal Comparative Cervical Test (SICCT or “skin test”) at least once every year. This is a key part of our TB surveillance and is designed to provide confidence that herds are genuinely free of TB and able to trade cattle.

The OTF status of a herd is lost, when movement restrictions are placed on the herd in any of the following circumstances:

- When an animal is identified as a reactor, or an inconclusive reactor (IR) to the skin test.
- When an animal is suspected of having TB, either as a clinical case at meat inspection in an abattoir, or at post-mortem examination.
- When an animal tests positive to an Interferon-gamma\*, or IDEXX test\*, when additional surveillance is carried out in herds, which have a clear test to the skin test in specified areas of North Wales.
- A skin test becomes overdue.

\*The Interferon-gamma (the “gamma test”) and the IDEXX test are blood tests used to supplement the skin test in identifying additional TB infected animals missed by the skin test.

When movement restrictions have been served on the herd:

- No movement is allowed into or out of the herd unless licensed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).
- Cattle can move under licence from the herd directly to slaughter, to an Approved Slaughter Gathering, to an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU), to an AFUE in England, to a TB Dedicated Sale (“Orange Market”), to a TB Isolation Unit, or to another TB restricted holding. Licences to allow these moves are only approved following a favourable risk assessment.
- No restocking is allowed until the cattle remaining have completed an additional whole herd skin test. In certain circumstances e.g. in slaughterhouse cases an immediate whole herd Check Test (CT) may be required and a further whole herd skin test.
- APHA will serve a notice requiring isolation of animals that are clinical suspects, are reactors or IRs to the skin test, are gamma and/or IDEXX test positive, or are identified as Direct Contacts (higher risk animals) for removal.

Movement restrictions reduce the risk of TB spreading within and between cattle herds. When a herd has been placed under movement restrictions more testing takes place until the required testing regime has been completed with negative, or clear results.

In the case of an overdue test, a test of all eligible animals is required, before movement restrictions are removed.

## Statutes

Cattle herds in Wales can have a TB status of:

- **Officially TB Free (OTF)**
- **Officially TB Free Suspended (OTFS)**
- **Officially TB Free Withdrawn (OTFW)**

### Officially TB Free

Herds with a clear test history are described as OTF. These herds have satisfied the testing requirements needed to allow them to trade cattle on the open market.

### Officially TB Free Suspended (OTFS)

From 17th January 2022, all new TB breakdowns across Wales, with only two exceptions listed below, will be classified as Officially TB Free Status Withdrawn (OTFW).

The only two exceptions, which will continue to be classified as OTFS, are:

- OTF herds where one or more suspect slaughterhouse case(s) have been disclosed and culture results are still pending. A whole herd skin Check Test is usually required and providing this test is clear and a culture, or PCR result is negative, movement restrictions are removed (see OTFW below).
- In specified spatial units\*\* and clusters in North Wales, breakdown herds where non-homebred animals positive to a gamma and/or IDEXX test only have been disclosed (i.e. no skin reactors were identified in a skin test) and disease has not been confirmed on post-mortem examination (PME), or on cultures set up to grow the organism. These incidents require a single clear skin test at standard interpretation for movement restrictions to be removed (see OTFW below).

Herds where movement restrictions are applied as a result of an overdue skin test are also considered as OTFS, until the required testing has been satisfactorily completed.

*Note:* All previous OTFS herds with a breakdown that started prior to 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 will remain OTFS unless any further skin test reactor is disclosed, or additional specific epidemiological risk factors are identified.

\*\*Wales is divided into geographical areas called spatial units comprising entire parishes. Each spatial unit comprises 225 holdings and has an identifier e.g. CL7 is Clwyd 7.

### Officially TB Free Withdrawn

From 17th January 2022, all new TB breakdowns across Wales, initiated by a skin test reactor, or two x IR will be classified as Officially TB Free Status Withdrawn (OTFW).

Those breakdowns still being classified as OTFS (as outlined above) will become OTFW if:

- One or more skin test reactors (or two-times standard IRs) are disclosed in any subsequent skin test.
- A slaughterhouse case is culture positive.
- Visible lesions are found at PME and/or culture results are positive for breakdowns where non-homebred animals are gamma and/or IDEXX positive only.

- A Veterinary Lead Wales has discretion to classify an OTFS herd as OTFW, in exceptional circumstances.

Additional actions are taken in an OTFW breakdown to ensure all risks of spread of disease from infected animals have been minimised:

- animals moved from the breakdown herd are traced and tested if appropriate,
- neighbouring herds are investigated and tested if appropriate,
- additional animals which are at risk of infection may be considered for slaughter as Direct Contacts (DCs),
- slaughter of the remaining animals in the group or herd may be considered if infection is severe and extensive.

When a herd is classified as OTFW, follow up testing takes place until we are satisfied that the disease is no longer present. Herds with an OTFW status require two clear consecutive TB tests at a minimum interval of 60 days, with at least the first test being at severe interpretation, in order to regain OTF status and for movement restrictions to be lifted.

### **Further information**

Information on what happens if TB is identified in your herd is available from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) (external link).