

21 February 2024

Dear

## **ATISN 20146**

### **Information requested**

Thank you for your request which I received on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024. You asked for:

1. Copy of Welsh Government current policy regarding the control of Bovine TB in cattle.
2. Copy of Welsh Government current policy regarding the control of Bovine TB in wildlife.
3. Details of the "Gamma diagnostic blood test" for Bovine TB referred to.

### **Our response**

In response to questions 1 and 2, Welsh Government's current policy regarding the control of Bovine TB in cattle and wildlife is detailed in the Wales Bovine TB Eradication Programme Delivery Plan published on the Welsh Government's website in March 2023. The Delivery Plan can be found at: [Wales Bovine TB eradication programme: delivery plan 2023 | GOV.WALES](#)

In response to question 3, the interferon gamma blood test is a laboratory based supplementary test for the diagnosis of TB in cattle. It is approved in the EU for use in conjunction with the tuberculin skin test to increase the overall sensitivity of testing. It is usually only used in herds under TB restrictions. The test is approved for statutory use in the testing of bovine animals in GB and the keeper has a legal obligation to comply with all reasonable requirements to allow it to be used in their herd.

The skin test can miss 20-25% of TB-infected cattle at standard interpretation and likewise the gamma test cannot identify every infected animal. The two tests identify slightly different 'sub populations' of TB-infected animals, e.g. the gamma test is more sensitive than the skin test and can identify cattle at an earlier stage of infection, as well as infected animals that simply fail to respond to the skin test. Hence using both tests together increases the probability of detecting more infected animals in the herd.

Blood samples are collected from cattle on-farm and the test is carried out in the laboratory under a stringent quality control system. Test positive animals (gamma and skin test reactors) do not necessarily show lesions typical of TB at post mortem inspection. This is because the animals are often in the early stages of infection when TB lesions are too small to be seen by the naked eye. Further information can be found at [TB hub interferon gamma blood test](#)

### **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely