



## Changes to Deer TB Testing following the Introduction of the Pest Management Strategy

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The introduction of the Pest Management Strategy (PMS) for control of bovine Tb by the Animal Health Board (AHB) occurred on November 1st 1996.

This strategy outlines a five year plan for the control of the pest *Mycobacterium bovis*. The designated agent for this control is the AHB, but until the Fourth Amendment Bill to the Biosecurity Act is passed by Parliament the Ministry of Agriculture remains legally responsible for the operation of the current programme. In the interim, the legal status of the AHB is that of an advisory body to Government.

During this hiatus, government has authorised the AHB to put into effect those aspects of the Strategy which are legally permissible.

Following Parliamentary approval of the Fourth Amendment Bill, the AHB will then be in a position to become the Pest Management Agency for the Strategy with subsequent effects on all aspects of the Tb scheme.

Accreditation of veterinarians as Veterinary Testing Officers by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) under the New Zealand Veterinary Associations (NZVA) Deer Tb Quality Control Scheme will occur once the AHB is legally accountable for the operation of the strategy.

In the interim the changes that the early introduction of the PMS for bovine Tb has meant for veterinarians Tb testing deer in the field are in terms of :

1. The way a deer herds status is described.
2. Changes to Tb area classifications.
3. Changes to the layout of Deer Tb Testing Allocation Forms.

#### **Description Of Herd Status**

Herd status and movement control status have been separated. This means that herds other than those with an infected status can still be placed on movement control if it is deemed necessary.

Herds may now be classified as:

- a. *Clear*: These are herds which are free of Tb and are subject to an on-farm testing programme .
- b. *Works Monitored*: Herds which are free of Tb and have their status monitored through post mortem inspection of carcasses at slaughter.
- c. *Infected*: Herds which are diagnosed as having bovine Tb.
- d. *Suspended*: Herds in which Tb is suspected but as yet is to be confirmed, or herds which have not complied with testing requirements, or herds which have derived animals from sources of unknown Tb status.

Herds that are either clear or infected are also given a status index number. This reflects the number of years that the status has applied. In clear herds only deer velvetting or breeding units can have a status that rises above one (i.e. C1). The index rises on the anniversary of the transition to that status.

**Table 1: Herd types and status index changes excluding infected herds**

Herd types	Testing programme	Status	Max Status Index
Beef Breeding Dairy Herd Deer Breeding Deer Velvet	Under test	C	Eligible to increase on completion of each clear herd test
Beef Dry Dairy Dry	Works surveillance	W	None
Deer Finishing	Under test	C	1
Cattle Misc Deer Misc	Under test	C	1
Safan Park	Under test or a combination of testing and surveillance through a Game Packing House	C	1
	Game Packing House surveillance only	W	None

For a herd to rise to a C2 there must be a whole year since transition to C1 status, to go from C2 to C3 there must be two years passed since the original transition date. Once C3 status is reached the herd can achieve a higher index if a clear herd test is completed within six months of the whole year anniversary.

### Tb Area Classifications

Areas are now classified as either Tb Vector Risk or Tb Vector Free, and are further subgrouped into Fringe, Surveillance, Vector Eradication and Vector Control.

**Table 2: Shows conversion of old area classifications into new**

Old Area Class	New Area Class	Sub-Group
Endemic	Vector risk	Vector control
Investigation control	Vector risk	Vector eradication
Surveillance	Vector free	Surveillance
Fringe	Vector free	Fringe
Investigation other	Vector free	Fringe

### Allocation Forms

A computer generated allocation is still required for each Tb testing episode. An ancillary test is classified as a separate episode and therefore requires its own allocation. Following completion of a test the allocation needs to be completed and returned within seven days to the MAF Qual office that generated it.

Information about this form and the NLDB will be soon distributed to all deer Tb testing officers by MAF Qual in the form of a booklet entitled "NLDB -A Guide For Deer Tb Testing Officers".

All the white areas on the allocation should be completed by the Tb testing officer.

### Test Results

1. *Date:* The date the animals were injected with tuberculin or bled for a BTB/Elisa
2. *Episode:* This denotes the type of test to be done.

- W Whole Herd Test
- P Part Herd Test
- F Final Part Of Herd Test
- M Miscellaneous/Sale Test
- R Replacement From Infected Herd
- T Tb Clinical
- C Tb Cull
- V Veterinary Direction
- I Inspection
- N Necropsy
- A Ancillary
- L Laboratory Result

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3. *Group Number:* Taken from the test instructions part of form. One number per group of episodes (i.e. P, F and A)
  4. *Test Type:* Denotes which sort of test to be done.
 

CT	Comparative Cervical Test
MT	Mid Cervical Test
PM	Post Mortem
NT	No Test
BT	BTB Otago
EO	ELISA Otago
  5. *Number Examined:* This should equal the number in the total column.
  6. *Number Positive:* This is the number positive to whatever test is used and should equal the number of positives in the test results section and the bottom line of the totals section.
  7. *Number Suspicious:* This is only filled in where a BTB equivocal or no data is returned prior to rebleeding, or alternatively if a Tb cull is found and culture results are pending.
  8. *Number Retest:* Usually the same as number positive unless an on farm necropsy is done.
  9. *Herd Status:* Depending on the result of a test, the herd status may be set to C, I or S.
  10. *Tester Code:* This is a unique four digit number generated by the NLDB for each testing officer. It is this number that validates a Veterinary Testing Officer's (VTOs) status as accredited.

### **Individual Test and Retest Results**

Individual animals with test positives are recorded in the tag, sex, age and action parts. This information is displayed on the retest allocation so CCT skin test measurements or blood test results may be recorded.

### **Stock Details**

These give the total tested and total positive for each sex and age group, plus the totals.

### **Remarks**

Comments about the next test or results may be included. Tick the record remark box if you wish this information to be recorded on the NLDB. It will then be printed on subsequent allocations.

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Prior to departure from the farm both the owner and testing officer should sign the declarations on the allocation. The farm copy should be given to the owner or their representative.

**References**

NLDB National Livestock Data Base A Guide For Deer Tb Testing Officers. MAF Quality Management