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That site may temporarily link to older information here that remains relevant - see "[About our website](#)"

ARCHIVE: Bovine TB: Pre-movement testing questions and answers for cattle owners

For all current information on Bovine TB
please see [the new Defra website](#).
This page has only been retained temporarily
pending transfer to the National Archives and removal

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When was pre-movement testing introduced in England?

27 March 2006.

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Why was it introduced in two phases?

Pre-movement testing is a single policy which was introduced in two phases to give vets and herd owners time to adapt their businesses. Phase 2 was introduced on 1 March 2007 and extended the testing rules to cattle 42 days old and over.

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Who pays for pre-movement testing?

All pre-movement tests must be arranged and paid for by the herd owner. Pre-movement tests are a private transaction between a herd owner and their Official Veterinarian (OV). Routine TB surveillance tests paid for by the Government qualify as pre-movement tests, if the animals are moved within 60 days after that test. If cattle received on a holding were not pre-movement tested or exempt, the receiving herd owner must arrange and pay for a post-movement test to be carried out.

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Monitoring of pre-movement testing

Is pre-movement testing being monitored?

Yes. Monitoring of the impacts of pre-movement testing is ongoing and [key statistics](#) are updated monthly and published on the Defra website.

The number of reactors seem low, is pre-movement testing worthwhile?

Farmers are generally complying with the policy and TB reactors are being identified, so there is emerging evidence that the policy is helping to prevent disease spread.

However, the published figures are an underestimate of the impact of the policy and show the minimum benefits. The number of reactors identified do not take into account the benefits of herd owners utilising government paid TB surveillance tests as pre-movement test.

Are there any other benefits from pre-movement testing?

Further benefits, that are not readily quantifiable, will arise from pre-movement tests picking up on incidents earlier in the herds of origin and from the obligation to carry out pre-movement tests discouraging what was a common practice of moving cattle prior to a routine herd surveillance test, so fewer cattle should now be escaping Government funded surveillance tests.

Is pre-movement testing going to be reviewed?

A review of pre-movement testing has begun and the outline scope of the review has been discussed with the TB Eradication Group for England. The review will gather information on the impacts, cost and benefits of pre-movement testing and make any recommendations for amendments to the regime to improve its disease control objectives and minimise any negative impacts on the livestock sector.

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Copies of Test Charts

Will I receive a certificate from the Official Veterinarian stating my cattle have been TB tested?

All herd owners not under movement restrictions will receive a copy of the TB test chart for any clear TB test, from either the OV or Animal Health after a routine surveillance test. Cattle certification provided by an OV after a pre-movement test would be a private arrangement between the herd owner and OV, which may be subject to an additional charge. You are required to keep a copy of the test chart for 3 years and 60 days as evidence of TB

testing. You may be asked for copies of relevant evidence by recipient cattle owners seeking buyer assurance or in the event of enforcement action.

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What if I lose the test chart provided by my Official Veterinarian? Should I contact my OV for another copy?

If you lose a test chart you should contact your OV in the first instance, who should be able to provide a copy. OVs have been informed of this responsibility and the need to keep copies of test charts at the practice.

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When selling cattle at markets, do I have to provide copies of test charts to the new owners?

This is a personal decision for the herd owner. Buyers are likely to request this information to be assured that cattle they receive have been moved in accordance with pre-movement testing rules. When selling through a market, market officials may choose to gather and distribute copies of TB test charts to provide buyers with more information.

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Exempt Finishing Units (EFU) and Exempt Markets

What is an exempt finishing unit?

Exempt finishing units are discrete, self-contained cattle units, isolated from other cattle herds and wildlife, that can be set up to provide a route for beef producers to finish animals without the need to pre-movement test. They are able to accept animals that would normally need pre-movement testing without those animals being tested. However, EFU operators may also accept other cattle into their EFU if they wish. These units must meet strict conditions designated to reduce the potential risk of disease spread from the premises and they will need to be approved by the herd owners' local Veterinary Inspector. Onward movements are restricted to slaughter.

How can I find out the location of approved EFUs?

You can contact your [local AHO](#) to find out where EFUs are in your area or by visiting the [Animal Health website](#).

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Are there enough EFUs?

It is a commercial decision for individual businesses whether or not to establish an exempt finishing unit. Establishment of these will be demand driven.

What is an exempt market?

Exempt markets are markets that have been established specifically for the sale of cattle moving from 1 or 2 yearly tested herds that have not been pre-movement tested when they should have been, subject to 6-day standstill rules. These markets will enable competitive trade of such non pre-movement tested cattle. Market operators may also accept other cattle into an Exempt Market if they wish. Onward movement from exempt markets must be to one of the following:

- Direct to slaughter
- A TB approved finishing unit or
- An exempt finishing unit
- The premises of origin - except for cattle from 3 or 4 yearly tested herds which are not permitted to return to the premises of origin

Cattle that are eligible to be pre-movement tested but which have not been pre-movement tested can also be sold through dedicated slaughter markets.

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Where will these markets be held?

You can contact your local market operator to see if they are holding an exempt market, or contact your [local AHO](#). Alternatively, visit the [Animal Health website](#) to find out if there is an exempt market in your area.

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Where can I obtain the conditions and forms for the Exempt Finishing Units and Exempt Markets?

You need to contact your [local AHO](#) (they are not available on the website).

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30 Day Exemption

The TB Order exempts animals from pre-movement testing that have been on farm no more than 30 days. Should this exemption only be applied once or can I move my cattle again under this exemption if they have been on the holding less than 30 days?

Cattle moving off a holding within 30 days of arrival do not require pre-movement testing. A test would not be required on animals moving again less than 30 days after the original movement. The use of this exemption will be reviewed throughout the first year of this policy being in force.

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Sole Occupancy Authorities (SOA)

If I have a SOA, which includes holdings/grazing in different PTIs, i.e. some grazing may be in annual, some may be in 48 monthly etc. Does this exempt me from pre-movement testing all cattle kept on all SOA listed holdings when they are moved between these holdings only?

Movements between holdings listed on a SOA are exempt from pre-movement testing. However, any movements out of the SOA group would require pre-movement testing if the movement is out of a high-risk herd. The testing of **all** holdings in the SOA should default to that of the most high risk.

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BCMS/CPH linked movements

Animals remaining under the same ownership but are moved on a tack basis for winter housing or summer grazing etc. Will they be required to be pre-movement tested?

Yes unless they meet any of the [exemptions](#) from pre-movement testing e.g. the cattle involved are under 42 days old. Movements between linked holdings are not exempt movements.

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Do animals returning from summer grazing require pre-movement testing?

Whether cattle need testing or not depends on how long they are there (as a clear test before movement is valid for 60 days) and the testing frequency of the premises where they have been grazing. If the grazing premises are subject to 3 or 4 yearly testing, movements off do not require testing. If the grazing premises are subject to 1 or 2 yearly testing, the movement is not exempt. If you have concerns over the practicalities of doing this please contact your AHO.

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What if I was required to pre-movement test my animals but need to move them off quickly due to welfare reasons?

You would need to contact your [AHO](#) promptly and agree a suitable approach. This would be on the basis that, on return, the animals would need to be post-movement tested within a given time period.

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If a holding has a BCMS link, will cattle need to be tested while going between these two holdings?

Yes they will need to be tested.

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If a cow is moving between holdings within the same parish and both are on annual or bi- annual testing, would it need to be tested?

Yes, that is correct.

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If moving between holdings with the same ownership but different holding numbers, wouldn't these also need a pre movement test?

Yes, that is correct.

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Hire Bulls

Herd owners who hire out bulls are subject to the same pre-movement testing requirements and exemptions as all other herd owners. It is important to remember that the key factor for determining eligibility for pre-movement testing is to consider the herd-testing interval of the departure herd.

With regards to hire bulls, who's responsible for arranging and paying for the pre-movement test?

The owner of the bull. It's a commercial arrangement. If the bull is on a holding requiring pre-movement testing, it will need to be tested before it can be moved.

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With the herd owner being responsible for the pre-movement test costs, what would happen if the hire bull stays on the farm longer than 60 days? Before it can be moved elsewhere it would need a test. Would the owner be expected to get his Official Veterinarian to travel to the farm where the animal is currently? What if it's in another part of the country?

If the bull needs to move out of the herd, (that is not exempt from pre-movement testing) and has not had a clear TB test in the 60 days, it will need to be tested. The arrangements should be agreed between the owner and person hiring.

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What if I wanted to check test my bull, if clear move it to another farm, then move it on again still within 60 days of that initial test. Will this be possible if the bull is at the other farm for more than 30 days, but less than 60 from the test? Or will another test be necessary before the bull can move on again, even though it will be within 60 days of its last test?

No, it is possible for the bull to be tested on his own holding and then move to another farm and then move again within the 60 days as it's not possible to re-test. The bull can be moved as many times as the owner wishes within the 60 day period following a clear test subject to the 6 day standstill requirement being adhered to. If the bull moves again outside of the 60 days then another test would be required if it has been on the holding for more than 30 days.

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Are Bull Hirers, Heifer Rearers & Dealers exempt from testing like Producer Retailers if they are in 3 or 4 yearly parishes and their herd-testing interval is annual?

Bull Hirers, Heifer Rearers and Dealers are not exempt from pre-movement testing as they are on a HTI of 12 months for increased animal health disease control reasons.

Producer Retailers are exempt from pre-movement testing as they are on annual testing for public health reasons

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Multiple pick-up licences

Who is responsible for ensuring cattle of varying TB testing 'status' do not mix on the lorry?

It is best practice not to mix cattle that are eligible for pre-movement testing (but have not been TB tested) with cattle that have been TB tested or with cattle that were exempt from that requirement. All herd owners know the TB testing (or exemption) status of their cattle and are able to provide this information to hauliers. Herd owners need to advise hauliers of the status of their animals and hauliers must be responsible for requesting this information if they are not presented with it. Hauliers in facilitating best practice are able, and required, to make suitable partitions of livestock during transit under existing animal welfare transport legislation.

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Cross Border Movements

What if I need to move cattle into Wales, will they require pre-movement testing?

You must adhere to pre-movement testing rules for England when moving your cattle. The pre-movement testing rules introduced in Wales are the same as the requirements in England. Therefore, herd owners in England from 1 and 2 yearly testing herds wishing to move cattle into Wales will be requested by Welsh recipients to pre-movement test all cattle 42 days old and over. Further information is available on the Welsh Assembly Government website.

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What if I need to move bovine animals into Scotland, will they require pre-movement testing?

You must adhere to pre-movement testing rules for England when moving your cattle. Although Scottish herd owners will want to make sure that any cattle 42 days old and over from one and two yearly tested parishes in England moving into their herd are pre-movement tested.

Additional testing requirements for movements of bovine animals to Scotland:

Scotland was granted Officially TB-Free status in September 2009. As a result, from the end of February 2010 additional testing has been required prior to certain movements into Scotland.

A clear TB test prior to movement to Scotland is required for bovine animals from all 3 and 4 yearly tested herds in England and Wales no more than 60 days before movement and no less than 60 days after any previous test unless:

- they can be shown to have spent their whole lives in low incidence areas;
- they are being sent to Scotland for direct slaughter; and
- they are less than 42 days of age (these will need to be tested post movement if they originate from a high incidence area).

For more detailed advice please contact your local Animal Health Office.

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General Questions

Can I add animals to any TB test carried out in my herd for the purpose of having them pre-movement tested?

Owners of herds that must pre-movement test their cattle can, in principle, request additional (usually young) animals to be included in any scheduled TB herd test paid for by the government for the purpose of having those animals pre-movement tested. However, for TB tests that are only intended for an individual animal or a reduced group of animals (such as inconclusive reactor retests, check tests of forward-traced animals, post-import check tests, etc.), herd owners must pay for any additional cattle that they wish to include for pre-movement testing or any other reasons (or, if the test in question is carried out by an Animal Health tester, they must have those animals separately tested by their own official veterinarian).

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What if I do not have an Official Veterinarian?

It is the herd owner's responsibility to find an OV to carry out pre-movement tests. Animal Health are unable to carry out specific pre-movement tests.

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What if I am not happy with the cost of my pre-movement test?

This is a matter to be sorted out between the herd owner and Official Veterinarian. Any OV trained to carry out TB tests are able to complete pre-movement tests.

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What are the requirements for new and reformed herds and also for herds in potential hotspot areas?

All herds subject to 12 or 24 month testing are required to carry out pre-movement testing. Therefore, the herds in potential hotspot areas, as well as new and reformed herds that had depopulated for TB control purposes will require pre-movement testing.

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What happens if a Reactor (R) or Inconclusive Reactor (IR) is found during a pre-movement test?

The same principles apply whether a R or IR are found during a pre-movement test or a routine surveillance test. For further information on restrictions applied and testing requirements please contact your [local AHO](#).

I have received a letter from Animal Health stating I have moved untested cattle that were eligible for pre-movement testing from my holding.

You need to contact Animal Health Pre-movement Testing Monitoring Unit Helpline on 0845 6030 795.

I have received a letter from Animal Health stating I have received cattle that were not pre-movement tested but should have been.

You need to contact the Animal Health Pre-movement Testing Monitoring Unit Helpline on 0845 6030 795.

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Implications of Disease Outbreaks for Bovine TB

Do I have to TB test my cattle during a disease outbreak?

The TB (England) Order 2007 remains in effect during disease outbreaks. Where cattle movements are permitted under disease outbreak controls, statutory TB testing requirements will apply as usual. This means zero tolerance will be applied to herds with overdue TB tests and cattle must be pre-movement tested as usual.

What if I paid for a pre-movement test prior to a disease outbreak and due to movement restrictions I have been unable to move my animals and the 60 day movement window has now passed. Can I still use this test to move my animals? If not, will Defra pay for another pre-movement test?

No, allowing cattle to move without a valid TB test risks introducing TB into other herds. A TB pre-movement test is only valid for 60 days. If you wish to move your animals after this you must arrange for a further test.

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