

Post-mortem (PM) examinations are carried out in order to assess the stage and severity of the infection at the time of slaughter and, where required, obtain tissue samples for culture and DNA typing of the TB bacterium (to assist with epidemiological investigations). However, bovine TB can only be detected by post-mortem examination if the infection is relatively well advanced and has caused lesions in the infected organ(s) and associated lymph nodes that are sufficiently extensive to be visible to the naked eye.

Detected lesions indicate that tissue changes characteristic of TB were seen at post-mortem examination. Examination of these lesions can aid in identifying the stage and severity of the disease, and can assist in assessing the degree of risk the infected animal posed to the rest of the herd.

No detected lesions means that no evidence of tissue changes characteristic of TB could be detected at post-mortem examination. However, tuberculin skin and blood tests are more sensitive than post-mortem examination and may detect the immune response to the bovine TB bacterium at the early stages of infection, *before* the development of lesions and clinical signs of TB. Therefore, failure to detect lesions of TB at post mortem examination does *not* mean the animal was free of infection.

Tissue cultures

Samples of tissues from all or some of these animals may be subjected to laboratory tests to attempt to grow, isolate and establish the strain of the TB bacterium. These are marked on the table overleaf (if animals killed on farm) or TB110 printout (if animals killed at abattoir). If the culture results are positive for the TB bacterium in animals where no lesions have been detected, the OTF status of a suspended herd will become withdrawn. Two further consecutive clear tests at 60 day intervals will be required before TB restrictions can be lifted

Culture results normally take up to 8 weeks to complete, but on rare occasions they can take longer than that. We will write and notify you of the results once they become available.

Ongoing testing in OTF withdrawn herds

In breakdowns where a positive culture result has been received, EU requirements are that when further reactors at **standard** interpretation are disclosed, irrespective of the post mortem findings, the herd must pass a minimum of **two** further clear tests at 60-day intervals before movement restrictions can be lifted. This is because such animals could represent early or latent TB infection, and would constitute a potential reservoir of TB for other cattle if left in the herd, as failure to detect typical TB lesions at PM *does not* necessarily mean that the animal was not infected.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the TB Reactor Section at the Animal Health Regional Office on the above number

Yours sincerely

The Customer Contact and Registration Team
for Regional Veterinary Lead

cc: OV Practice

Notification of the TB status of your herd

Following the PM results, as indicated in this letter, the OTF status of your herd remains

*Withdrawn**

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The Animal Health Regional Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We are committed to providing the highest quality of service to our customers and the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

Therefore, the new TB testing requirements for your herd are:

Two consecutive skin herd tests with negative results (the first of which will be read at severe Interpretation), at 60 day intervals ('short interval' tests)*

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*This requirement applies to all TB testing agents. For the interpretation of results, please refer to the TB testing manual available at www.advis.gov.uk