

12 February 2012



Policy Change for Deer TB Testing in Closed Herds

Introduction

Representatives of the deer industry requested that TBfree New Zealand review the current deer TB testing policy. This was to meet concerns that some deer herds being managed in a "closed" manner are being over-tested relative to apparent TB risk, with associated management and financial costs to farmers.

In response, a test sensitivity analysis was undertaken by the TBfree New Zealand, with results presented to a group of deer industry representatives in late 2011.

Following further assessment from TBfree New Zealand's technical service group, TBfree New Zealand has agreed with this request subject to specific conditions for qualifying herds (see below). But also considers such policy as interim and will eventually be superseded by the use of a Risk Index Calculator currently in development. This will enable TB testing policy for all cattle and deer herds to be based on individual herd risk assessed through a combination of land based (vector) and herd management risk factors, as opposed to current geographical area testing policy.

Qualifying rules for a Closed Deer Herd TB testing policy frequency change Definition:

Closed Herd

All deer breeding clear herds, C2 and above are potentially eligible, (ie this is a voluntary participation programme at present) with the following conditions:

- 70% of the annual weaner crop is killed as yearlings
- 10% of adults (deer over 24 months of age) are killed annually
- The herd has completed a clear whole herd test in the year prior to joining the test regime
- All stock are tagged and registered in compliance with NAIT once NAIT is mandatory for deer from 1 March 2013.

Policy

No deer are introduced into the herd except for sire stags, which must be from C5 or greater herds and must not be from an annual testing area.

No deer are to be moved out of the herd except to slaughter, unless

- a clear whole herd test has been completed in the year prior to first allowing any live animal sale or movement and
- herd status is C5 or above and
- all deer to be moved are clear to a pre-movement TB test completed within 60 days prior to movement.

For herds of 100 head or more: All eligible animals will be TB tested on a **Triennial (every three years)** basis. Age eligibility (either 8, 15 or 24 months) will be based on existing Disease Control Area policy.

For herds less than 100 head: All eligible animals will be TB tested on a **Biennial (every two years)** basis. Age eligibility (either 8, 15 or 24 months) would be based on the existing Disease Control Area policy.

Declarations

The person in charge of the herd will make an initial written declaration to join the Closed Deer Herd test regime. This declaration will include:

- Agreement to TBfree New Zealand's terms and conditions for the Closed Herd TB test regime
- Agreement that in the event of non-compliance with the above terms and conditions or with any TBfree New Zealand policy or directive, herd testing will revert to standard TB test policy for the area.
- Agreement that in the event of any diagnosis of TB from the herd, the herd will be managed under a TBfree New Zealand management plan to be developed by the ADM according to TBfree New Zealand case management guidelines.

The person in charge of the herd will make an annual declaration of compliance with the general terms and conditions for the Closed Deer Herd TB test regime and will provide evidence or records of:

- Herd size(ie an annual stock reconciliation)
- Stock killed during the previous 12 months (with copy of kill sheets)
- Stock introduced to the herd during the previous 12 months (with ASD forms)
- For herds of C5 or higher TB status, copies of ASDs for any of live animal sales or movements, with associated TB test receipts for pre-movement tests completed.

Administration

TBfree New Zealand will administer the scheme and process applications and annual records.

Scheme Funding

Deer Industry New Zealand will fund this scheme including any costs associated with any TB breakdowns that may occur in herds within the testing regime.

NAIT

The herd will be managed in compliance with all requirements of the NAIT system.

Start Date

This policy will be implemented from 1 March 2012.