

## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

### INTRODUCTION

Incidence of Bovine TB disease has increased quite dramatically in certain areas of the country in the past decade. This has led to large areas of land becoming part of what are known as 'high risk' areas. These are areas where the Parish Testing Interval (PTI) is either 1 or 2 years. On January 1 2010 changes were introduced to the testing area boundaries which brought a much larger area into a 1 or 2 yearly testing and with it they become a higher risk.

### A RISK BASED APPROACH

This approach was taken for two main reasons. Firstly because parishes are too small an area to assess the risk of disease and this resulted in a situation where annual testing parishes could be next to 4 yearly testing zones. Secondly because the testing frequency is based on historical TB incidence and not on the current situation or trend, this results in circumstances where it is impossible to get ahead of a disease which is worsening.

This new approach to setting PTI's moves away from the method of retrospectively setting PTI's depending upon the disease frequency in the parish. Instead it includes the health and distribution of disease of all the cattle (epidemiology), within the parish and also the surrounding area. This will reflect the risk of infection for all the cattle in the local area and is likely to bring more cattle into high risk areas.

### PRE-MOVEMENT TESTING

As well as the one or two yearly Routine Herd Test (RHT) of the entire herd, farmers in high risk areas have a statutory requirement to test all cattle that will be moving off their holding. This is

designed to reduce the spread of disease and also allow the purchaser of cattle to check the health status of the animals bought. Testing must be done within a maximum of 60 days prior to the movement off of the holding, including to holdings which are linked through BCMS. In practice this can particularly difficult and it may be useful to speak to your local Animal Health Office (AHO) for advice on movements to and from linked holdings.



Fig 1: All cattle in PTI 1 or 2 areas must be PrMT.

It is possible to use your RHT as a pre-movement test provided it is within 60 days of movement.

Nonetheless pre-movement testing (PrMT) can cause a range of problems for farmers, not least the fact that the time spent by your Official Veterinarian (OV) to carry out the test must be paid for by the farmer.

To aid with movements within the farm business there are a number of exemptions to pre-movement testing of cattle that allow cattle to be moved without testing, these are outlined in the table below along with the evidence required to allow the movement.

Exemption from PrMT	Evidence
Cattle subject to three or four yearly routine TB testing.	The letter issued annually by Animal Health informing the keeper of the interval for their cattle.
Cattle that would be subject to three or four yearly routine testing if not for reasons of public health e.g. cattle at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open farms</li> <li>- Producers/retailers of raw milk</li> </ul>	The letter issued annually by Animal Health informing the keeper of the interval for their cattle.
Cattle at an artificial insemination (AI) centre.	The approved licence issued by animal health.
Cattle under 42 days old.	Cattle passports.

## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

Cattle moving off premises within 30 days of arrival.	On-farm and BCMS cattle movement records.
Cattle moving for veterinary treatment (animal must be returned to its original premises or moved direct to slaughter).	Records of veterinary treatment, On-farm cattle movement and medicine records.
Cattle moving within a SOA group.	Document confirming the granting of the SOA.
Cattle moving between premises sharing rights of the same common.	Documentary evidence of rights of common.
Cattle moving under specific written exemption granted by a Veterinary Inspector.	Written exemption from a Veterinary Inspector.
Cattle moving directly to agricultural shows (animal must be returned to its original premises or moved direct to slaughter).	On-farm and BCMS cattle movement records and details of market designations (e.g. market catalogues etc).

### TRADING WITHOUT PRE-MOVEMENT TESTING

To assist farmers to continue to trade there are also a number of options available that do not require pre-movement testing of cattle. Cattle moving to the following do not require pre-movement testing:

#### EXEMPT FROM PrMT

- Moving directly to slaughter
- Moving directly to a slaughter gathering
- To an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU)
- To an Approved Quarantine Unit (AQU)
- To an Approved Collection Centre
- To an Exempt Finishing Unit (EFU)
- To an Exempt Market

### MOVEMENT TO SLAUGHTER OR A SLAUGHTER GATHERING

Cattle destined for slaughter are able to move directly there or via a slaughter gathering providing that all required herd tests are up to date. They will require on-farm movement records and BCMS evidence to support this movement. Cattle from slaughter gatherings may also require further evidence such as market designations.

*(Please see part 6)*

### MOVEMENT TO AN AFU / AQU / APPROVED COLLECTION CENTRE

Cattle can be moved to an approved unit either directly or through a dedicated market or

collection centre to be finished for slaughter, or if under 10 months old, to a quarantine unit where the animal can potentially be declared free of TB following two severe short interval tests (SIT).

### EXEMPT MARKETS

These markets are primarily for the sale of cattle that have not been pre-movement tested when they should have been. However, market operators may accept other cattle into an Exempt Market if they wish. Onward movements are restricted to direct to slaughter; direct to an exempt finishing unit; direct to an approved finishing unit or back to the premises of origin – except for cattle from 3 or 4 yearly tested herds which are not permitted to return to the premises of origin.



Fig 2: Exempt markets are primarily for the sale of cattle that have not been PrMT.

There has been a steady increase in the number of exempt markets, particularly in high risk areas

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## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

to ease trading and reducing the number of pre-movement tests required. The majority of exempt markets are so called Red Markets where the cattle are sold directly to slaughter. In order to increase the number of store cattle there must be a sufficient number of purchasers available, this can be achieved through a greater uptake of EFU and AFU facilities.

### MOVEMENT TO AN EFU

EFU's provide a route for beef producers to finish animals for slaughter without the stock they buy needing to pre-movement test. EFU's can accept animals that would normally need pre-movement testing without those animals being pre-movement tested. In England only, EFU operators may accept other cattle into the EFU if they wish. EFU's must be approved by Animal Health and meet strict conditions designed to reduce the potential risk of disease spread from the premises. Onward movements are restricted to slaughter.

### SETTING UP AN EFU

One of the key differences between an EFU and an AFU is that an EFU will keep its Official Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status.

As a general rule the risk of disease spread has to be at a minimum (both to other cattle and wildlife) on an EFU and there are a number of conditions setting out the guidance for approval and operation.

- In annual testing parishes Emu's may be granted as fully housed, housed with grazing or solely outdoor grazing (with adequate handling facilities). Cattle on these EFU's will be subject to 6 monthly testing. In other parishes cattle in the EFU must be housed or yarded, these cattle will be tested annually.

- Nose to nose contact with cattle outside the EFU should be impossible, this means that walls of buildings should be solid to a sufficient height. If grazing is allowed there should be a 3 metre gap between EFU cattle and neighbouring cattle which should be double fenced. Water troughs may not be shared with cattle outside the EFU. Animal health may inspect the boundary to ensure that it is satisfactory.

- All housing and yards must be wildlife proof. This will be farm specific but can include items

such as ensuring there is mesh or sheeting on gates and that feed passages are inaccessible as well as ensuring feed can not be accessed. An alternative option may be to fence the perimeter of the farm buildings and feed stores to ensure access to wildlife is prohibited.

- Where equipment and machinery is used, this should not be shared with other premises including other premises owned by the EFU operator. This also applies to items of clothing and staff. If it would be impossible to operate the EFU without sharing equipment it is possible to produce a written biosecurity plan which outlines how equipment will be cleansed and disinfected so that it will prevent contaminated equipment leaving the EFU.



*Fig 3: A biosecurity plan should be produced.*

- A biosecurity plan should outline the use of items such as dedicated/ disposable overalls and how footwear will be changed or disinfected. It should also outline what equipment will be used and when and how it will be disinfected, covering a range of items from crushes to tractors and feed wagons.

- There should be facilities for the storage of manure, waste feed and slurry, which will allow it to be stored in a heap for at least 3 weeks. It must be inaccessible to cattle and wildlife and treated with a suitable disinfectant or covered with a layer of earth or manure from non EFU premises.

- Slurry and dirty water should be stored for 6 months before it can be spread, it should be spread on arable land so that it is immediately ploughed in. If grassland is the only option available it must be spread on land that will not be cut or grazed by cattle (guidelines say livestock) for a minimum of 60 days.

## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

- If the EFU is in an annual testing area slurry can be spread at an earlier date provided it goes on arable or grass land within the EFU. Again grassland can not be cut or grazed by cattle for 60 days and it must be spread without spraying into the air (e.g. - through injection, trailing shoe or dribble bar).

- Records must be kept of all manure/slurry treatment and spreading, this can be done through a simple plan of the farm showing dates and locations of spread.

- Animal health do have the ability to refuse applications for EFU's unable to meet conditions where the parish is on annual testing because purchased cattle have caused a confirmed breakdown.

- Housed and yarded EFU's must be prevented from accessing water courses. They must also have in place a system to collect run off separate from run off from other cattle.

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

If you are interested in setting up an EFU your local Animal Health Divisional Veterinary Manager will be able to provide you with an application form. Once the form has been returned and approved your premises will be inspected and you will be informed in writing if you are successful. The EFU will be granted for one year and will be inspected periodically. Movement records may also be inspected.

### MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS ON AN EFU

An EFU is able to accept animals without PrMT however are also able to accept cattle which have had a PrMT. It is important to bear in mind that all cattle that enter the EFU must only move to slaughter or to slaughter via market or a collection centre. Cattle moving to slaughter via this route will require a general movement licence which is issued at the start of EFU approval. Cattle moving direct to slaughter do not require a licence.

When buying stock from exempt markets the EFU operator will need to show their approval letter to the market auctioneer or provide their registration number.

### ACTION IF A TB INCIDENT IS FOUND ON AN EFU

If there is a TB breakdown on an EFU from either testing or a slaughterhouse case it will trigger the same action as on any other farm. The unit will be placed under TB2 restrictions. Animal Health are likely to carry out a risk assessment before any future cattle move onto the EFU and movements both on and off will be under licence, however as long as testing is up to date, cattle will be able to continue to move to slaughter.

It is also important to consider that should the EFU have a confirmed incident, cattle neighbouring the farm may require testing. Although this should not be necessary for housed EFUs, a review may be carried out to ensure there has been no breach of compliance. If the EFU has grazing this will trigger the routine testing of neighbouring cattle farms.

### ISOLATION UNITS

Isolation units are an option available as an outlet to farmers under TB2 restriction but also as an outlet for calves under 42 days old without a test from both restricted and unrestricted holdings.

Isolation units allow cattle within them to achieve OTF status following 2 SITs (60 day tests), the first of which must be at least 30 days after the last animal enters the unit. Therefore following a minimum period of 120 days the cattle within the unit can be traded in the same way as other clear cattle.



Fig 4: An example of an isolation unit.

Isolation units are particularly useful for private trading between 2 farmers as they are only allowed to accept cattle from one premise. They

## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

also provide an option for farmers under long term TB2 restrictions to set up their own isolation unit on farm. This allows cattle that have cleared a skin test within the previous 60 days (not a Reactor, IR or DC) to leave the farm as OTF after spending a period of time within the unit and completing two further tests.

The restrictions can be lifted sooner if the testing times are synchronised with the premises of origin who subsequently also receive OTF status this can potentially reduce the amount of time the cattle will need to be inside the unit.

An isolation unit can be created on a holding without requiring a separate CPH however grazing is not allowed. As isolation units only accept cattle from one origin they can suit smaller buildings. Isolation units do not have to be long term, although having an isolation unit on farm is good practice to help deal with all diseases. However the building used must be suitable and adhere to biosecurity best practice precautions (as advised by FERA) when it is in use for TB isolation.

### SETTING UP AN ISOLATION UNIT

Although isolation units do not get to keep their OTF status it is regained when all cattle have 2 consecutive clear tests, however during the period which the unit is under TB2 restrictions there are a number of conditions that the unit must meet.

It must also be remembered that every individual farm will vary and therefore there is no 'model' isolation unit. Animal Health will be able to provide guidance and advice to help tailor each farm to the required standards which include:-

- Direct or indirect contact (through sharing facilities / equipment) with susceptible stock outside of the Isolation Unit must be impossible.
- The cattle in the unit must be housed in wildlife-proof accommodation adequate for both the number of cattle and also for any potential cattle growth.

#### **WILDLIFE PROOF CONDITIONS INCLUDE:**

- No open sides - solid walls over 1.5m high
- Solid doors at least 1.5m high

- Gaps under doors no greater than 10cm (*rubber curtains under doors are an alternative*)
- Feed stores and silage faces should be protected (*through the use of electric fencing*)

- Where equipment and machinery is used, this should not be shared with other premises, including if the isolation unit is on the same holding as other cattle. This also applies to items of clothing and staff. If it would be impossible to operate the unit without sharing equipment then a written biosecurity plan must be in place which outlines how equipment will be cleansed and disinfected so that it will prevent contaminated equipment leaving the unit.

- There must be facilities available for the storage of manure and slurry in the case that a Reactor or an unresolved IR is identified on the unit and the unit is on an unrestricted premise.

- On unrestricted premises and those in 2, 3 and 4 yearly PTI's, systems must be in place to collect run-off water and effluent that prevents watercourse contamination or access by unrestricted cattle on the holding.

- The way in which cattle are fed/bedded etc., must also be given consideration to prevent disease spread and ensure that there is no contamination.

- Consideration must be given to providing adequate testing facilities including a crush and race. The use of shared facilities can be permitted provided that the facilities are cleansed and disinfected following their use as outlined in the biosecurity plan.

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

If you are interested in setting up an Isolation unit your local Animal Health Divisional Veterinary Manager will be able to provide you with an application form. Once the form has been returned and approved your premises will be inspected, paying particular attention to biosecurity and testing facilities. A TB2 notice will be served until a TB10 is served lifting the restrictions. The unit may be inspected again before the unit is restocked and movement records may also be inspected.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

## Trade from High Risk Areas – (PTI 1 / 2 Zones) – Part 8

Further information on biosecurity is available in the NFU training bulletin 4.

More information on setting up an AQU is available in the NFU training bulletin 5.

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