

Our Ref: AH0976

Date: 4 May 2011

Dear xxxxxxxx

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about TB testing which we received on 15 April 2011. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 / the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

I enclose a copy of the information you requested:

For which tasks does a veterinary receive payment when a veterinary carries out a bovine TB test on a farm and are the allocation of tasks and responsibilities documented anywhere?

If so, I am most interested in if the veterinary receives payment for providing an assistant who ticks off and records skin thickness measurements when an animal is tested. From personal experience I am finding that it is common for the farmer, or a helper paid for by the farmer, to carry out this task. I am asking this question because this involves a significant additional expense for the farmer. I also query if this fits in with best practice in view of

**(a) allocation of responsibility,
(b) conflicts of interest and
(c) the farmer being trusted to record measurements properly.**

Payments to Official Veterinarians (OVs) to carry out bovine TB tests cover all the technical tasks associated with the skin test of the eligible cattle on the farm, including the recording of all animal IDs and test measurements on the farm, on both days of the skin test and their submission to AHVLA.

It is up to the OV practice to decide whether the vet needs to take an assistant (e.g. vet nurse) with them on the farm to help with data recording whether the OV will do all the tasks themselves or whether they rely on the farmer or a stockman to complete that job. That will depend, among other things, on the number of animals to be tested, the type of farm and their relationship/degree of familiarity with the herd owner. Some OVs will bring with them a printout of all the IDs and other details of the cattle on the farm, which simplifies the task of recording the TB test results.

The herd owner's statutory responsibility is limited to gathering the herd for testing, ensuring that all the cattle are correctly identified and providing suitable animal handling & restraining facilities so that animals are presented in a safe way for testing on the required day. The attached link gives advice to farmers:-

<http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/publications/advice-guidance/documents/presenting-booklet%20-eng.pdf>

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000/Environmental Information Regulations 2004, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. The information you requested may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. I also attach an Annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the services you have received.

Yours sincerely

(By email)

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Animal Health Information Manager

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