

# Business Guides



## **Bovine TB** Business Guide Ref: 921

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# Bovine TB:

## INTRODUCTION

The disease is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*), which can also infect and cause disease in badgers, deer, goats, pigs, camelids (llamas and alpacas), dogs and cats, as well as many other mammals. Bovine TB (bTB) is a zoonotic disease, which means that it can be naturally transmitted from animals to humans under certain conditions. bTB is one of the biggest challenges facing the cattle farming industry today, particularly in parts of Wales, the West and South West of England.

Recent figures show that:

- Costs to UK economy - £500 million over the past 10 years increasing to £1 billion in the next 10 years
- 7.5 million cattle in GB tested in 2017
- 277,341 cattle culled in GB between 2008 and December 2017
- 3,824 new recorded outbreaks during 2017
- 1 in 3 badgers have bTB in some disease hotspots

Up to date statistics can be found in Defra's Epidemiology Analysis; which is published every year to analyse data and historical trends.

Read the full 2016 Epidemiology Analysis [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-epidemiology-and-surveillance-in-great-britain-2016>

Defra also publish analysis of data and trend on a county by county basis. Read [here](#).

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/681899/tb-epi-eng-county-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681899/tb-epi-eng-county-report.pdf)

## DEFRA POLICY

### 25 Year Strategy

Defra launched The Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free Status for England in April 2014.

In February 2018, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, announced a review of the 25 year strategy. The review will consider which actions are necessary now to ensure other tools and interventions are ready to be deployed in later phases of the strategy. The Government have also announced that there will strategy reviews every 5 years.

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### Defra Consultations

To ensure the strategy is working, Defra constantly review the cattle and badger control methods.

Defra carry out consultation exercises with stakeholders when necessary but usually every 6-12 months. They aim to propose changes which strike a balance between robust disease controls - aimed ultimately at achieving OTF status for England - and supporting a sustainable livestock industry. In order to achieve OTF status it is vital that Government works closely with stakeholders to ensure that policy enhancements can be delivered and that any adverse impacts are minimised.

Farmers are able to view consultations on the Defra consultation hub [here](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/consultation_finder/).  
[https://consult.defra.gov.uk/consultation\\_finder/](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/consultation_finder/)

They can respond to the consultations directly to Defra or through their NFU membership by visiting the NFU Animal Health and Welfare pages [here](https://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/animal-health/animal-health-news/). <https://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/animal-health/animal-health-news/>

### Policy Updates

Defra policy updates can occur at any time throughout the year and arise from the public consultations that Defra launch. Once they have gathered industry views from a consultation they will then announce the policy changes which will occur.

Cattle keepers are encouraged to keep up to date with these policy changes by visiting the [Animal Health and Welfare page](http://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/animal-health/) [www.nfuonline.com/sectors/animal-health/](http://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/animal-health/) of NFU Online and by visiting the Defra website.

NFU members will also receive weekly bulletins via email and any updates or changes are included in the British Farmer & Grower magazine received on a monthly basis.

## TB TESTING – PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

### Testing intervals – WHT/6m/annual/4yrly

England is split into three different areas due to the varying levels of TB incidence across the country. The map below shows the three areas:

The High Risk Area (HRA) – TB incidence is high

The Edge Area – TB incidence is much lower than in the HRA, however there is a wide variation in TB across the counties.

The Low Risk Area (LRA) – TB incidence is low

(See risk map below)

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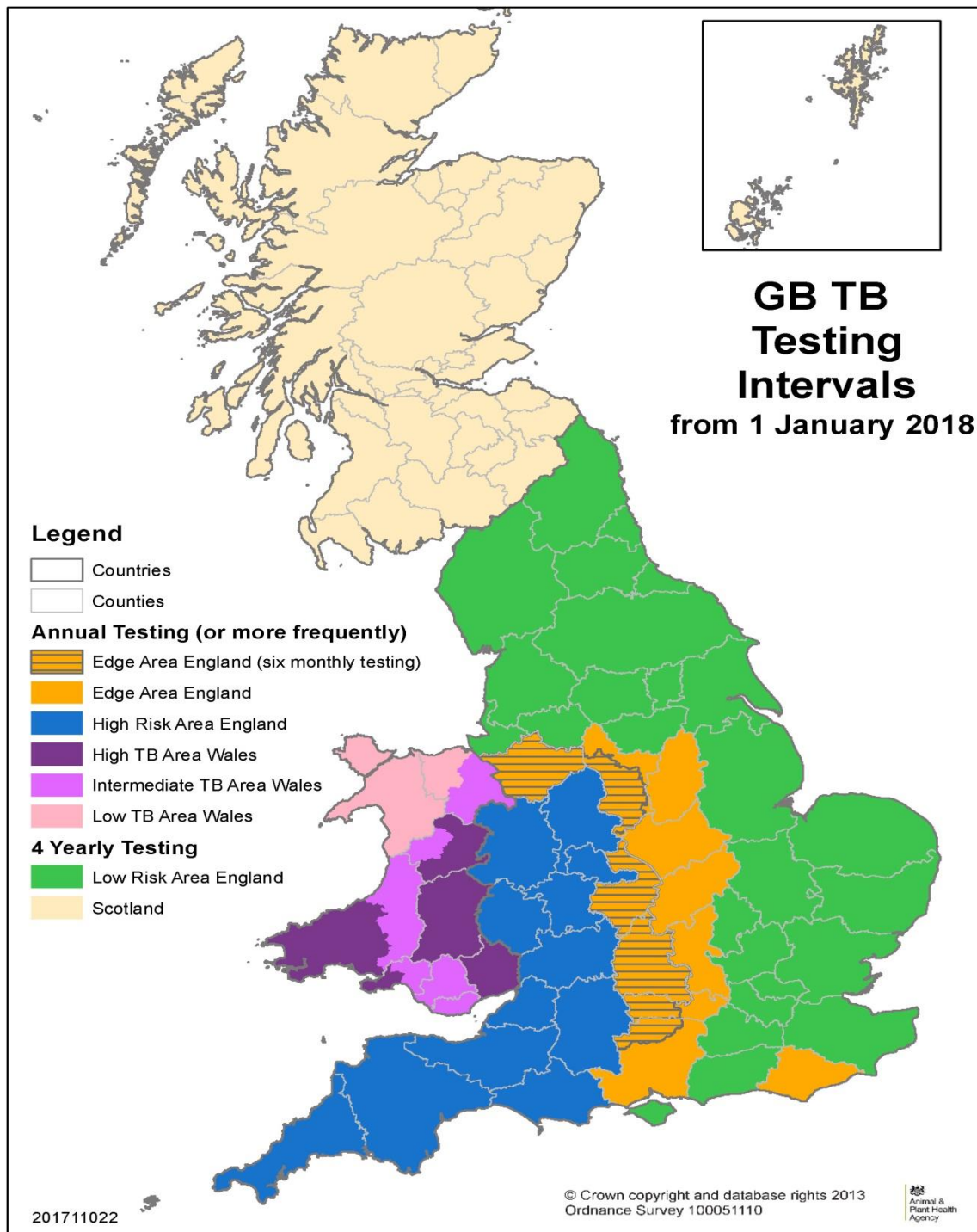
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### Pre-movement testing

Pre-movement TB testing (PrMT) reduces the risk of bovine TB spreading to new herds through movements of cattle. Pre-movement testing is a statutory requirement for certain Officially TB Free (OTF) herds.

It is the farmer's responsibility to book and pay for a pre-movement test with their private vet, although farmers can move stock that have tested clear at a statutory i.e. annual test.

Clear pre-movement test results are valid for 60 days from the date of injection (day one of the test).

Read the APHA guidance on pre-movement [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-movement-and-post-movement-tb-testing-of-cattle-in-great-britain) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-movement-and-post-movement-tb-testing-of-cattle-in-great-britain>

### Post-movement testing

Post-movement testing (PoMT) is compulsory in the Low Risk Area (LRA) and optional in the Edge Area and the High Risk Area (HRA) of England.

Post-movement tests must be carried out between 60 and 120 days after the movement on to the premises and must be arranged and paid for by the farmer.

### Inconclusive reactors

If an animal had read inconclusive on any test, it will need to be re-tested in 60 days. If on re-test the animal is read as negative, it will remain on farm for the duration of its life. The only way that animal can leave the farm is via an APHA license to slaughter (either direct or via an Approved Finishing Unit).

To release resolved IRs from life-long restrictions, farmers will have the option of interferon gamma blood testing (paid for by the animal owner), subject to securing prior approval from APHA.

If a resolved IR tests negative to the gamma test, the movement restrictions on the animal will be lifted and it could move freely (unless whole herd movement restrictions apply).

### Refusal to test

As cattle owners, farmers will be advised by letter when the herd, or a specific animal, must be tested and are obliged to arrange a bovine TB test before the end of the specified testing period. The herd will be placed on movement restrictions (TB2) immediately if it is overdue for testing. The restrictions prevent movements of cattle on or off the premises and will remain in force until the testing has been completed and there is no evidence of TB.

### Late testing

If a cattle herd is required to have a TB test, the cattle keeper must ensure the Official Veterinary (OV) nominated to test the cattle, starts the test and injects all eligible cattle before the expiry testing window notified by APHA.

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Read the APHA guidance on penalties for overdue TB testing [here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf)

If cattle keepers know they will not be able to complete the test on time, they must contact their local APHA office immediately. If there are extenuating circumstances which will prevent the test being completed on time, these must be provided in writing to APHA. Farmers should not wait until the test becomes overdue due to cross compliance penalties.

### Cross Compliance implications

Cross compliance refers to the requirement for recipients of certain CAP subsidy payments to meet a range of agricultural and environmental standards and certain statutory requirements (including TB testing requirements). These apply if farmers receive direct payments under the Single Farm Payment Scheme (SPS) and/or through certain Rural Development Schemes. Cross compliance rules will also have to be met by recipients of subsidy from the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS).

If cross compliance penalties are applied, RPA will inform the cattle keeper to explain the reason for the level of reduction.

The table sets out the typical reduction for overdue tests:

Overdue (days)	Reduction (%)
1 – 10	1
11-30	3
30+	5

Cattle keepers can appeal, if there is a disagreement with the amount of reduction. APHA will inform you of who to contact. Read more [here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405229/tb-in-0115-late-tb-testing-cross-compliance.pdf)

To further encourage the timely testing of cattle, compensation will be reduced for cattle found to be reactors with an overdue test of 60 or more days.

See compensation on page 10.

### TB Status of a herd

#### - Officially TB Free (OTF)

Herds become OTF once there is no suspicion of TB within the herd and providing all TB tests are up to date. There are no movement restrictions placed on the herd.

#### - Officially TB Free Suspended (OTFS)

Herds become OTFS when there is suspicion of TB. In simple terms the OTF status of the herd will be suspended. This is because of a skin reactor; which has not had any visible lesions on post

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mortem. Restrictions will be placed on the herd until the following short interval tests (SIT) become clear.

### - Officially TB Free Withdrawn (OTFW)

Herds will become OTFW when skin test reactors are found with visible lesions at post mortem. Restrictions will be placed on the herd until the following SITs become clear.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Help and assistance

According to the [Health and Safety Executive annual report 2016/2017](http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/resources/fatal.htm)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/resources/fatal.htm> there were 2 fatal accidents involving cattle. Cattle are unpredictable and handling them can be dangerous especially with the added stress on both cattle and handlers of TB testing, accidents can be all too common.

By providing sufficient and appropriately experienced help to move groups of cattle into and through the handling facilities, the test will go more quickly with less stress to cattle and less risk of injury to all involved.

APHA staff will not routinely be able to help gather or move animals. If a keeper fails to present cattle for testing safely and the inspector considers the facilities and assistance provided to be inadequate, the test will not proceed until the issues are resolved.

This could mean your test becomes overdue and movement restrictions may be applied.

### Handling facilities

It is a legal requirement for keepers to provide suitable handling facilities in order for the vet to carry out safe and correct TB testing.

Testing and handling facilities must:

- allow safe movement of cattle
- include a suitable handling system (such as a crush and penning system linked by a secure race)
- make it easy for inspectors to restrain and examine cattle, clip their hair, measure the skin with callipers, and give them injections
- be in good working order
- be suitable for the size and breed of cattle that have to be tested
- be well-lit so inspectors can read ear tags and carry out the test

A vet or inspector may cancel the test on the day if they decide the cattle keeper hasn't prepared for it or it's not safe to go ahead. Cattle keepers are still responsible for making sure cattle are safely

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tested on time. It is also the cattle keepers' responsibility to ensure there is enough staff to move cattle through quickly and safely.

Please read the [information sheet](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais35.pdf) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais35.pdf> from HSE on housing and handling cattle.

### Veterinary treatment & other tasks

Cattle keepers should avoid giving routine veterinary medicines like wormers or vaccines once the test has started, and until the test has been completed for each individual animal, as they could interfere with the skin test results.

Cattle keepers should seek the advice of a vet before administering medicines around TB testing.

## MINIMISING DISEASE RISK

### Biosecurity

Biosecurity measures can be taken by farmers to reduce the opportunities for cattle coming into contact with infection, whether that is other cattle or wildlife.

From a cattle perspective there are various tasks a keeper can carry out to reduce the risk of TB to cattle.

#### - Risk Based Trading (RBT)

The key objective of risk based trading (RBT) is to consider the TB history of the herd that keepers are buying from, so that the risk of introducing TB into the herd can be determined and managed. RBT can play an important part in helping to reduce the spread of bovine TB.

Read more [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/risk-based-trading/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/risk-based-trading/>

#### - Pre- and Post-movement testing

Pre-movement testing reduces the risk of TB spreading to cattle through movements. It is the farmer's responsibility to organise and pay for the pre-movement test through the private vet.

Post-movement testing should be carried out on cattle before introducing them to a herd. It is compulsory in the Low Risk Area (LRA), for cattle that have moved from other areas of England and Wales.

Read more [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/pre-and-post-movement-testing/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/pre-and-post-movement-testing/>

#### - Isolating cattle

Introducing cattle into a herd can pose many disease risks. Isolation should be part of a keeper's herd health plan to ensure that the cattle are not incubating any disease and to give time to test for all diseases, not just TB.

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Reactor cattle and inconclusive reactors should be isolated immediately until they are sent for slaughter. These cattle pose a risk to the rest of the herd.

Read more [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/isolating-cattle/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/isolating-cattle/>

### - *Cleansing and disinfecting*

Effective cleansing and disinfecting on farm is important for TB and other disease controls. Cleaning and disinfecting clothing, footwear and equipment after contact with cattle will help reduce the risk of disease.

Read more [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/cleansing-and-disinfection/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/cleansing-and-disinfection/>

### - *Reducing contact between neighbouring herds.*

Infection of TB from neighbouring herds can occur through direct contact (nose to nose when grazing), or indirect contact, (through equipment).

One method to reduce this risk would be to erect suitable fencing or barriers between neighbouring herds of at least 3 metres wide.

Read more [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/neighbouring-herds/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/cattle/neighbouring-herds/>

## Wildlife measures

Many species of non-bovine farmed animals can be susceptible to bovine TB, such as camelids, deer, sheep pigs and goats. Wild mammals can also be susceptible and evidence carried out by APHA shows that badgers are the principle maintenance host of bovine TB in wildlife.

Read more on TB in badgers [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/wildlife/effects-tb-infection-badgers/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/wildlife/effects-tb-infection-badgers/>

Read more on TB in other wildlife [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/wildlife/tb-in-other-wildlife/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/wildlife/tb-in-other-wildlife/>

Read more on TB in non-bovines [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/non-bovines/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/non-bovines/>

### - *Wildlife biosecurity on farm*

There are various biosecurity actions that cattle keepers can carry out in order to minimise the risk of TB from wildlife and reduce the risk of disease.

Badgers are known to use cattle pastures and also visit farm buildings such as cattle sheds and feed stores. These activities can increase the likelihood of cattle being in direct contact with badgers and increase the risk of transmitting bovine TB.

Cattle keepers can use biosecurity measures to reduce the opportunity for cattle and badger direct contact.

The TB Hub has a comprehensive list and video guides to help cattle keepers understand the actions which can be carried out to reduce the risk. Even though it may not be practical to apply all measures

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on a farm, taking some practical action is a sensible precautionary approach to managing herd health.

Read the biosecurity measures on the [TB Hub](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/biosecurity-factsheets/) <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/biosecurity-factsheets/>

### - *Badger culling*

In the Government's commitment to eradicating TB, they see badger culling as an integral part of the strategy. Badger culling has taken place in England since 2011, firstly as pilots and then as a part of a wider bovine TB eradication strategy. Controlled shooting of badgers was trialled in Gloucestershire and Somerset in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, a badger cull continued in these two areas and was extended to a third area in Dorset. In 2016 the cull was extended to 7 new areas, and 11 more were added in 2017.

### - *Badger vaccination*

In September 2017, the Government relaunched the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme (BEVS2) in the Edge Are of England. BEVS is a key measure in the Government's strategy to eradicate bovine TB in England.

Due to a vaccine shortage the original scheme had to be suspended in 2014.

More information and BEVS applications can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/badger-vaccination-scheme-relaunched-in-fight-against-bovine-tb).  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/badger-vaccination-scheme-relaunched-in-fight-against-bovine-tb>

## CATTLE MOVEMENT LICENSES

Cattle on TB restricted holdings are only permitted to move on and off the farm via an APHA license, in order to control disease.

If a license is required, an [application form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-restricted-cattle-application-for-movement-licence-in-england) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-restricted-cattle-application-for-movement-licence-in-england> must be sent to the TB licensing team at APHA.

Note that the TB licensing team need a minimum of 5 working days to process a license and during busy periods it is advised to apply for the license with as much time as possible.

APHA will assess each license application and will need as much information as possible in order to carry out a risk assessment for the movement.

Once APHA have made a decision, they will contact the cattle keeper to confirm if the license has been granted or not.

APHA do have the ability to refuse a license request if they see the movement to be of high risk. APHA will contact the applicant to explain the refusal.

Farmers can apply for a license in the following circumstances:

- for welfare reasons

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- for breeding reasons
- for economic reasons

More detail can be found [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/guidance/planning-for-the-worst-and-hoping-for-the-best-how-can-i-reduce-the-impact-of-a-btb-breakdown-on-my-business/). <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/guidance/planning-for-the-worst-and-hoping-for-the-best-how-can-i-reduce-the-impact-of-a-btb-breakdown-on-my-business/>

### Movements of cattle onto a TB restricted holding

TB restrictions prevent the movement of cattle on a restricted holding without a license and no movement will be permitted before the first short interval test (SIT) after the initial breakdown. The reason for this is to ensure the severity and extent of the breakdown has been established and it gives APHA the time to assess the results before any further cattle are introduced. Licenses won't be permitted when reactors are still present on the farm and if a TB test is overdue.

Sourcing cattle from lower risk herds will be desirable to reduce the risk of undisclosed infection being reintroduced to the herd.

Movements of cattle from one TB restricted holding onto another will only be permitted when the destination herd is due to have at least 2 short interval tests at severe interpretation. Read more on this [here](http://www.tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/effective-control-movement-cattle-one-tb-breakdown-herd-another/). <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/effective-control-movement-cattle-one-tb-breakdown-herd-another/>

### Movements of cattle off a TB restricted holding

Many of the rules and regulations around movements of cattle off a TB restricted holding are similar to movements of cattle onto a TB restricted holding; however, the cattle are only permitted to move off a restricted holding unless their destination will be to slaughter, a TB isolation unit or another TB restricted farm.

Options for movements off a TB restricted holding and testing requirements:

Destination	Type of cattle	Testing requirements
<a href="#">AFU</a> (non-grazing vs. grazing)	Calves (rearing AFUs) Stores and culls (finishing AFUs)	Clear test within 90 days of movement
<a href="#">TB isolation unit</a> (can only take cattle from a single source over a limited period of time)	All types; particularly useful for groups of dairy calves	Clear test within 30 days of movement
<a href="#">TB dedicated sale</a> (orange market)	All types	Clear test within 90 days of movement
<a href="#">TB approved slaughter</a> gatherings (red markets)	All types	Clear test within 90 days of movement
<a href="#">TB restricted holding</a>	All types	Clear test within 30 days of movement
Direct to slaughter	All types	No test required.

Note that cattle under the age of 42 days do not require TB testing.

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Farmers can find a list of cattle approved premises [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finishing-units-for-cattle-approved-premises)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finishing-units-for-cattle-approved-premises>

### COMPENSATION

Cattle keepers, who have cattle that test positive to TB and need to be culled to prevent the spread of TB, will receive government compensation.

For those cattle that are found as reactors on a test overdue by 60 or more days, compensation will be reduced on a sliding scale. See table below:

Overdue (days)	Reduction (%)
60 - 89	25
90 - 179	50
180+	95

Further information on this can be found in the [Cattle Compensation \(England\) Order 2012](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1379/made).  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1379/made>

Table valuations are based on real market data. Each month the tabular values are monitored and adjusted according to information obtained from store markets, prime markets, rearing calf sales, breeding sales and dispersal sales in Great Britain.

View the month on month tabular valuations [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-historical-compensation-value-tables)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-historical-compensation-value-tables>

### Pedigree compensation

Cattle keepers with cattle that have tested positive to TB will receive government compensation, when their cattle have to be culled.

Compensation prices are slightly higher for pedigree cattle; however the compensation is based on individual valuation for particular ages of cattle.

View the month on month tabular valuations [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-historical-compensation-value-tables)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-historical-compensation-value-tables>

### AGRICULTURAL SHOWS

Cattle keepers need to be aware of the testing requirements when transporting cattle to and from agricultural shows.

Exempt shows (less than 24 hours and where cattle are not housed), do not need to be pre- or post-movement tested.

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Non-exempt shows (where cattle are housed for longer than 24 hours), require pre- and post-movement testing, depending on the risk area or holding and of agricultural show. (Annex 1)

### TB ADVISORY SERVICE (TBAS)

The TB Advisory Service is a Government funded service for farmers in the High Risk Area and the Edge Area of England.

The service provides farmers in these areas with information and advice both on the telephone and through on farm visits.

The telephone helpline will provide information on limiting the risks of TB; whilst the on farm visits will provide clear, practical help to protect herds and manage the impacts of a TB breakdown.

### USEFUL CONTACTS

Click the logos to be directed to the website



[www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)



[www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk)



[www.tbas.org.uk](http://www.tbas.org.uk)

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## Business Guides

### ANNEXES

#### Annex 1

From the 6th April 2016, Defra introduced post-movement testing to herds in the Low Risk Area (LRA). Herd owners must arrange and pay for the post-movement tests for cattle bought or moved from herds in annual (or more frequent) surveillance testing areas of England and Wales.

<b>LRA</b>	<b>Low Risk Area</b>
<b>HRA</b>	<b>High Risk Area &amp; Edge Area</b>

#### NON – EXEMPT SHOWS

Non – exempt shows are shows which are more than 24 hours and housed.

Area of Show	Area of Herd Origin	Pre-movement	Post-movement
LRA	LRA	No – for 4 yearly testing herds  Yes – for animals from 12 month testing herds	No
LRA	HRA	Yes	No
HRA	LRA	No – for 4 yearly testing herds  Yes – for animals from 12 month testing herds	Yes – within 60-120 days of return to farm. Animal should not move off farm until the test is undertaken.
HRA	HRA	Yes	No

#### EXEMPT SHOWS

Exempt shows are less than 24 hours and not housed. Cattle attending these shows from either the LRA or HRA are **EXEMPT** from pre-movement testing and post-movement testing.

Further information on pre- and post-movement testing, visit the **TB Hub**.

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