

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

# **Statistics on TB in Cattle in GB**

## **Responses to user survey**

**September 2014**

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## Introduction

For eight weeks from 16<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014, Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Statistics team ran a survey seeking the views of users of the *statistics on incidence of TB in cattle in GB*.

A link to the survey was published next to the Statistical Notice at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidence-of-tuberculosis-tb-in-cattle-in-great-britain> alongside the April, May and June publications. The introductory text stressed that the survey did not seek views on any policies in place to control bovine TB. The [@DefraStats](#) twitter account tweeted a link to the survey as did the Government Statistics Service's Good Practice Team. The survey was also emailed to a number of known users of the statistics external to government (for example from the agricultural industry or wildlife organisations). See Annex 1 for a full transcript of the survey.

## Respondents

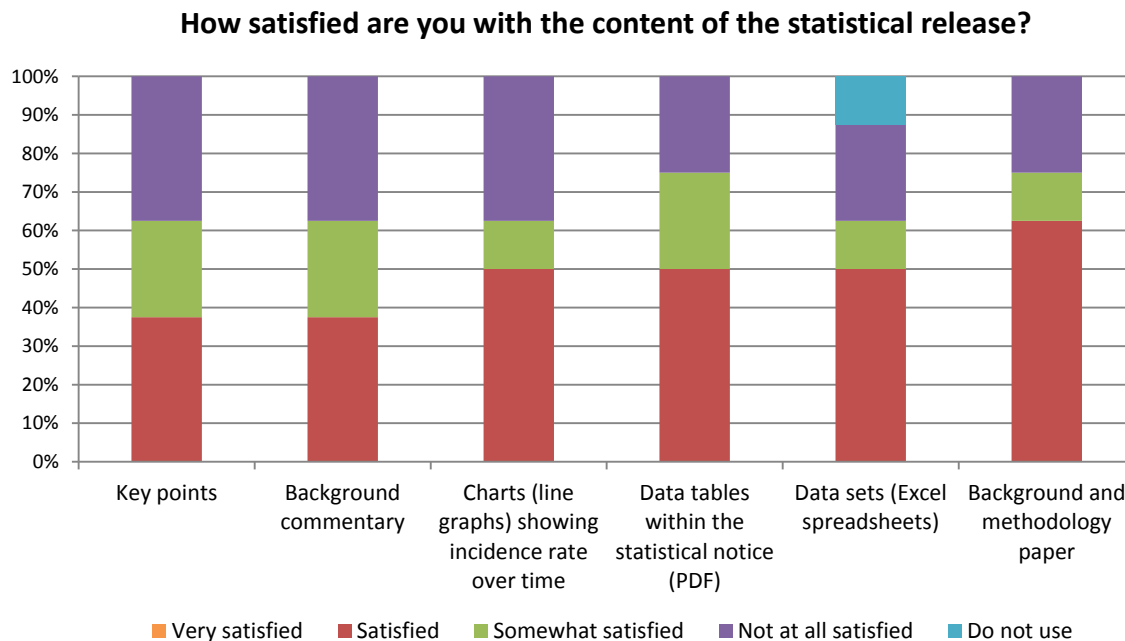
Of 13 responses received, three were incomplete and one respondent had been unable to view the statistics in question. This left nine useable responses. Despite the low response to the survey, respondents came from a cross-section of the user base (see Annex 2).

The bTB statistics generate a lot of interest, with around 970 unique page views of the home page for the statistical release in a typical month. It may be that where users (or groups of users, such as devolved administrations) wish to influence the content of the statistical release they use alternate mechanisms. This might include direct contact with the responsible statisticians or engagement via stakeholder groups such as the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.

## How the statistics are used

A majority of respondents were viewing the statistics to monitor trends in TB incidence both at a national and local level. Other uses included informing policy (external to government), holding government to account and to carry out their own further analysis.

# The statistical release

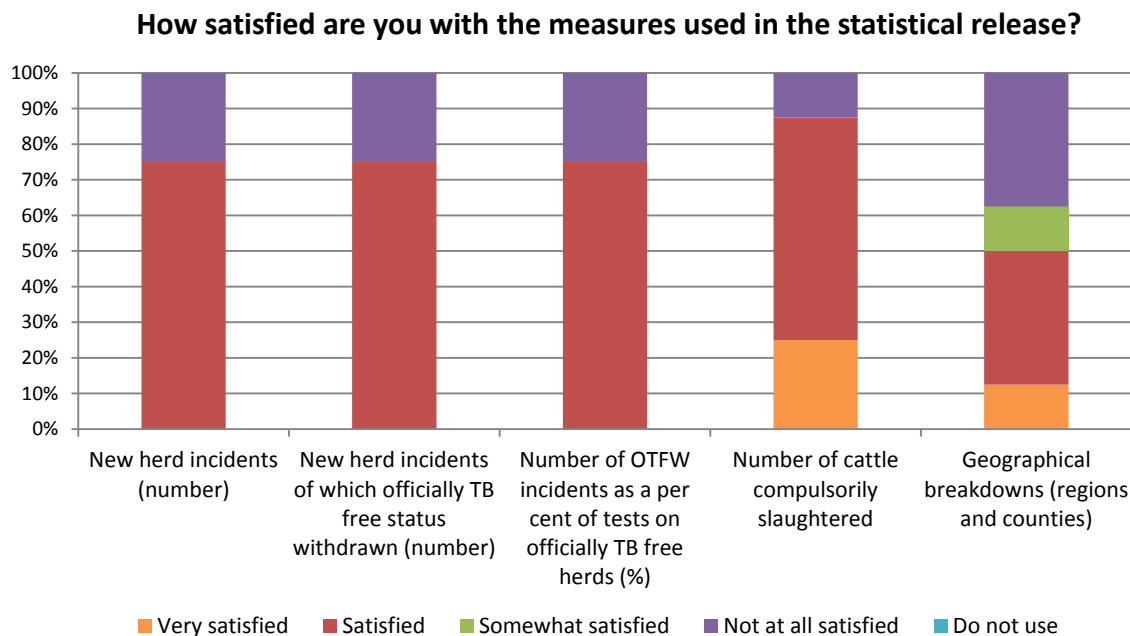


Reasons for 'satisfied' included the level of detail provided and the format of the statistical notice. Areas for improvement included a longer time series and more data to be provided at a county level around herd and animal characteristics (beef/dairy, age of reactors etc.).

While Defra plans to produce a longer time series of county level data going beyond 2008, introducing a lot of detail to the monthly statistical release will require a disproportionate amount of resource. However, more in-depth analysis, such as incidence rate by herd type (dairy/beef) is published in AHVLA's [annual surveillance report](#).

Reasons for 'not at all satisfied' answers included dissatisfaction with the levels of TB present in the country and a mistrust of the statistics following revisions earlier in the year.

# The statistical measures



The majority of respondents were satisfied with the different measures in the statistical release, with the main reason offered for 'satisfied' responses being the amount of information given in the regional and county statistics. There was less satisfaction with the geographical breakdowns, with several users stating that the geographical breakdowns did not go far enough and suggesting data at a parish level would be more useful. While this would be too much information to publish in a monthly statistical notice, there are plans in place to disclose information about the location of TB breakdowns. This would cover England and Wales, but exclude Scotland. Preparatory work on making the changes to the Tuberculosis (England) Order 2007 is in progress. See the [response](#) to the consultation on new control measures for tackling transmission between cattle herds for further detail (proposal 3; page 4).

Respondents were interested in the majority of the statistical measures included in the release, including incidence rate, new herd incidents, reactors, restricted herds, cattle slaughtered as a result of bTB, both nationally and at a county level statistics.

For suggestions for the future, respondents expressed interest in:

- incidence rate in 'edge' and low risk areas and the IAA of Wales
- length of herd restrictions
- more local data
- a longer time series for county statistics
- additional statistics on the numbers of cattle and herds.

There was also interest in information about breakdowns in other species. These data are already produced by AHVLA and [published](#) in the same area as the statistical release.

# Annex 1: Survey questions

Defra publishes monthly statistics on the incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in cattle for GB. We would like to hear from our users about their experiences of using these statistics. The statistics referred to in this survey are published [here](#) alongside information on [background and methodology](#) and spreadsheets containing the GB and sub-national data.

**Please note that this survey is not seeking views on any policies which are in place to control bovine TB.**

## \*1. How do you use these statistics?

## \*2. How satisfied are you with the content of the statistical release?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Do not use
Key points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Background commentary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts (line graphs) showing incidence rate over time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data tables within the statistical notice (PDF)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data sets (Excel spreadsheets)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Background and methodology paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to comment on your answers please do so:

## 3. Which statistical measures are you particularly interested in?

**\*4. How satisfied are you with the measures used in the statistical release?**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Do not use
New herd incidents (number)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New herd incidents of which officially TB free status withdrawn (number)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of OTFW incidents as a per cent of tests on officially TB free herds (%)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of cattle compulsorily slaughtered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geographical breakdowns (regions and counties)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to comment on your answers please do so:

**5. Are there any other statistics you would like to see?**

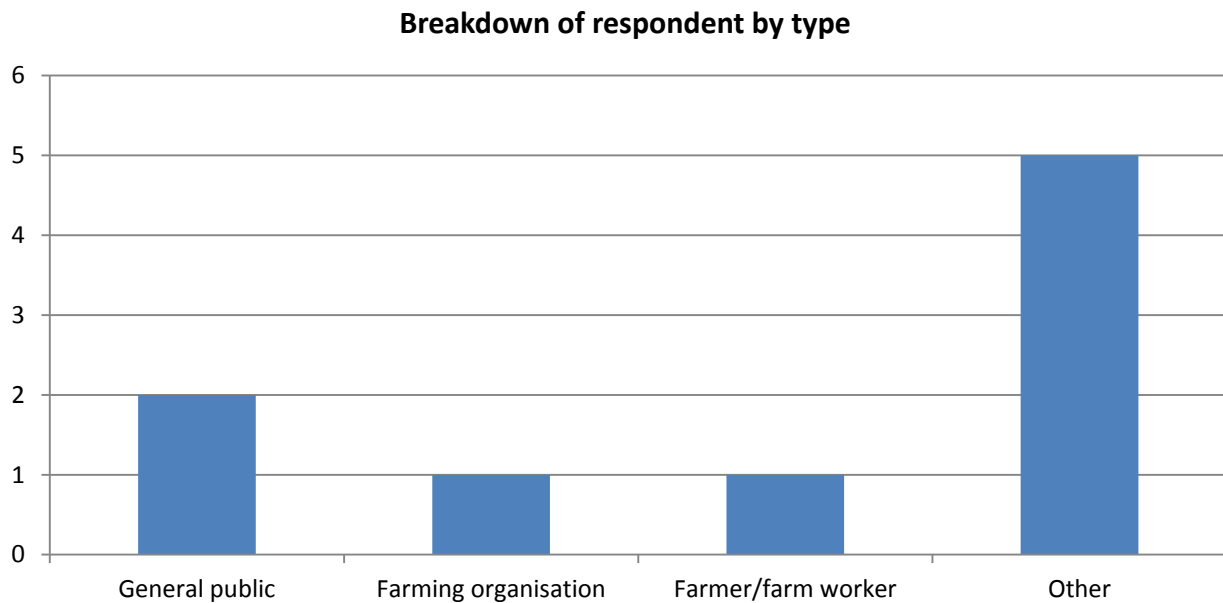
**\*6. So that we can understand who is using our statistics, from which sector or organisation are you responding?**

- ☐ Central government
- ☐ Government agency
- ☐ Other public sector
- ☐ Veterinary sector
- ☐ Farmer/farm worker
- ☐ Farming organisation
- ☐ Academia
- ☐ Wildlife organisation
- ☐ Media
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Charity/voluntary sector
- ☐ Other

Please provide more details if you'd like to

**7. If you have any additional comments, please provide them here. Otherwise, thank you very much for completing this survey.**

## Annex 2: Summary of respondents



### Other:

- International organisation which has successfully addressed bTB in several countries.
- bTB campaign organisation
- Freelance researcher/writer
- Retired vet nurse and crofter
- Independent organisation concerned with animal health and welfare