

Committee Name:	East Anglia Regional TB Meeting – Livestock and Dairy Boards	Meeting Date:	03. February 2014
Circulation:	Dairy Board and Livestock Board delegates Group Secretaries	Location:	Regional Office, Newmarket
		Chairman:	Roger Long
		Secretary:	Adam Scott
		Tel:	01638 672114
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Present: Roger Long, Jonathan Brown, Andrew Foulds, Kevin Morgan-Jones, Judith Jacobs, Denise Thomas, Gary Hubert, Tony Evans, Ken Procter, Paul Baker, Jane Schwier, Chris Evans, Richard Davis, Tim Burton, William Brigham, Tom Crawford, Jon Reaves, Bob Amott, Gavin Hughes

For NFU: Diane Armitage, Adam Scott, Hannah Padfield, Rosie Barnett

For AHVLA : Andy Patterson, Susana Taylor, Isabela Ciofaca

Apologies: Ian Frood, Edward Stanton, Stuart Roberts, Julia Camp, Keith Williams, Gerald Ketley, Andrew Blenkiron, Roger Martin, Simon Merrett.

Key points:

- Farmers presented a list of detailed concerns relating to AHVLA communications and disease control management – many of these were accepted by AHVLA.
- TB is a difficult disease to control and it is not possible to have control measures that do not cause some collateral damage.
- EU funding is a vital part of the £100 annual cost of disease control measures. Defra have to be responsive to EU demands to tighten controls.
- Poor communications with AHVLA partly reflect the significant internal restructuring that has resulted in knowledgeable staff leaving. The new AHVLA region comprises 17 counties further complicating communications
- Rebuilding relationships with the industry is essential and further staff recruitment and training is required by AHVLA
- Communications should be directed through the central number at Bury St Edmunds, with your case vet being the first point of contact if a breakdown is suspected.
- Farmers are encouraged to be pro-active in developing TB plans with their private vets to protect their herds.
- AHVLA will provide further guidance on a number of areas to help disease management

Minutes for the East Anglia Regional TB meeting 03 February 2014

Meeting Objectives

- To raise awareness of the confused communications and mixed messages farms feel they receive from AHVLA which provide an ongoing generic concern
- To help to re build trust and relationships. Many recall that the FMD crisis led to good working practices and sharing information to support the industry – this appears to have been lost
- Identify where farmers / NFU can help

AHVLA Structure

Following a restructure in 2013 England is now divided into 4 AHVLA regions: East Anglian is in with the South East a combined region covering 17 counties. Andy Paterson is Veterinary Lead AHVLA South East. Andy also holds the TB lead for the South East and East Anglia. Anthony Greenleaves is the Veterinary Lead for East Anglia and is the lead for Exotic diseases for South East and East Anglia.

Susana Taylor is the lead TB VO for East Anglia. Isabela Ciofaca - is a new AHVLA Vet working on TB

AHVLA have undergone significant restructuring over the past 12 months. The Reigate office is effectively closed, transferring most functions but few staff to Chelmsford. The Reigate support team were very able and this loss has resulted in confused messages as the new team at Chelmsford gets up to speed with the details of TB legislation.

Vet numbers currently stand at 23 with a target of 30 for the South East / East Anglian region. As this region now comprises 17 counties, the scale limits the ability of AHVLA staff to have the detailed local knowledge that they would wish. Recruitment for the additional 7 posts is due shortly.

The variability in testing skills between vets was raised. It was confirmed that quality assurance steps are taken to maintain the standards delivered and AHVLA do unannounced audits of OV testing.

Good handling facilities are essential to allow accurate testing as through-puts need to be fast to allow all animals to be tested with in the timeframes available. There have been two deaths while TB testing in the last year.

Action: Ensure handling facilities are suitable for accurate and safe testing.

Action: AHVLA to provide a 1 page summary for Practical steps for easier TB testing (eg crush set up, do bulls first, labour requirement, etc)

Contracts for private vet work have recently been put out to tender. This process reflected the need to meet stringent EU tendering rules that were not met by the current arrangements. It is envisaged that a small number of national Holding Companies will administer the testing, sub contracting actual testing to local vets at the OVs. Some local vets have indicated that they do not find the work financially viable.

AHVLA contacts: The new structure utilises a central phone number from Bury St Edmunds. Calls will then be redirected to the appropriate satellite office either in Norwich, Colchester or Bury St Edmunds

AHVLA regional contact: 01284 778 150

TB controls - background driving recent changes

Andy Paterson provide a frank review of the current TB control measures and explained how a number of previous "loopholes" in the testing requirements made no sense in terms of disease control. While some of the tightened measures were going to cause problems for those caught by them TB is not an easy disease to control and there will be some "collateral" damage. Those working in 1 year testing areas would love to be working under the conditions 4 yearly testing zones "enjoy".

The importance of the €30m EU funding to the overall annual budget was underlined. The EU commissions have made it clear that they expect the UK to deliver against the TB control programme and funding will be withdrawn if these controls are not in place and effectively

administered. The FVO are due to visit 15 -26 September; this inspection will be critically important to future funding.

All were encouraged to plan for a TB breakdown and discuss options with their vet. Good records of livestock movements within each holding greatly help and allow Veterinary Risk Assessments to be more accurate when holdings are caught in a breakdown.

Action: Speak to you vet and develop a plan for a TB breakdown

Discussions also considered the inherent weakness with CTS Links: Removing the CTS links is progressing more slowly than expected, it will be possible to reapply for CTS links in the future once the slate has been wiped clean. The restrictions on restocking while under certain restrictions was discussed and the limits on SOAs. Approved Finishing Units (AFUs) were seen positively and were encouraged although local experience highlighted the lack of understanding that surrounds AHVLA advice when setting these up.

East Anglian Issues

The issues raised on agenda broadly fell in to three areas as follows:

Identifying local herds / Cattle keepers

The problems with the various databases not allowing accurate herd identification were recognised. The RPA CHP system has evolved to allow payments not manage disease control which is a weak point. The BCMS CTS is the source of information on cattle locations for AHVLA. Where movement records are not sent to BCMS AHVLA will be unsighted. AHVLA aware that RPA CPH system will not be reviewed until 2017 to allow the new CAP Basic Payment Scheme to be bedded in.

Action: Farmers are encouraged to speak to AHVLA in confidence if they are aware of cattle that may not be on the AHVLA radar. This should be viewed as responsible animals disease management not "landing you neighbour in it".

Testing and notifications

Confusion occurs with SAM listing the animals to be tested in order of the check digit. This needs reviewing.

Action: AHVLA to see why SAM uses the check digit to list stock and if this is necessary.

Multiple letters received from AHVLA was a frequent source of frustration and confusion to farmers. The loss of the Reigate support staff with the office closure was seen as a major cause of this. Speaking directly with you case officer was the first step. More persistent errors anomalies should be discussed with Susana Taylor.

Susana Taylor: 07738 898748

Post movement testing was encourage in addition to pre movement testing for those who wanted to ensure greatest protection from introducing TB into their herds.

Notification of neighbours before an outbreak is confirmed. This has caused conflicting issues for a number of farmers – some want more information others do not want to be identified wrongly. It was stressed that there should be no shame attached to having a TB reactor identified – this is a slow developing difficult disease to control and manage.

Slow movement of reactors to abattoirs has occurred. It was confirmed that 10 days is the target for these to be collected. Following re tendering the nearest abattoir for reactors is Gloucestershire. Animals can be put down on farm if welfare grounds dictate this is required.

Trading cattle

Movement on and of marshes when under a TB 34 was a weak point that leaves other cattle exposed to the risk on TB infection.

Action: AHVLA to check the wording on TB 34 and provide clarity

For those letting land to a number of graziers it is suggested that private rules on TB testing and control measures are built into the letting agreement

Action: Consider including TB testing controls in grazing agreements

AOB Next meeting Dates

Individual boards to confirm their dates

Potential Livestock Board dates are

National Board Tuesday	Pre Wednesday	Post Wednesday	
25 March 2014		2 April	Easter 18 -21 April
20 May 2014		4 June	Suffolk show week before
15 July 2014		23 July	? harvest
23 September 2014		1 October	
25 November 2014		3 December	After county ACMs
27 January 2015		4 February 15	

The meeting closed at 15:30.

Action Summary

#	Action	Who	Due
1	Updates to be provided as available	AS DA	
2	Ensure handling facilities are suitable for accurate and safe testing.	All	
3	1 page summary for Practical steps for easier TB testing	AP	
4	Speak to AHVLA in confidence if they are aware of cattle that may not be on the AHVLA radar	All	
5	AHVLA to see why SAM uses the check digit to list stock	AP	
6	AHVLA to check the wording on TB 34 and provide clarity	AP	
7	Consider including TB testing controls in grazing agreements	All	

