

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Strategy for Achieving “Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free” Status for England

The ‘edge area’ strategy: Rollout of new TB control measures

Bovine TB Information Note 06/13

October 2013

Introduction

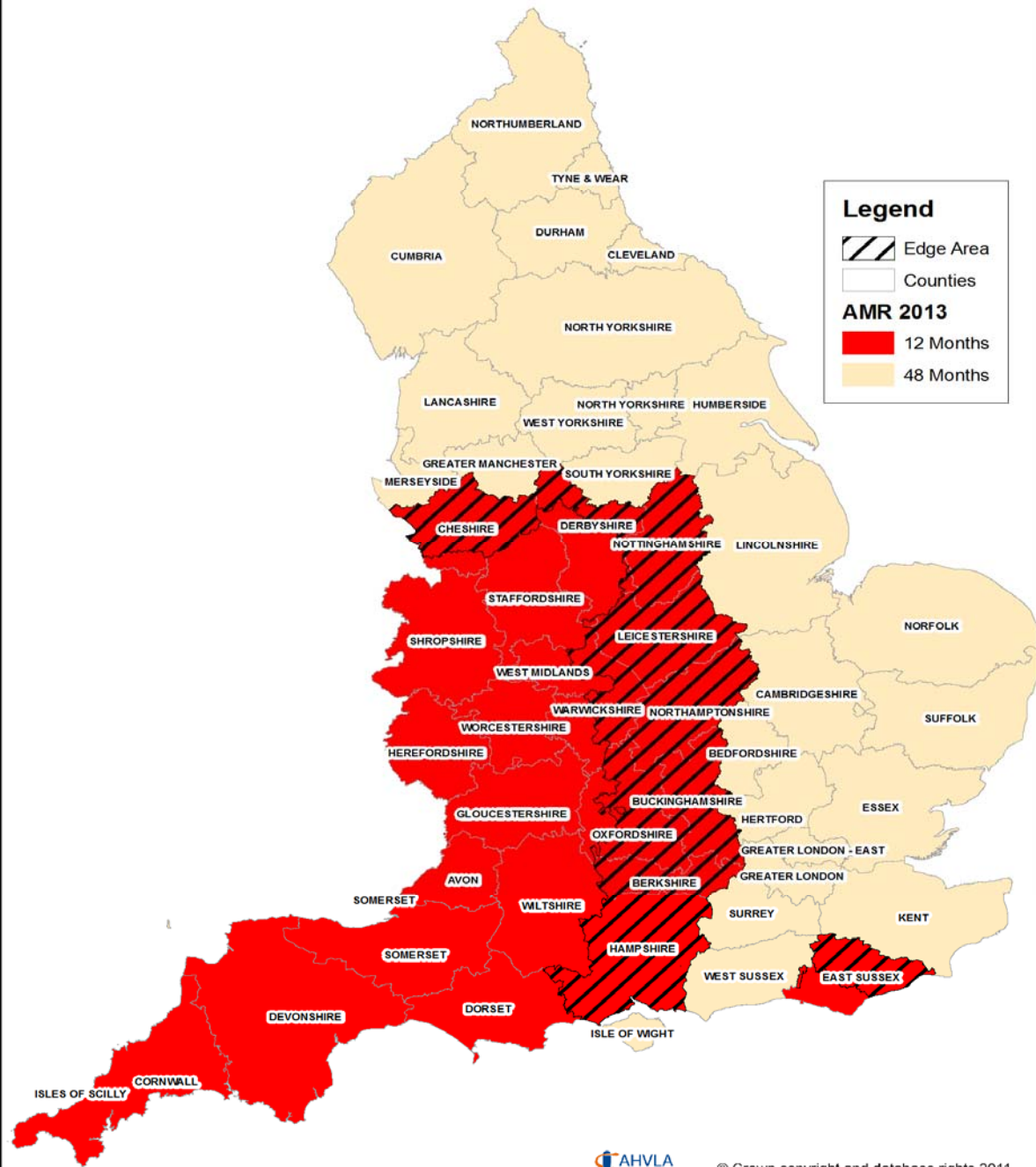
On 4th July Defra launched a public consultation on a new draft strategy for achieving Officially TB Free status for the whole of England within 25 years. The draft strategy confirmed that, ahead of the outcome of the consultation exercise, Defra will be introducing further control measures designed to stop and ultimately reverse the spread of bovine TB (bTB) at the frontier of the disease, known as the ‘edge area’. This note supplements TBIN05/13, published on 12th August 2013, and provides more detail on the timing of the introduction of the new TB control measures in the edge area.

What is the ‘edge area’?

The edge area is one of three types of bTB risk area identified in the draft bovine TB strategy for England (the ‘high risk area’ (HRA), the ‘edge’ and the ‘low risk area’ (LRA)). The ‘edge’ area is the outer part of the current annual TB testing area, where infection is either currently spreading or at risk of spreading in the short to medium term.

The edge area consists of entire counties (Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Hampshire) and part counties (Cheshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and East Sussex).

Area to which the edge action plan will be applied



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AHVA
Animal Health and
Veterinary Laboratories
Agency

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Timing of the new TB control measures

August 2013

Since August 2013, farmers in the edge area have not been able to establish new CTS links with holdings outside the edge area.

October 2013

Information events are being held throughout the edge area to ensure that farmers and their vets have the opportunity to find out more about the new measures and to raise any questions they may have (contact details below).

Removal of CTS links will begin on a rolling basis. Those farmers who have links that are due to expire during 2013 and 2014 will receive a call from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) in advance of the expiry date to discuss possible options. BCMS will also contact those farmers whose links do not have an expiration date.

December 2013

Changes to the TB testing regime for herds whose Officially TB Free status is suspended (OTFS) due to a new TB breakdown will be brought in throughout the edge area. Those herds will need to pass two consecutive skin tests (rather than one) read at the severe interpretation before the movement restrictions can be lifted.

Enhanced TB breakdown management will begin throughout the edge area. This will involve detailed investigation and advice from AHVLA for the affected farms.

January 2014

Interferon gamma blood testing will be rolled out to the whole of the edge area to supplement the skin test in TB breakdown herds and improve detection of infected animals. This will be compulsory for herds whose Officially TB Free status is withdrawn (OTFW), and discretionary for herds with OTF status suspended (OTFS) based on a veterinary assessment of the herd by AHVLA.

Field TB epidemiology reports will be collated by AHVLA on a regular basis, with the 1st quarterly reports due in May 2014. These reports will assess the local epidemiology of the disease and will contribute to the development of local approaches to tackling the bTB. A summary report will be published.

Enhanced TB surveillance of herds will be adopted around new OTFW breakdowns in the edge area of Cheshire and Derbyshire. All herds within (or straddling) the 3km radius

around an infected cattle herd will be subject to an immediate skin check test, followed by another test six months later ('radial' tests). No movement restrictions will be applied to these herds unless these additional radial tests become overdue or they identify TB reactors.

How can I find out more?

There will be a series of independently-run workshops for cattle keepers and Official Veterinarians in the edge area to get more information about bTB in the edge area and measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of bTB. For information on the timings and location of these events please visit www.farm-skills.co.uk or telephone 01765 608489.

Contacts

If you have any further questions on how these changes will affect you, please contact your local AHVLA office. Contact details are available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/about-us/contact-us/>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/bovine-tb-information-notes>

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