Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Sharing the location of TB infected farms

Date of issue: 8 December 2014
Action required: Responses by 30 January 2015
Overview

We are proposing change to the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010 to allow us to publish information regarding cattle herds infected with bovine TB.

How to respond

You can respond to this consultation through the online response form, by letter or by email at the addresses below.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

The consultation document is available on the Welsh Government website at: www.wales.gov.uk/consultations

Contact details

For further information, please contact the TB team:

TB Team
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: bovinetb@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 528 3300

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone’s name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.
The current position

In order to move or trade cattle, herds need to be Officially Tuberculosis Free. One of the primary aims of our TB Eradication Programme is to prevent infection spreading to TB-free farms. To assist with this, we have cattle surveillance and control measures in place which are designed to reduce the risk of infected animals remaining undetected within a herd and prevent TB spreading through cattle movements. These include:

- Annual testing of all cattle herds
- A requirement for cattle to be pre-movement tested within 60 days of being moved from a farm (although there are some exemptions)
- Placing herds under movement restrictions when animals are identified or suspected as being infected with bovine TB (referred to as a TB breakdown)
- The rapid removal and slaughter of test positive (reactor) animals
- Requiring infected herds to have at least two clear tests before movement restrictions are lifted

Despite these controls it is not possible to fully eliminate the risk of TB spreading through undetected infected cattle. The reasons for this are:

- The sensitivity\(^1\) of the skin test is not 100% which means that infected animals can be missed
- Cattle can become infected after being tested and before they are moved
- TB can spread through contact with neighbouring cattle

We do not currently release information on the TB status of individual herds. We are concerned that this can result in incomplete, incorrect or a lack of information being available to farmers on their local TB situation.

Why we are proposing to change

There are precautionary measures that cattle farmers can take to improve biosecurity on their holding and help prevent the introduction of TB. These can include preventing contact between their cattle, neighbouring cattle and wildlife, and understanding the risk of introducing infection when bringing new cattle into the herd.

We believe that by publishing the location of TB breakdown herds, awareness of the risk will improve and encourage farmers to take additional precautions to protect their herds from TB.

What we are proposing

To allow us to do this we need to change the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010 to allow the Welsh Ministers to publish information on TB breakdown herds.

---

\(^1\) How likely a test will correctly identify an animal as being infected
The proposed change to the Order will say:

“Where an affected animal has been identified, and the rest of the herd thereby loses its tuberculosis-free status, the Welsh Ministers may publish information regarding the affected bovine herd in any form that the Welsh Ministers see fit for the purpose of helping other persons to protect against further spread of tuberculosis.”

Next steps

1. The Welsh Ministers will make a final decision on whether to change the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010 after fully considering the responses to the consultation.

2. If the Welsh Ministers decide to change the Order, they will then consider the suitability of proposals for how to use this new power on a case-by-case basis. This will include any consideration of the release of personal data.

3. One of the options available to the Welsh Ministers will be a web based system which will display the location of current cattle herd breakdowns in Wales.

Future

If the Welsh Ministers decide to change the Order, one of the options they could consider in the future is to display the location of TB breakdown herds on a website. **No personal information relating to the farm or farmer would be displayed**, only the location of the herd will be shown on a map if it is currently under TB restrictions.

The primary purpose for this will be to make farmers aware when their neighbour(s) has a TB breakdown so that they can then take sensible precautions to reduce the risk to their cattle e.g. avoid grazing fields on the boundary. As well as this there could also be some benefit when buying cattle as farmers could use the website to be more aware of the current disease situation in areas they source cattle from.

Showing the information on a map provides a complete picture of where infected herds are located. Using a website also allows us to keep the information up-to-date by no longer displaying farms after they regain their TB-free status.
Consultation Response Form

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Email / telephone number:

Your address:
**Question 1:** Do you agree that the location of TB infected herds should be published? If not, why?
**Question 2:** How do you think this information might be used by cattle farmers to help protect their herds from TB?
**Question 3:** What do you think is the best way of publishing information on TB breakdown herds?
Question 4: Would it be useful also to publish information on herds that have recently come off movement restrictions? If think that it would be, why?
Question 5: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you would like to make any related comments which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: