

Bovine TB: Slaughterhouse surveillance milestones



From
to tbadmin@DEFRA.GSI.GOV.UK

Wed 03/04/2013 20:32

Dear Sir / Madam,

If you can, please list for me milestones with dates in Great Britain for improving slaughterhouse surveillance for bovine TB in the last 12 years.

Please only list those which are thought to have lead to a significant increase in the proportion of new herd incidences being detected by slaughterhouse surveillance.

If possible, please treat this as a Freedom of Information request.

Responses by email will be preferred.

Yours faithfully,

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Your ref: RFI 5416
Date: 1st May 2013

Dear xxxxxxxx,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: TB SLAUGHTERHOUSE MILESTONES

Thank you for your request for information regarding '*milestones with dates in Great Britain for improving slaughterhouse surveillance for bovine TB in the last 12 years*', which we received on 03/04/2013. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

As requested, please find below a list of what we believe to be the key milestones in the process of improving the ability to detect suspect lesions of TB in cattle during post-mortem meat inspection (PMMI) at routine commercial slaughter (i.e. slaughterhouse cases):

1984	Tuberculosis in cattle carcasses became notifiable under the (old) Tuberculosis Order 1984 (this probably reaffirmed a similar legal obligation in earlier statutory instruments).
1989	TB in deer became notifiable in 1989 (Tuberculosis (Deer) Order 1989).
2000	Creation of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in 2000. The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) merged with the FSA in April 2010. More details can be located at: http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/monitoring/mhservice/
1999-2000	Overhaul of the Notifiable Diseases section of the MHS Manual of Operations (1999-2000).
2004	Review and consolidation of EU food hygiene legislation (Regulations (EC) No 853/2004, (EC) No 854/2004 and (EC) No 882/2004). These came into force in England from 1 st Jan 2006, enacted by the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations.



2004-2005	A TB CPD training initiative for MHS staff took place in 2004-05. Please note that FSA can confirm that this training took place, however we no longer hold documentation relating to this training as the timeframe goes beyond our documentation retention period.
2006-2007	Suspicion of TB in carcasses of other farmed species is notifiable for the first time under the TB (England) Order (2006), later replaced by the TB (E) O (2007).
2006-2007	Another major update of the TB section (Chapters 2.4 and 6) of the MHS manual took place in 2006-07.
2008	Internal audit of MHS controls relating to TB sampling and submission carried out in Feb-March 2008. This was commissioned to provide assurance that processes and arrangements in place at the time were effective, to identify good practice and opportunities for improvement. This fed into the project that eventually led to the transfer from AHVLA to the FSA of responsibility for the sampling and submission of lymph node TB in slaughterhouses.
2009	Following trials in 2009, FSA jointly with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) developed new TB reactor sampling procedures and a training pack for meat inspectors. These procedures were gradually rolled out during 2011 to all abattoirs processing TB reactor cattle from England and Wales and ultimately from Scotland.
2011-2012	During 2011-12 the FSA extended the new TB sample collection procedures to other cattle slaughterhouses that do not process TB reactors, as well as abattoirs that process 'red meat' species other than cattle. This was supported by a programme of training on the new TB procedures, along with a refresher on the identification of TB in carcasses of cattle and other species. This training was developed as e-learning modules. All OV's and MH's working in red meat slaughterhouses had to undertake the training.
2012	Articles on TB in cattle and other red meat species often feature in 'TEC Files', a regular newsletter for frontline FSA staff on technical meat inspection issues.

Please note that the improvement in PMMI for bovine TB is a continuous process and it is difficult to say what proportion of the increase in TB slaughterhouse cases over the last 12 years can be attributed to better surveillance or to a particular intervention, as opposed to an underlying increase in the prevalence of infection in cattle. Defra will be commissioning a research project to evaluate more carefully this element of our bTB surveillance regime under our TB Research Requirements for 2013-14.

It is also important to realise that the sensitivity of PMMI for bTB is limited by the fact that only a fraction of cattle infected with the bTB bacterium show lesions in their organs that are visible with the naked eye at the time of slaughter.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that all the initiatives listed above have, over time, enhanced the awareness of bovine TB among the meat inspector community in GB, led to a gradual increase in the number of TB slaughterhouse cases in cattle and hence the proportion of new bovine TB herd breakdowns initiated through slaughter surveillance.

Future requests on slaughterhouse surveillance for TB should be directed to the FSA, as this is a statutory function that the agency delivers under a Service Level Agreement with AHVLA.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Defra TB Programme

Email: ccu@correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk