HARI HARI FARMING COMMUNITY MEETING

NOTES

6PM – 8:30PM | 8 APRIL 2021
HARI HARI COMMUNITY HALL

VIABILITY OF VACCINATION IN NZ?

There has been some research into TB vaccination in the New Zealand environment however currently vaccination is not currently part of the New Zealand eradication programme. While we continue to take note of international advances in vaccines and TB tests, our current strategy focuses on TB eradication and is not significantly strengthened by vaccinating New Zealand herds.

Different vaccines have been trialled in other countries for cattle. The main benefit is to reduce the impact of TB on animal health and production. The protection of the vaccine is believed to be relatively short-lived, so regular administration would be required.

OSPRI will continue to work towards the industry approved goal of TB freedom in cattle and deer by 2026 and TB freedom in possums by 2040. In places like Hari Hari with annual testing we are finding TB infected animals early, so reducing the likelihood of spread within the herd. Identifying infected animals early and removing them should also reduce the long-term impacts on production.

DEER AS A SOURCE

TB has been found in wild deer near Hari Hari in previous years, however wild deer TB infection is not thought to be driving the disease in Hari Hari more a result of possums having the disease.

Deer like cattle carry the Mycobacterium bovis internally (lymph nodes) and often their immune system 'walls off' the disease so it less likely to spread from animal to animal. Possums' immune systems are less robust, and infection breaks through the skin discharging millions of bacteria which represents a real risk to any other animals that interact with it.

What we know from control work in other TB risk areas – Reducing possum numbers and controlling TB in that host also leads to drop in TB in other species such as deer. This approach has been effective in other areas, we believe the same outcome will be seen in Hari Hari.

TB DNA LINKS TO WILDLIFE

Samples from individual TB livestock are sent to the USA for DNA processing. Whole genomic sequencing is used – this is very specific and allows our Vets to pinpoint the disease type to a particular 'family' of the disease, or area on the map. This means we can see if the TB in the Hari Hari livestock is directly related to TB found in the local wildlife population (possums, feral deer) or if it matches with a strain found elsewhere in the country and the likelihood that it came in via a livestock movement.

To date we have results for 4 of the 9 herds, all have DNA links to local wildlife TB strain type(s).

HOW MANY TB POSSUMS FOUND IN RECENT GROUND CONTROL WORK?

Referring to the map in the presentation with possum kill data – the red crosses reflect possum kills, not possums with TB.

Carcasses with obvious lesions may be tested, but OSPRI is not investing resource into testing a large group of possums. TB in possums is fatal, so possums with TB die soon after contracting the disease. When trying to find TB in the possum population – you have a short window to catch the individuals with it; a small percent of the population at any given time are infected.

SELLING ANIMALS

Animals from clear status herds can move off farm for sale or grazing provided they have completed clear 'Pre-movement TB test' within the 60 days prior to movement, all animals must be tagged with a NAIT RFID, registered in the NAIT system and the movement recorded.

Exceptions to premovement TB testing are animals moving directly to slaughter and animals aged less than 90 days old.

CONTROL APPROACH: AERIAL VS. GROUND CONTROL

The TBfree programme relies on both ground and aerial possum control. Ground control is the preferred option where it can be delivered effectively and efficiently. It has been established that aerial application of 1080 in Ianthe and One One is the most effective method of controlling possums to the required levels where TB cannot be maintained through achieving the required control coverage.

WHAT WORK IS BEING DONE AROUND THE AERIALS TO MEASURE SUCCESS?

Historically OSPRI has monitored the outcome of aerial possum control operations through pre and post monitoring- it has now been found that aerial control is effective at reducing the possum population to below the required levels and pre and post monitoring is now not needed to measure the outcome of an aerial. Where applicable, OSPRI also undertakes possum population assessments to help with long term planning. Recently (in the last 2-3 years) technology has also supported what we know about the effectiveness of aerial control. For example, radio collaring possums prior to a 1080 aerial application to assess the percentage kills rates post aerial.

KEA

OSPRI is working with partner agencies to understand more about the local Kea population and ways to mitigate any risk to them. For the 2021/22 aerial 1080 operations OSPRI is reliant on independent advice and guidance to work under and allow delivery of these operations.

TRACEABILITY

AsureQuality have streamlined the process when sending scan files to farmers upon request. Please let your TB tester know if you would like a copy of the scan data and provide a current email address.

Keeping your NAIT records accurate is particularly important while we are working to control TB in your area, and the OSPRI team is available to help you with NAIT including recording animal registrations, movements, and deaths.

1. At your TB test, your tester will electronically scan the NAIT ear tags of the animals tested and send the file to OSPRI (and to you at your request).
2. Currently, our team at OSPRI will get in touch if we identify any differences between what was scanned on your farm and what is listed in your NAIT account and offer further assistance.

If you scan your animals yourself at any time, you can email your whole herd scan to info@ospri.co.nz, please include your name and NAIT number in your email along with a request for an account reconciliation.

Our team has RFID scanners available for hire at no cost if you need. However, you will be required to get the scanner back to OSPRI's Christchurch office at your cost via tracked courier.

Optional service: At your request OSPRI can use the scan files to help you complete an account reconciliation of your NAIT records so that your NAIT records match what is on farm.

We encourage you to work with us to get your NAIT records up to date. It is expected that once an account reconciliation has been completed you will continue to keep your NAIT account up to date.