

Terms and Conditions of the Approval and Operation of an Approved Finishing Unit With Grazing

Approved Finishing Unit (AFU): to allow the purchase of TB restricted cattle from multiple sources for rearing, fattening or finishing (with grazing).

Background and Purpose

AFUs were introduced to provide an outlet for the rearing, fattening and/or finishing of clear tested cattle from TB restricted holdings. They can also source cattle from unrestricted premises. Cattle may be sourced from multiple premises and from any area of England, Scotland and Wales. AFUs are approved for cattle only.

AFUs are not intended for pregnant animals and no breeding must take place in these units. Contingencies must be in place for any calves born unexpectedly in an AFU.

The conditions of approval and operation of AFUs with grazing have been formulated to ensure disease security and are detailed overleaf. They include the following:

- the unit must be under TB restrictions
- the unit must have an individual permanent County Parish Holding (CPH) number allocated and be registered with the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) on the Cattle Tracing System (CTS)
- the unit must not have a temporary CPH (tCPH) or Temporary Land Association (TLA) registered against it nor can land/premises registered against an AFU CPH be associated temporarily through a TLA or as a tCPH to another CPH
- the unit must not have any Sole Occupancy Authority (SOA) or BCMS link with any other premises
- the unit will only be approved in the High Risk Area (HRA) of England and only in areas where the evidence indicates that local wildlife are implicated in the origin of disease in the cattle in the area. A risk assessment will be carried out to determine whether a unit with grazing can be set up within the HRA. Where a unit with grazing cannot be approved due to low incidence of disease attributed to wildlife in the local area, an AFU without grazing can still be considered.

AFUs with grazing cannot be approved in a Badger TB control area where the first year of controls have been completed and the controls are authorised to continue into subsequent years.

Source of Cattle

- AFUs with grazing may source the following cattle:
 - from TB restricted premises under the authority of a movement licence (TB16) which will be issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) office responsible for the premises of origin. Cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days preceding their movement to an AFU (except calves under 42 days of age)
 - from a TB Dedicated sale under the authority of a movement licence (TB16b). Movements must comply with the conditions of this licence and cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days of the movement(except calves under 42 days of age)
 - **in England only**, from an on farm herd dispersal sale under the authority of a movement licence (TB16). Cattle from a herd dispersal sale must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days of the movement(except calves under 42 days of age)
 - direct from an AFU under licence (TB16). Cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days preceding their movement. For instance calves may move to a 'rearing' AFU but once grown to young stores might need to move to a 'finishing' AFU with increased space and proper facilities
 - from premises not restricted for TB (under licence TB15a):
 - without the requirement for a pre-movement test

- that are exempt from pre-movement testing
- that have been pre-movement tested
- all movement requests will be subject to a risk assessment by APHA and those considered to be high risk will be refused
- cattle moved from TB incidents at other premises will not be traced and/or notified to AFUs. AFUs will consequently accept responsibility for any reduction in value of any carcase following slaughter as a result of TB lesions being disclosed in such cattle.

Destination of Cattle

After finishing at the AFU, cattle can only leave for slaughter:

- directly under a general licence (TB24g)
- via an approved collection centre/slaughter gathering for TB restricted cattle under licence (TB24b), the conditions of the licence (TB24b) must be complied with and cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within the previous 90 days.

In England the movement of cattle from an AFU **directly** to another AFU may be allowed under licence (TB16). Calves may move to a 'rearing' AFU but once grown to young stores might need to move to a 'finishing' AFU with increased space and proper facilities.

TB Testing on Approved Finishing Units With Grazing

- testing of cattle within the AFU will be at 90 day intervals tests will be instructed 90 days from the earliest date that the previous test was due, not the date that the test was actually carried out. No test interval will be less than 60 days (i.e. the interval between the first day of one test and the first day of the next test will be a minimum of 60 days)
- at the 90 day TB test all cattle within the Unit will be tested
- no tracing tests will be undertaken in addition to 90 days regular tests
- if testing becomes overdue movement on licences will be revoked and the approval of the AFU may be revoked.

Conditions

The conditions listed below are aimed at ensuring that the AFU remains a discrete, self-contained cattle unit clearly isolated from other cattle herds. The object is to prevent disease spread within the locality of the Unit from undetected infection within the unit.

Approval of Finishing Units can be considered if the proposed premises comply with the following conditions:

- AFUs with grazing can only be approved on a premises that is Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) at the time of approval
- each unit should meet all the criteria required to qualify for a separate CPH
- the boundaries of the unit should be well defined, discrete, effective and secure. There should be separate housing, management, equipment (see below), machinery (see below), yards etc. and a double fence with a 3m gap or something that effectively serves the same purpose e.g. a solid wall to a building with no openings or opportunity for leakage of drainings from the unit would be an acceptable part of a boundary. All gates on the boundary must also be double fenced
- all grazing included in the AFU must be within the same parcel of land as the buildings or on a contiguous land parcel. The entire AFU including the grazing must be defined by a single outer boundary i.e. dispersed, non-contiguous grazing areas must not be included. Cattle must not have access to any premises out with the boundary of the AFU in order to access the grazing
- housing must be available for all cattle within the Unit for poor weather conditions, treatment and handling. Plans for situations causing adverse welfare must be considered. The housing does not have to meet the strict wildlife biosecurity measures as for units without grazing, as some will be 'open' to allow cattle constant access from pasture
- however every effort should be made to reduce the chance of cattle/badger interaction. There should be no ground feeding of energy or mineral supplements. Raised/badger proof troughs should be provided for feed and water and feed stores should be fully badger proof as for units with no grazing above
- there should be a record of grazing patterns and this may be subject to checks
- there must be no opportunity for straying or for nose-to-nose contact with other livestock

- cattle may only move into the unit under licence issued by APHA. No other cattle must have access to the unit at any time
- units must not be co-located on a yard where another herd exists including any type of TB unit
- multiple units cannot co-exist within the same yarded area but multiple buildings within a yarded area may be acceptable as one single unit
- units must have strict biosecurity with protocols in place for movements of personnel, equipment and vehicles entering and leaving the unit. All such movements must be limited to those essential to the running of the unit
- if personnel, equipment or vehicles are to be used/have access to other cattle outside of the unit, the biosecurity protocol should refer to this
- protocols must also be in place for drainage of effluent and washings from the unit. There must be no drainage of effluent or wash offs from the unit into areas where TB susceptible stock have access
- protocols must include access to feed
- access to watercourses will be acceptable, providing there can be no contact with neighbouring stock. If the watercourse is shared double stock proof fencing must be used
- equipment should be dedicated, unless:
 - contamination is at a level that can satisfactorily be cleaned using a power wash and/or disinfection
 - any contamination should be dealt with immediately and certainly before contact with other TB susceptible stock
 - contamination will be assessed according to risk and generally shared feed wagons will be acceptable, whilst dung scrapers will not
 - either dedicated outerwear or waterproof clothing must be worn and a protocol provided to demonstrate elimination of risk of disease spread
- a full and effective biosecurity protocol will be required for all shared equipment
- manure will be stacked for three weeks on the site of the Unit, or an approved site to which wildlife or other livestock do not have access
- slurry will not be stored, but must be spread a minimum of 10m from the farm boundary or from any land grazed by, or housing used by, any TB susceptible stock (includes sheep, pigs, goats and camelids, farmed or park deer) and there will be no access to the treated ground by TB susceptible stock for 60 days following spread.

Application and Inspection

- persons seeking approval for an AFU should contact their local APHA office who will provide them with an application form
- on receipt of a completed application form and plan of the premises, APHA will assess the application and if the unit appears to meet the criteria for approval, a Veterinary Inspector (VI) will visit and inspect the proposed premises
- following a satisfactory inspection report, written confirmation of the approval will be sent. The approval will contain the conditions for continued approval
- if the unit does not meet all of the conditions required, approval will not be given and APHA will inform you of the reasons
- if approved the AFU, which will have its own dedicated CPH, will be served with a TB Restriction Notice prohibiting movement of bovine animals (TB02) which will be copied to the relevant Local Authority (LA)
- in addition to testing, the premises, records of movements, etc. will be subject to inspections periodically (which may be unannounced) and, as a minimum, on an annual basis, by APHA
- failure to comply with any of the conditions set out in the approval form (including failure to test the cattle on the unit at the prescribed interval) will result in withdrawal of the approval. In this case, TB02 movement restrictions will continue to operate until OTF status can be achieved
- AFUs are commercial enterprises and promotion and publicity cannot be carried out by APHA. However, APHA will, list all approved premises on the public website.

Action in the Event of a TB incident in the Approved Finishing Unit With Grazing

The AFU will follow the standard APHA procedures for compensation, removal and post-mortem of reactors.

Further to a breakdown in the unit:

- if a slaughterhouse case is reported, an immediate check test may be required, followed by the routine 90 day check test which will be carried out at severe interpretation
- following the identification of Reactors, the 90 day check test will be carried out at severe interpretation

- following identification of inconclusive reactors, a retest will be carried out at the following 90 day check test at standard interpretation and isolation of the animal will be required
- testing will continue at 90 day intervals
- contiguous premises will be subject to further testing if the reactors are disclosed
- the owner/operator may wish to depopulate the AFU if there has been spread of disease within the AFU. In these cases the AFU must be cleansed and disinfected as stated in the conditions on the Notice (BT05). This will be inspected, before restocking is approved
- the Veterinary Head of Field Delivery (VHoFD) may stop the movement of cattle onto the AFU if a severe TB incident is disclosed in the unit as a whole or in a part of it.

Action on the Farm of Origin when Animals have been Consigned to an AFU

- Slaughterhouse cases and reactors from AFUs will be routinely back traced to the farm of origin and any implications for management of the breakdown at the farm of origin need to be considered
- if the supply herd has passed two 60-day tests since the movement, then normally no action would be required, but the case VO may consider the need to instigate further check tests.

Re-gaining Officially TB Free (OTF) Status (Lifting TB02 Restrictions on the AFU)

- if the operator decides to cease functioning as an AFU, they must notify the VHoFD in writing of the intention to seek OTF status
- the requirement to undertake trace testing will recommence immediately that an AFU seeks to regain OTF status
- AFUs can regain OTF status when the operator depopulates the unit, completes satisfactory cleansing and disinfection (C&D) and meets conditions for the grazing land
- as soon as the unit is empty, C&D must be carried out as per the conditions stated on the C&D Notice (BT05). Disinfection will have to be confirmed as satisfactory on inspection by a VI or other authorised officer
- all grazing land that is part of the AFU must remain free of livestock for 60 days after the last animal leaves the unit
- when all of these conditions are satisfied OTF status will be achieved and a Withdrawal Notice (TB10) can be issued. Restocking with livestock will then be permitted
- in all cases, restrictions will remain on manure/slurry until the treatment prescribed in the general conditions listed above has been completed
- once OTF status is regained, the operator must reapply in the normal way if they wish to reinstate the AFU.

Implications for AFUs with Grazing if Badger Control Measures are introduced into the area in which the Unit is Located

- following the first year of badger control activity in an area, an announcement will be made by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) for England about the outcome of the controls and to confirm whether the activity will continue into subsequent years. Where the decision is to continue with the badger control policy, operators of AFUs with grazing in the area will be given notice of revocation of their approval
- where notice of revocation is given, AFUs with grazing will be permitted to continue to operate for up to 24 months from the date on which the badger control licence was issued
- APHA will give written notice of revocation to all operators of affected units.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.