

TB CLOSE TO HOME

What do you do if your neighbour or someone in your community has an infected herd?

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) has been in New Zealand for over a century. Controlling and eradicating the disease by 2055 is the goal of the TBfree programme, and while we are working towards eradicating the disease, there are still a number of TB infected herds under management throughout New Zealand.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Having a TB infected herd can cause significant financial and emotional stress for a farming family. Farmers often blame themselves and there can be a stigma attached to having TB in your herd. Apart from taking steps to help stop the disease spreading, it's important that farmers come together to support and offer help to the affected farmer through this difficult time. It can be as simple as providing support over a cup of tea, working together to sort any boundary fencing issues, or making sure that they don't feel isolated or blamed.

BE INFORMED

In farmed cattle and deer herds, animals are commonly infected with TB in a couple of different ways:

- An animal in the herd comes into contact with TB-infected wildlife – usually a possum or a ferret
- An animal or animals, unknowingly infected, is purchased and brought into a herd
- TB infection in an anergic animal (one that is unresponsive to the TB antigen) re-activates and causes TB within the herd.



CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF TB

In order to restrict the spread of the disease, the movement of animals out of the infected herd is controlled with a Restricted Place notice. This notice means that stock can only be moved off-farm if:

- going directly to slaughter
- moving to a place managed by the owner, e.g. a grazing property, where there is no contact with another herd
- moving the stock is essential due to a civil disaster or for reasons of animal welfare.

OSPRI uses information gathered from the affected herd owner and through the NAIT programme to trace animals which have moved off and onto the

infected property. This identifies possible sources of infection and other herds which may be impacted. Identified animals are tested to ensure the disease does not continue to spread.

Bovine TB doesn't survive long outside an infected animal's body, so gumboots, clothing and vehicle tyres do not spread the disease between properties.

TB TESTING

Your herd's next TB test may be brought forward if you haven't completed a recent test. TB testing requirements in the area might also change for a period of time if it is suspected the infection source has originated from local infected wildlife. OSPRI will contact you directly if there are any changes to your testing requirements.



BE PROACTIVE

There is a very small risk of neighbouring herds becoming infected if there is no TB-infected wildlife located in the area. TB spread requires close and generally prolonged contact with infected stock or wildlife. The bacterium which causes TB does not survive long in the environment without a live host, and it does not survive on fence posts or stock yards for a prolonged period as it is susceptible to UV sunlight. However, you can be proactive:

- Minimise the risk of contact between your animals and a neighbouring infected herd. Consider setting up an electric outrigger on the boundary fence or work with your neighbour to ensure stock is not grazed in adjacent paddocks. If animals do jump a fence to or from an infected property, isolate the stock and contact OSPRI as soon as possible so the situation can be managed.
- If you capture a sick possum or ferret on your property, triple bag and freeze it, and contact OSPRI for further assistance. Locating TB-infected wildlife in this way adds to the investigation into where disease persists.

- If an OSPRI wildlife survey or possum control operation is planned in your area, discuss with the contractor undertaking the work in areas where you are aware of possum or ferret populations, or areas which hold wild pigs.
- Contact OSPRI at any stage if you are concerned about what an infected neighbouring herd means for you and your herd, and to discuss what else you can do to help.



FURTHER INFORMATION

OSPRI is here to provide technical support to everyone – not just the infected herd owners – so if you have questions or need a hand call OSPRI on:

0800 482 463

OSPRI manages the NAIT and TBfree programmes and can help you meet your responsibilities for each.

Ensure you are registered with the NAIT and TBfree programmes.

Ensure stock is NAIT tagged and registered, and their movements are recorded in the NAIT system.

When purchasing animals, check the herd status and last clear TB test date prior to purchase, and confirm details on the animal status declaration (ASD) on receipt of stock.