

# Pictured: The dramatic moment a prize cow is slaughtered after controversial blood test showed signs of TB

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This is the shocking moment a Government official prepares to shoot one of 80 cows slaughtered over claims they had bovine tuberculosis - of which only FIVE turned out to have the disease.

Devastated farmer Tony Yewdall, 73, watched in horror as his £100,000 prize herd was killed after a controversial blood test showed they had signs of TB.

The tests, carried out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, have been criticised as producing "erratic" results by farmers and farming leaders.

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Fresh to the slaughter: An official prepares to shoot a prize cow who is suspected of having contracted bovine tuberculosis

Mr Yewdall, a widower, launched a High Court Appeal to block the cull and offered to pay for a retest himself.

His action failed and on Wednesday Defra vets arrived at his West Webbery Farm near Bideford, Devon, to carry out the mass slaughter.

But when laboratory tests were taken on the dead animals it was discovered that 75 of the 80 Guernsey cows were free of the disease.

Mr Yewdall said: "All the others were killed unnecessarily. It's quite appalling.

Because they were pedigrees, we cannot replace these animals and we shall have to see whether we can stay in business.

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Devastated: Farmer Tony Yewdall watches in horror as his £100,000 prize herd are killed. Further tests eventually revealed that 75 of the 80 Guernsey cows were free of the disease

"Our costs are going up all the time and our income is falling and we shall not get proper compensation.

"The fact that Defra insisted in doing this without a re-test is just awful. All those poor healthy cows have been put down without reason.

"We were not allowed to appeal. We should have been allowed a re-test as it was clearly a matter of doubt, which has now been proved."

The herd was slaughtered after two of the cows showed signs of the disease and the latest lab tests showed three more had early signs of TB lesions.

Mr Yewdall sends his milk for ice-cream, cheese, cream and other dairy products but says he will now have had to buy in non-pedigree Jerseys.

Many farmers attribute the increase of TB in cattle to badgers spreading the disease - but because they are a protected species they cannot be culled.

Mel Hall, of National Farmers' Union, said: "The Yewdalls did everything absolutely right and by the book and it's very sad indeed.

"We need to see a Government policy in the future which includes a realistic compensatory package, tackles the disease in wildlife and doesn't leave farm businesses teetering on the edge."

A Defra spokesman defended the cull and added: "A retest would only be appropriate if there were evidence that there had been problems in the laboratory procedures.

"For sound disease control reasons, our objective is to remove all cattle that react positively to a TB diagnostic test."

**Bovine tuberculosis is an infectious disease that is caused by the bacteria mycobacterium bovis.**