

TB-infected herds first-time fall below 100

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Press Release: TB Free NZ

TB-infected herds fall below 100 for the first time

The number of bovine tuberculosis (TB) infected herds dropped below 100 in March for the first time in the history of New Zealand's TBfree programme. According to last month's figures, a total of 91 cattle herds and seven deer herds were infected with bovine TB.

"While this is a big step towards becoming TB-free, we are mindful that the number of infected herds traditionally increases over the coming four to six months," says Dr Paul Livingstone, Animal Health Board (AHB) technical manager.



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“The size of this increase, however, will depend on the quality of possum and other pest control over the past two years. Identifying infected stock before they’re moved off the property is another critical factor.

“We certainly can’t afford to rest on our laurels, although this is a considerable improvement on the same time last year, when 119 cattle herds and 10 deer herds were infected with bovine TB.

“While possums remain the main source of TB infection in livestock, a smaller but no less significant number of herd breakdowns have been caused through uncontrolled stock movements.

“Reducing possum densities in the wild and sustaining this population is still the key to maintaining low stock infection rates. This also reduces the risk of TB spreading through stock movement.

“The pest control operations being undertaken by the AHB in 2010 are designed to stop the transfer of infection between possums and cattle. Each of these operations is vital if New Zealand is to reach the international TB-free standard.

“Last month’s figures indicate that possum and other pest control operations are working. Yet there is still some way to go before we can claim to be free from TB.

“That’s because, as it stands, infected wild animals inhabit an estimated 38 per cent of New Zealand’s land mass.

“Nevertheless, the success of the programme to date is a credit to the agricultural industry and to those people dedicated to eradicating TB from New Zealand.

“Farmers and landowners are encouraged to keep up the good work by regularly testing their animals for TB and using the correct identification tags,” Dr Livingstone concluded.

For more information on the role farmers and landowners play in eradicating bovine TB from New Zealand, please call 0800 4 TB INFO (0800 4 824 636) or [click here](#) to visit the AHB’s website.

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