

**THE ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME FOR TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL
IN FARMED DEER**

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HISTORY:

The present scheme format has evolved from inputs by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the N.Z. Veterinary Profession and the Deer Industry.

Essentially the scheme can be regarded as a compromise between the extremes of:

- (a) No control - which is unacceptable for obvious reasons.
- (b) Compulsory control - which at this stage is considered politically and/or economically unjustifiable.

This compromise has given essentially a voluntary scheme involving the State in a largely administrative role with the implementation of the scheme the responsibility of the Veterinary Profession.

SCHEME AIMS:

These fall into two areas:

- (a) To reduce (or eliminate) Bovine Tb in herds of farmed deer.
- (b) To prevent or reduce the spread of Bovine Tb from infected herds.

THE SCHEME: - See the 'Rules' appended to this paper

The basis of the scheme is the requirement for WHOLE HERD TESTING. All test eligible animals, either 6 months and older or adult breeding stock, where accredited, must be presented for testing. The testing schedule is followed in an orderly manner with respect to:

- (a) Testing technique and standards.
- (b) Result interpretation.
- (c) Time scale - for whole herd testing for accreditation.

(a) Testing technique

This is now well established in respect of the single intradermal test. The introduction of the Comparative Cervical Test has required veterinarians to be familiar with this ancillary technique.

(b) Result interpretation

Reactors: For the purposes of the accreditation scheme a reactor is an animal identified by the testing veterinarian to be destroyed as a result of a tuberculin test.

To determine this, factors for consideration are:

- (i) Previous testing history
- (ii) Previous autopsy or slaughter history
- (iii) Origin of stock
- (iv) Has clinical disease been evident
- (v) Management (i.e. trading property)
- (vi) Tb in other species (i.e. cattle/possums)
- (vii) Neighbouring property status

Where a Bovine Tb problem is confirmed then it is wise to interpret animals with reactions to the standard test as reactors.

Where indications are that the possibility of a nonspecific problem exists, then the use of the comparative cervical test will allow a wider interpretation to be employed.

(c) Time Scale - refer 'Rules'

For Accreditation three whole herd tests are required over a period of not less than 2 years. Each whole herd test is applied on an annual basis unless reactor animals are declared. Testing then reverts to a six month interval. Discovery of tuberculous deer (DSP evidence or clinical disease) will also change the status of a herd if a clear herd test has previously been declared (i.e. the herd is placed under a Disease Control Place notice).

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ANIMALS TO HERDS IN THE ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Clear criteria are laid down for the introduction of new animals with isolation and retesting prior to entry to the herd. A compromise in respect of feral capture has been made, allowing their introduction into accredited herds though technically their origin is outside the scheme. Otherwise introductions to accredited herds can only be from other herds within the scheme and NOT under quarantine (DCP). Prior to accreditation, animals can be introduced from another DCP herd even if outside the scheme.

GENERAL

Entry to the scheme requires the completion of the appropriate application form. A commitment is then made by the farmer to abide by the 'Rules' of the scheme.

The necessity for veterinarians to maintain and provide records is of major importance. These records will provide the basis for progress to and/or accreditation.

Tuberculin testing on a whole herd basis is the platform for evaluation of that particular herd. The accreditation scheme is designed to put in place a systematic approach to determining herd status with the end aim being the designation as "accredited Tb free". Time will show whether or not this programme will be a success.

**OFFICIAL RULES FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF DEER HERDS
AS TUBERCULOSIS FREE**

General

1. Persons wishing to join the scheme will do so by completing the appropriate application form (available from MAF offices).
2. The application form is to be signed by that person who is effectively in charge of the herd on a day to day basis. [Referred to from now on as the 'owner'.]
- 2.1 A herd is defined as all deer contained within the deer-fenced area.
3. Any reactors to tuberculin tests carried out prior to the date of application and condemned by your veterinarian must have been destroyed.
4. **Whole herd testing**

On entry into the scheme the owner must present all test-eligible animals* for testing (the initial test).
(*For test-eligible animals, see rule 7)
- 4.1 This whole-herd test will be arranged between the owner and his/her veterinarian.
- 4.2 Preferably, all test-eligible animals should be tested on the same day. Where this is not practical testing of different mobs on different days is acceptable as long as all animals are included within a 2-month period, at most.
5. **WHOLE HERD RETESTS**

Subsequent to the initial whole-herd test, herds must be re-tested according to the following schedule. Responsibility for ensuring that re-tests are carried out on time lies with the owner.
- 5.1 **Initial tests with no reactors disclosed**

The whole herd must be retested no later than 12 months after the initial test.
- 5.2 **Initial tests with reactors disclosed**

The whole herd must be retested at least twice within the ensuing 12 months.

5.3 Retests with no reactors disclosed

The whole herd must be retested no later than 12 months after that first retest.

5.4 Retests with reactors disclosed

The whole herd must be retested within the ensuing 6 months.

5.5 Accredited herds must be re-tested at least every two years after the date of accreditation.

Note: An exception is that in districts designated as endemic tuberculosis areas (such as Wairarapa, King Country and Westland) the frequency of results will be the same as for cattle.

6. MISCELLANEOUS TESTS

The owner shall arrange with his veterinarian for miscellaneous tests such as a test of a specific animal for sale purposes or the testing of animals introduced into his herd.

7. TEST-ELIGIBLE ANIMALS

7.1 For whole-herd tests, either initial tests or retests (but not including retests of accredited herds) all deer of either sex 6 months of age and older must be presented for testing.

7.2 In accredited herds, only adult breeding stock need be tested. (There is of course no restriction on testing younger animals also if the owner so wishes.)

8. INTRODUCTION OF NEW ANIMALS

The owner must ensure that the following conditions are observed and make the necessary arrangements with his veterinarian for any necessary testing on his farm.

8.1 For non-accredited herds

8.1.1 Animals being introduced from an accredited herd need not be tested.

8.1.2 Animals being introduced from another herd which is testing in compliance with the scheme and is not under quarantine must have been tested within 30 days prior to arrival.

8.1.3 Animals being introduced from a herd that is either under quarantine or not within the accreditation scheme must:

- (a) have passed a tuberculin test within 30 days prior to arrival, and
- (b) be kept in isolation until they have passed another test no sooner than 60 days after the previous test.

8.1.4 Animals captured from the wild must be kept in isolation until they have passed two tuberculin tests at least 60 days apart.

8.2 For accredited herds

8.2.1 Animals from accredited herds undergoing accreditation but not under quarantine must:

- (a) have passed a tuberculin test within 30 days prior to arrival, **and**
- (b) be kept in isolation until they have passed another test no sooner than 60 days after the previous test.

8.2.3 Animals captured from the wild must be kept in isolation until they have passed two tuberculin tests at least 60 days apart.

8.2.4 No deer shall be introduced from herds that are either under quarantine (disease control place notice) or outside of the accreditation scheme.

9. TUBERCULIN TESTS

9.1 The normal basic test to be used is the intradermal bovine tuberculin test.

9.2 Ancillary tests **may** be applied to individual animals which react to the basic test **but only at the discretion of your veterinarian** and in accordance with guidelines recommended by Animal Health Division (AHD) of MAF.

10. REACTORS

10.1 All animals identified by your veterinarian as animals which are to be destroyed **must** be so destroyed within 30 days of a condemnation order being served by an AHD officer.

10.2 Destruction must be under the supervision of an AHD officer or the testing veterinarian.

11. EX GRATIA PAYMENTS

So long as money is made available by Government for the purpose and so long as the budgetary limit on the amount of such money is not exceeded the MAF will pay to the owner ex gratia payments for animals destroyed because of reactions to tuberculin tests or clinical signs of tuberculosis.

12. FACILITIES

The owner must provide facilities for the testing of his animals which are acceptable to his veterinarian.

13. ACCREDITATION

When a herd has had 3 consecutive whole-herd tests clear of reactors over a period of not less than 2 years, the herd will achieve accredited status.

14. CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITED STATUS

Accreditation status will be cancelled by MAF if:

- 14.1 Animals are condemned as a result of tuberculin tests applied to any animals in the herd.
- 14.2 Any animal from the herd is found to be tuberculous as a result of clinical or post-mortem examination on the farm or at a deer slaughtering premises.
- 14.3 If any of the above rules are violated by the owner such as failure to deal with introduced animals in accordance with the rules or failure to retest the herd according to requirements.