SHROPSHIRE FARM VETS
stand out from the herd

Biosecurity Best Practice
- Control of Bovine TB

Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) is one of the biggest challenges facing the farming industry today. It is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*, which can also infect and cause TB in badgers, deer, goats, pigs, camelids, dogs and cats. It is a slow chronic disease, and it takes time for the infected animals to become detectable. This means it is possible that cattle could be bTB-infected but not react to the skin test. So when buying cattle in do not rely on just one pre-movement test. Instead quarantine them for 2 months and then test again.

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity reduces/prevents the introduction of new diseases onto a farm from outside sources.

Biocontainment reduces/prevents the movement of infectious diseases once they are on your farm once biosecurity has been breached.

Many biosecurity recommendations are common sense. We all know that thorough and effective cleaning and disinfection will minimise the spread of disease between animals but other basic biosecurity operating procedures can include protocols for:

Selection

- Purchase all animals from known sources
- Know the health status of purchased animals
- Only buy from farms of known bTB status. Additionally, ask for the previous years bTB test results for that cow AND the farm. Don't settle just for the last PrMT result
- Find out if the cow you are buying has lived in any other herds before her current farm
- Limit the number of bought in cattle

Isolation

- Isolate/quarantine all new animals (re-test after 2 months)
- If possible keep/switch to a closed herd
- Hire bulls can potentially introduce infection
- If possible avoid using common grazing
- Keep your stock away from your neighbours

Movement

- Adhere to and maintain isolation procedures
- Ensure all visitors comply with biosecurity
- Insist upon clean, disinfected boots/clothing
- Insist visitors arrive clean and leave clean
- Limit where possible any unnecessary visits

Sanitation/Disinfection

- If you must share livestock vehicles and trailers, disinfect them
- Routinely clean and disinfect all equipment
- Avoid spreading slurry from another farm
- If possible store slurry for 6 months
- Don't feed milk from a reactor or IR to calves – this is a common route of transmission of the disease
- Don't feed mastitis milk to calves – the mastitis may be due to *M.Bovis*

Control of Wildlife

Wildlife, particularly badgers, can transmit bTB to cattle through either direct contact, where an infected mammal comes within close proximity to cattle, or through indirect contact, whereby cattle ingest feed contaminated by an infected mammal.

- Make sure all buildings are secure are there are no gaps through which wildlife can gain access
- Ring fencing / electric fencing (3 strands at 10cm, 15cm and 20cm) around buildings
- Prevent wildlife accessing maize silage clamps and feed stores by using electric fencing
- Ensure the gaps between the bottom of gates, doors or fences and the floor are less than 10cm
- Avoid feeding cattle on the ground
- Be aware of high risk areas at pasture—active badger sets, badger latrines

Biosecurity – Best Practice

- If clear of bTB, don't think your herd is immune
- Early detection of the disease is key – comply fully with herd testing
- Seek out and share best biosecurity practice
- Remember that this disease is an epidemic in cattle and wildlife. Protect your herd from both
- Work with your vet to formulate a health plan for your herd

Biosecurity 5 Point Plan

1. Selection
2. Isolation
3. Movement
4. Sanitation/Disinfection
5. Control of Wildlife

Final Word

A 'gold standard' bio-security protocol will include the examination and testing of all purchased animals. Several diseases are easily detected by examination and sampling of blood and milk to find carrier animals. Their risk to the herd can then be determined. Unfortunately this is rarely done due to the perceived costs, however in the long term, it is a money-saving practice. Prevention is ALWAYS better than cure – because reducing the diseases entering a unit means less time is spent treating the diseases.

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