Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Bovine TB:

Call for views on future bovine TB strategy and how to meet the challenges ahead

West Sussex Workshop outputs

Date: 25 September 2012

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1 About the workshop and this report

Purpose of the workshop

The TB Eradication Programme for England was published in 2011. Key principles include partnership working between Government, industry and the veterinary profession, giving farmers more control and choice, empowering industry to take greater responsibility for tackling TB, sharing and reducing the cost of TB, and ensuring that farmers have the right incentives.

The purpose the regional workshops was to widen the opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on and actively contribute innovative solutions on

- The strategic direction of TB policy, including future measures to strengthen disease control
- achieving a fair and effective balance of roles and responsibilities between livestock keepers, the veterinary profession and Government

The workshops form part of the AHWBE engagement which begins an open and informal dialogue with a wide audience about the challenges faced by Government and industry, and looking at options for the future.

We are still in the early stages of developing policy on new ways of working. To address these challenging circumstances, we need new ways of working with more partnership and sharing of responsibilities.

The engagement and particularly these workshops will provide those affected by and who have experience of dealing with bovine TB the opportunity to share suggestions and innovative ideas to help us address these challenges together.

Participants' contributions will form part of a Final Engagement Report to the AHWBE later this year, along with the written responses. The AHWBE will consider and make recommendations to Minsters in early 2013.

About this report.

During workshops the essence of everything that is said is noted in writing on flipcharts, Post-It notes or forms. Following the workshop these are typed up, 'word for word' and then sorted to put similar ideas together. This report follows the same order as the event.

Why sort the outputs?

Conversations do not progress in a linear fashion but go off at tangents, circle back and change direction suddenly. As a result, it can be difficult to make sense of a discussion when it is reported in the order in which it happens and important themes and ideas can be obscured.

For this reason the outputs of each session are sorted and clustered.

The sorting is done by 'emergent processing' i.e. seeing what themes emerge rather than organising the text to a predetermined set of titles. The ideas could have been grouped differently or different titles chosen, so no weight should be attached to them.

Whilst this report serves as a record of what was discussed, and an *aide memoir* for those who took part in the workshop, the contents are inevitably quite cryptic in places so it is strongly recommended that it is not used as a means of communicating with non–participants without proper explanation.

Acronyms used in this report	Meaning
AHVLA	Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency
AHWBE	Animal Health and Welfare Board for England
BCMS	British Cattle Movement Service
bTB	bovine tuberculosis
BVA	British Veterinary Association
CTS	Cattle Tracing System
DIVA test	Differentiate between Infected and Vaccinated Animals test
EU	European Union
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
NBA	National Beef Association
NFU	National Farmers Union
OTF	Officially Tuberculosis Free
OV	Official Veterinarian (private vet)
PrMT	Pre-movement testing
PTI	Parish Testing Interval
SBV	Schmallenberg Virus
SFP	Single Farm Payment
TBEAG	TB Eradication Advisory Group (sub-group of AHWBE)
VMD	Veterinary Medicines Directorate
VO	Veterinary Officer (AHVLA vet)

2 Imagine it is 2025. You are at the market talking about how bovine TB is handled now compared to way back in 2012. For you the best two things are......

Disease in wildlife

- I would like to see serious effort made to control TB in wildlife
- Wildlife infection has been dealt with
- Badgers and cattle now, how long before a human epidemic
- Why are single issue groups controlling what is necessary action

Testing

Test properly, not cheaply

Disease incidence

- The end of TB in cattle and wildlife with culling and vaccination
- Wildlife infection has been dealt with
- TB is found in fewer areas than previously
- TB is rare today compared to then
- Now it is eradicated, thanks to our colleagues

Support

More support for those suffering from the consequences of TB

Wider animal health issues

Wasn't it great how the control of TB led to the control of other endemic cattle diseases

Vaccines

- Accurate and proven blood testing and vaccination
- Vaccine for cattle (market)
- TB is eradicated because all of the EEC vaccinates with an effective vaccine that can be differentiated from field strains

Collaboration

- All sectors working together to effectively help keep bovine TB levels down
- All parties working together without threats from buyers or boycotts

3 Questions to clarify what you have just heard in the presentations

(What do you mean by...? Or Please explain...? Please write your question on one of the white cards. There will be plenty of opportunity to give your views during the workshop.)

- Q What are the 40% of herds in the endemic areas who haven't had a TB breakdown in the last 10 years doing to keep clear?
- A In the South West, they are doing things such as buying carefully and biosecurity. There is no magic one answer, some of the 40% will be in areas with low badger numbers
 - We need to look at what these farms are doing more closely, put more vets on the ground to get more knowledge
- Q Of the 40%, how many herds are housed or grazed?
- A AHLVA does not hold this type of data on herds
- Q Isn't it true that the insurance sector is not interested because the disease is out of control?
- A It may be that Government has to support an insurance-type scheme, therefore think of insurance-type concept or service, rather than thinking of existing insurance products
- Q Is a cattle vaccine available?
- A Research continues to be carried out. By the end of this year the VMD may be able to announce whether it's ready to be used. However, the EU will have to lift legal restrictions before it can used in this country, and the DIVA test is needed for this to be even be considered.
- Q Bluetongue and SBV vaccines are available on the market, why aren't bTB vaccines commercially explored/available? Why is it taking so long?
- A Commercial providers are reluctant to put money into developing a vaccine due to the EU legal position, i.e. it would pose too much of a risk that any developed vaccine would be able to be legally deployed in this country.

- Vaccines in themselves will not be a magic wand, more of a weapon in the armoury.
- Q What are the implications of a vaccine of tests for export?
- A This needs more detailed discussion with the EU
- Q Could Camelids be as big a bTB reservoir as badgers?
- A There are fewer risks in terms of camelid-to-cattle infection; however there are risks of more infection camelid-to-camelid. More testing and research is being carried out.
 - Camelids and the disease transmission risks posed are high on the AHWBE's agenda
 - The alpaca industry recognises that it needs to be registered similar to livestock, but there
 are cost implications. The blood test is supported by the alpaca associations but has too
 many false positives <17>
 - Government would disagree with the view above.
 - The camelid industry wants to work with the livestock sector <17>
- Q Does the TB budget figure of £100m mentioned in the presentation equal 40% of the £240m budget?
- A The majority of AHVLA's costs are bTB related

4 What's working and new ideas

What is working well now?

Collaboration / communication

- Vets are doing a good job
- Good rapport between local vets and farmers
- Vets engaged with Defra and industry in terms of seriousness of TB
- Government is engaged, i.e. the pilot cull
- AHWBE has brought in outsiders and experts who provide challenge to Defra especially from a practical perspective

Common sense

- If the problem is getting worse, how can anything be considered as working well?
- Lots of things that can be improved

Testing and compensation

- PrMT is working well
- Tabular valuations work better than for other Governments

Cattle to cattle transmission

- Farmer's show keenness to comply with TB controls (pre-movements testing, etc).
- Farmers are playing their part

How could this be strengthened, enhanced or improved further?

Collaboration / communication

- Defra should co-ordinate information
- Need data on contiguous farms
- Internet is the main mode of information
- Other forms of communication mean delay
- Reach out to farmers with information on the local situation where farmers meet, i.e. pubs
- We have a responsibility to control Government needs to give the message about the levels of disease to the public
- Will take a long time to eradicate
- More user-friendly website with up-to-date information on local situations
- Government should be honest about the long term outlook and the costs of long term actions
- Government should manage expectations of the public
- More timely / immediate communications and information on local situations at parish level
- Think of other ways of reaching livestock keepers
- Remove the stigma, so neighbouring farmers are open about TB breakdowns
- TB is a major problem in humans, too

Testing

- Post-movement testing
- Test to be done earlier than scheduled
- Increase sensitivity and specificity of tests may need to accept some false positives but would still be beneficial if more 'real' cases are taken out provided compensation package is up to the mark
- Need better and more accurate diagnostic testing
- Post movement testing to be paid by the receiving keeper
- Wales is now PTI 1, and have found TB in places not known before
- Why not zone England, concentrating on current PTI 4 areas (i.e. a health check)
- Widen annual testing areas

Compensation

- How far could levels of compensation be changed if they're changed too much, then it's too much 'stick' (not 'carrot) for farmers already bearing the costs of TB
- Remove compensation of non-compliant

Trading / moving

- Tighter movement restrictions, such as risk-based controls, not moving from infected area to non-infected area
- Tighter controls needed on linked holdings
- Some cattle dealers are buying cattle from the south west, which worries local farmers (in the south east)
- Containing animals regionally may help
- Improve licensing and movements in terms of checking
- Reduce movements, or don't move animals, from the high risk TB areas to the low risk areas
- Better ID on cattle passports such as holding of origin, whole herd history

Incentivise behaviour change

- Farmers in some places are flouting PrMT rules when moving from the south west to the south east
- Other views are that PrMT is being carried out
- Non-compliance: heard that there is some eartag swapping, and not all animals presented at second part of test. There shouldn't be compensation in these cases
- Trading Standards have taken enforcement action against non-compliant farmers
- Why are people breaking rules?
 - Changes in disease over the years
 - Farmers are victims of the disease and stigmatised
- Penalise non-compliance using SFP
- Use farm assurance schemes to encourage of enforce compliance
- Important to maintain trading options if farmers have a TB breakdown if the farmer is complaint: perhaps less so if farmer is found to be non-complaint

Funding

- How are costs going to be reduced if the levels of testing are increased?
 - Increases the costs to farmers
- Talking about cuts but the issue is around health and livestock

What else needs to happen?

Collaboration / communication

- Defra needs to give messages that there is good biosecurity, that there are other initiatives(other countries such as Wales/Scotland seem to be better organised at doing this)
- Question other Member States about their TB situation / action / approach / control
- Communications around non-bovine issues, i.e. pets, cats

Organisations and vets

- Unfair criticism from Defra vets already performing well
- Discrepancy between OVs and AHVLA vets
- Need to be proper facilities provided to enable vets to do the job but vets also need to be more robust about saying the facilities are not up to scratch
- Officials should go and see TB test carried out

Testing

Improve the efficiency of the skin test – possible?

Dealing with reactors / diseased animals

- Remove reactor animals from farms quicker
- Deer create less of an issue than badgers as lower transmission? In the south west slaughterhouses report that a lot (most) deer have signs of TB

Vaccines

- Need an effective, marketed cattle vaccine form private pharmaceutical companies
- Once a vaccine is developed, farmers should be paying but Government needs to help in the development of the vaccine
- Lobby at EU level for commercial companies to explore vaccines development
- Trail oral badger vaccine in England

Disease in wildlife

- Need to ensue the pilot culls are carried out well
- Supermarkets anti-cull?
- East Sussex is an ideal are to carry out culling of badgers
- Wildlife control is critical prior to introducing a cattle vaccine
 - If not controlled, wildlife reservoir would increase out-of-control even if cattle vaccinated
- Should industry take on more costs (from Government) when they haven't had much control over previous policy (e.g. wildlife control - but not limited to this area)
- Wildlife reservoir is not just badgers, should look at all species

What new innovations or ideas can you suggest?

Collaboration / communication

 Camelid industry approached Defra before FMD to suggest camelid identification but Defra wasn't interested

Testing

- Pay testing money direct to farmers, get them to decide, give them the control and responsibility e.g. the Bluetongue approach
- Blood test is more effective than skin test but needs to be more accurate
- TB testing should be charged on a time basis rather than per head, to encourage farmers to be more organised for a test
- PrMT is more organised as farmers have to pay for it

Trading / moving

 Introduce movement and identification of other species such as camelids, along the lines of the statutory regimes for cattle/sheep/goats/pigs

Disease in wildlife

- Communicate the idea that farmers want healthy badgers don't want to cull badgers per se
- Do what has to be done so we can have a healthy cattle and wildlife population
- Anecdotally there are suggestions that badger culling has already been happening which may have kept TB down in some areas

New research

- Tie up TB control with other endemic diseases, deal with them simultaneously
- Farmers are innovative
- Research the link between grazed cattle herds in the south west and TB
- More housed units in the south west, smaller units

Biosecurity

- Address biosecurity concerns:
 - Cattle to cattle transmission
 - Double fencing
 - Co-operative approach
 - Prevent badger access but need to stop cattle to badger transmission

5 What do you think?

Some ideas emerged from workshops AHWBE held with key industry representatives (including NFU, BVA, NBA, & Dairy UK). People were asked to consider these and say what they thought. When answering, people were asked to think as broadly and widely as they could (for example: short & long term, for personal interests and for the industry as a whole, initial and knock on effects/consequences).

5.1 What do you think about the idea of reducing compensation combined with greater ability for farmers to remove reactors and negotiate salvage payments?

1. What are the benefits and positives of this idea

Reactor removal

- Animals that test positive are removed more quickly
- 2. What are the negatives, challenges and difficulties?

Negotiating salvage - impacts

- Individual farmers wouldn't have the bargaining power on salvage that Government does
- Changes in salvage values won't improve the situation
- Slaughterhouses are not likely to pay more

Compensation and wildlife control policy

- If no compensation paid, farmers need to be able to carry out wildlife controls (i.e. primarily culling of infected badgers)
- Politicians need to give farmers a fair deal
- Politicians have dragged their feet on the issue for years and this has made the situation worse
- Politicians need to be more aware about TB
- Politicians take more notice of single issue groups

Other impacts

Vaccination would be a less attractive option

Compensation values and testing costs

- For pedigree stock there is a particularly large difference between compensation value and potential salvage value
- A lot of the cost of testing is not the cost of carrying out testing on-farm
- If appropriate compensation isn't paid then the industry will not be willing to come on board

3. Any amendments or refinements you can think of?

Information for buyers

- Having better information about the herd's disease status and movements is needed when buying cattle
- 4. Any alternatives or innovations you can suggest?

Supporting good practice

- Full compensation should be paid to farmers who have taken every precaution to minimise disease risk
- Increased compensation for farmers that haven't engaged in risky practices e.g. closed herds
- Carrot rather than stick approach
- Need to pay the correct amount of compensation to encourage people to get on board

Reducing risky practices

- Sliding scale of compensation for farmers that engage in risky practices
- No compensation for animals recently purchased / bought in to herd

5. What would you want to know about the idea to consider it further?

Details on costs

- If animal is slaughtered following a positive result and found to have TB (at slaughterhouse) then no compensation and additional cost of disposal
- Slaughter value of cow £500-700 but if it has TB, no compensation turns into a £200 cost

Wider TB issues

 TB affects humans too: practices such as feeding badgers in back gardens means humans can contract the disease

Clear proposals

Need more information on the proposals – it's not clear what is being proposed

5.2 What do you think about the idea of an insurance type scheme to help farmers meet any additional cost?

1. What are the benefits and positives of this idea

Premiums vary by location

Less to be paid by farmers in non-infected areas

Potential for incentive

An incentive to address biosecurity and risky cattle movements

Must be national scheme

As long as a national insurance scheme, it would benefit the livestock sector

2. What are the negatives, challenges and difficulties?

Fairness for those in endemic areas

- Farmers in infected areas will pay higher premiums and can do little to reduce their risk as unable to cull wildlife
- NFU Mutual chooses as to who they insure, so if you're a farmer in an endemic area, then forget it – and who else is going to insure?
- Finding an equitable scheme

Potentially a disincentive

 If all farmers paid equally into a scheme, there would be no incentive to address risky cattle movements – there would be a 'safety net'

Testing regime - impacts on commercial providers

Finding a testing regime that underwriters could live with

5.3 What do you think about the idea of cattle keepers arranging their own tests and negotiating prices directly with an AHVLA approved veterinary practice?

1. What are the benefits and positives of this idea

Farmers have more TB control on-farm

- Cattle keepers should be given the money themselves and decide how to spend it to control TB in their own herd within the legislative framework
- Farmers should be given a pot of money that allows them to control TB at their current status: should their management or biosecurity encourage/contribute to a TB breakdown then the costs should be met from farmer's own packet
- Like to be able to pick the time and date of TB testing so they can all done whilst still yarded
 important if single-handed farmer
- Could form part of a health contract with the vet

National company

National company set up to help with economies of scale

Quality Assurance

Proper accountability on auditing of testing

Cost impact

May end up being cheaper!

Wider disease control

Could tie bTB testing in with other endemic disease control

2. What are the negatives, challenges and difficulties?

Local vets and national organisations - impacts

- Local vets may not be able to compete with national companies and end up charging local rate
- May not be accepted by the broad church of vets (i.e. BVA)

Poor auditing, undermines good practice

- Risks of lack of testing/ appropriate observance of practice may lead to further breakdowns if left to individuals without auditing and ongoing enforcement
- Challenge of getting to the poor practitioners of all sectors of the industry

Broader issues

- 'Big Brother' effect on disease control
- Currently supermarkets have a stranglehold

Costs increase

- More expensive
- The amount of weight the single issues groups have means we have to pay for it all ourselves
- Concern that it is a shift to farmers having to pay the lot
- Extra cost implications if a breakdown occurs

Support needed for good practice

Those exercising good practice in the farming sector are already stretched – need support

3. Any amendments or refinements you can think of?

Quality control and auditing

- More stringent quality controls of practitioners / vets undertaking TB tests
- Independent auditing of practitioners / vets undertaking TB tests

4. Any alternatives or innovations you can suggest?

Involve supply chain

- Encourage the involvement of the whole supply chain (e.g. supermarkets, milk buyers, abattoirs)
- 5. What would you want to know about the idea to consider it further?

Managing choice

- Managing supply and demand everybody will want it at the same time, e.g. at turnout or housing
- Which testing regime would farmers have choice of using when arranging their own tests?

5.4 What do you think about the idea of areas being able to get 'TB free status'

1. What are the benefits and positives of this idea

Good disease principle

- In principle, a good idea
- OTF status, or 'zoning', is key to disease eradication

Leads to more co-operation

- Everyone would work together in an area
- People would adapt and would make it work for their businesses
- Could result in farmer organisations / groups / co-operatives which would mean working together better

Higher values for OTF businesses

- People could sell animals for a higher premium if in an OTF area
- Farmers in OTF areas could benefit from higher land prices / rents as well as higher premiums for their animals

2. What are the negatives, challenges and difficulties?

Risks non-compliance

- It would lull people into a false sense of security in the OTF areas
- People in OTF areas would get too lax about the rules

Some people affected more than others

- There would be pressure on the last people to go 'clear' in an area seeking OTF status, particularly if they have a persistent breakdown i.e. hey may be / feel targeted
- Difficulties adapting to change would result in a two-tier system between those who are able to or can adapt and pay, and those who can't able / can't adapt
- The size of the farm / business would affect the ability to adapt to (and pay for) new practices
- Okay for those in OTF areas, not for those outside

Working together: pressures and risks

- Is it possible to get a whole area i.e. county to work together?
- It may not be possible on your own to achieve OTF status without your neighbours help it would need co-operative of farmers to agree / work together

Reduces trading options

- Would put another boundary or level in the way, in terms of trading options, i.e. TB restricted herds ability to trade out of the non-OTF areas
- Reduces trading options, and therefore prices for those TB-affected herd owners

Costs increase

- Could be expensive for individual farmers
- May see an increase in higher land prices / rents

3. Any amendments or refinements you can think of?

Communications

 Would need critical mass of opinion in areas (i.e. at county level) to ensure it worked – so, communications vital

OTF areas and wildlife control

 Give farmers more control over, for example, wildlife measures, which would mean they could work towards OTF status better

Size of areas

The areas would have to be very big

4. Any alternatives or innovations you can suggest?

Size of areas

- Deal with it on a county level, not smaller units
- 5. What would you want to know about the idea to consider it further?

Define OTF

Would need a clear definition of what 'OT free' actually means

5.5 Minimising the geographical spread of TB in cattle:

1. What else can Government and Industry do?

Stricter movement controls

- Limiting movements from restricted / infected areas to TB-free areas of the country
- Introduce trade zoning only move animals from low to high risk areas

More annual testing

- Annual testing of herds around high incidence / affected areas
- Government imposes, industry accepts the annual testing of herds around high incidence / affected areas

Wildlife control

- Operate cull (wildlife) practice from east to west in high risk areas
- 'Oral' bait trial (for badgers) in England to be introduced

Disease status of animals for purchasers

- Make the disease status of animals more transparent to purchaser (i.e. disease / geography / movement history)
- Information on disease history for purchasers should be compulsory
- 5.6 Different types and providers of support and advice.

What support or advice would you like?

- Have to know other people's TB status and herd history when buying stock
- More support in terms of wildlife controls
- On biosecurity measures:
 - cattle to cattle
 - wildlife to cattle
- Need to consider impact of potential changes and what support is needed – when is the critical point?

– Who could provide it?

- Government has the data on herd TB status
- Private vets have the knowledge and experience on biosecurity, e.g. advice on purchasing livestock, knowledge of the business and local intelligence
- Happy for own vets to provide advice but who's going to pay for it?

6 Out of everything you have seen and discussed today what two things would you most want to see happen?

Collaboration / communication

- It's important to have dialogue like today but choose a venue which is closer to the affected area when in Sussex
- Government and farmers working together to resolve the problems of TB in cattle
- More money spent in the short term will pay for itself in the long term
- Better communication from Government of the severity of TB in England

- More encouragement, financial or otherwise, to encourage responsible biosecurity and movements
- More information available on history of animal either on passports or BCMS helps to encourage more risk-based trading
- For AHLVA / Defra to make as many efficiency and cost saving measures before thinking about passing cost on to the industry

Testing

- One year testing 5 miles+ from all infected herds
- More precise tests

Compensation

- Main concern: change to compensation. Salvage value very much different to breeding value. Possible if animal infected, no value but costs of disposal
- No change in compensation

Trading / moving

Fair and true competition

Vaccines

- Cattle (marker) vaccine
- A faster track for a vaccine for cattle
- More progress on cattle vaccine

Disease in wildlife

Greater say of industry on addressing wildlife

Annex 1: Agenda

Bovine TB workshop: Pulborough Agenda

12.30 Doors open for registration. Coffee and tea will be available (Please have lunch before you arrive).

Starting activity:

Imagine it is 2025. You are at the market talking about how bovine TB is handled now compared to way back in 2012. For you the best two things are......

1:00 Welcome and how the workshop will be run.
Setting the scene
Context and key information

Lead Facilitator Chair of AHWBE Director, TB Programme Defra

Questions to clarify what you have just heard

(What do you mean by...? Or Please explain...? Please write your question on one of the white cards. There will be plenty of opportunity to give your views during the workshop.)

What's working and new ideas – work in small groups to discuss the following:

- What is working well now?
- How could this be strengthened, enhanced or improved further?
- What else needs to happen?
- What new innovations or ideas can you suggest?

2:40 Tea and coffee

3:00 What do you think?

Some ideas have emerged from workshops AHWBE held with key industry representatives (including NFU, BVA, NBA, & Dairy UK). Please visit each of the different topics below and have your say. When answering the questions aim to think as broadly and widely as you can (for example: short & long term, for your personal interests and for the industry as a whole, initial and knock on effects/consequences).

PLEASE NOTE: It is unlikely that you will be able to get around all of the questions so do prioritise the ones you most want to respond to.

- 1. What do you think about the idea of reducing compensation combined with greater ability for farmers to remove reactors and negotiate salvage payments?
- 2. What do you think about the idea of an insurance type scheme to help farmers meet any additional cost?
- 3. What do you think about the idea of cattle keepers arranging their own tests and negotiating prices directly with an AHVLA approved veterinary practice?
- 4. What do you think about the idea of areas being able to get 'TB free status'

For each of the above four topics you will be asked the following questions:

- 1. What are the benefits and positives of this idea
- 2. What are the negative, challenges and difficulties?
- 3. Any amendments or refinements you can think of?
- 4. Any alternatives or innovations you can suggest?
- 5. What would you want to know about the idea to consider it further?
- 5. Minimising the geographical spread of TB in cattle:
 - What else can Government and Industry do?
- 6. There could be different types and providers of support and advice.
 - What support or advice would you like?
 - Who could provide it?

Out of everything you have seen and discussed today what two things would you most want to see happen?

Finishing tasks

What happens next

No	Finish	
later		
than		
AAE		

Annex 2: Attendee List

Organisation / sector

Farm Crisis Network

The Livestock Partnership

Westpoint Veterinary Group

The Alpaca Stud

NFU South East (Livestock and Dairy)

Cliffe Veterinary Group Ltd

Starnes & Gatward (veterinary practice)

Jersey Cattle Society

Farmers and livestock keepers (beef and dairy)

Officials

AHWBE Chair and Board member Acting Director, TB Programme, Defra Regional Veterinary Lead, AHVLA

Numbers attending:

14

Farmers or farming organisations:

9

Veterinary practices or organisations:

5