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Tackling bTB the New Zealand way

25 August 2009

NFU Head of Food and Farming, Kevin Pearce, is at an international conference on bovine TB at the Museum of New Zealand (Te Papa Tongarewa) in Wellington.



The [M Bovis Conference 2009](#) started today and includes 200 delegates from 29 countries.

Kevin will be providing regular updates for NFU Online and has just sent back this brief report of the opening day's proceedings:

'The conference, which is being hosted by the Animal Health Board of New Zealand, started with a traditional Maori welcome.

'After an opening address we got down to business and the most interesting speech was from Dr Paul Livingstone, Technical Manager for the Animal Health Board (AHB). Paul has been researching, managing and controlling bTB for over 30 years and it was clear that he had an in-depth knowledge.



'He explained how bovine TB was managed in New Zealand through the AHB and outlined the main elements of the NZ control programme, which has successfully moved the herd prevalence rate from a peak of 3.87% in 1994/95 to 0.35% in 2008/09, despite the presence of wild animal TB vectors (possums).

'The programme has a clear strategy of cattle testing, movement controls and the culling of possums. The NZ TB programme costs around \$88m (£34m) and cattle farmers pay 55% of this.

'Basically farmers pay for all the cattle related measures (testing, compensation etc) and then they share the cost of the vector control programme (50% government, 40% farmers, 10% local councils). Farmers receive compensation at a rate of 65% of fair market value although there is limited scope for this to increase to 100% for dairy cattle under certain circumstances after this was agreed with the dairy farmers - because they have to pay!

'Farmers have a significant say in the programme through the AHB at both a national level and through regional TB committees.

'I'll produce a more detailed note on the Animal Health Board - its governance, structure and role in the coming days. I met their CEO William McCook on Monday at their offices in Wellington. Today I spent some time during conference breaks with their board chairman John Dalzell (a farmer) and tomorrow I hope to talk to one of the regional chairmen who is also a farmer.'

For news, views and policy reports on bovine TB, visit NFU Online's dedicated channel [here](#).