



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
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Our Ref: ATIC2506

[REDACTED]

{By Email}

28 September 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about post mortem results for cattle and camelids that tested positive for bovine Tuberculosis, which APHA received on 02 September 2021. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

“How many animals that test positive and are slaughtered annually are found to be Bovine Tuberculosis negative on autopsy? Please include the statistics for Camilids and Cattle”

APHA wrote to you on the 06 September 2021 to seek clarification on your request and received the following on the same day:

“Please could you confirm how many animals including Camilids and Cattle were euthanized between 31st August 2019 to 5th September 2021 which had tested positive for Bovine Tuberculosis prior to Euthanasia but tested Negative for Bovine Tuberculosis after Euthanasia with the conclusion of an autopsy and slaughter?”

The purpose of testing

It is important to remember that infected animals can be contagious before they display lesions or other clinical signs of TB. Therefore, removing them promptly from the herd after a positive diagnosis is an essential part of tackling this disease and ensuring that it does not spread amongst our livestock population or is passed onto humans.

The additional post-mortem and testing processes carried out by APHA are used to identify which strain of the disease is present and help inform decisions on testing other animals in the herd.

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.

The absence of visible lesions at post-mortem does not mean that an animal was free of TB infection. In the early stages of TB, the lesions in the affected organs are often microscopic.

These can be difficult times for owners and APHA staff are always on hand to provide advice and assistance during this process. The UK enjoys a hard-won international reputation for animal health, welfare and biosecurity and our standards are second to none. Our strict animal control strategies are central to this. Due to the comprehensive bTB eradication plan in place in the UK, human cases of bTB have been significantly reduced over recent decades and international markets remain open to exports of UK beef and dairy products.

To find out more about some of the terms used and the procedure APHA follow after a confirmed case of Bovine TB can be found on the APHA Science Blog here:

<https://aphascience.blog.gov.uk/2021/09/17/bovine-tuberculosis-testing-and-examining-btb-positive-animals/>

The data for cattle for the year 2019 can be found here and is summarised as follows:

Cattle tested positive, had a PME, results negative	Cattle tested positive, had a PME, results inconclusive	Cattle tested positive, had a PME, results positive	Data source
974	20,793	7,756	Link below

[England TB Epi report 2019 Figure 3.4.9a](#)

As this information is already in the public domain it is exempt from release via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

The data for 2020/21 is due to be published and is exempt from release citing Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 22

APHA have concluded that the public interest in withholding the information sought outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. Releasing information now before it has been finalised would be misleading to the public and this would contradict the principles behind Freedom of Information. It is in the public interest to wait until the information has been collected, assessed and quality checked rather than to release the information in a piecemeal fashion.

Given the importance of publishing only appropriately collated and checked figures, it is reasonable to expect that this information should be published in line with accepted practice rather than disclosed before official publication.

Information on Camelids can be found at Appendix 1.

More information on Tb and non – bovine species Tb can be found at the following links:

[Bovine TB epidemiology and surveillance in Great Britain, 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
[Statistics on TB in Non-Bovine Species - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/other-tb-statistics>

<https://aphascience.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/05/bovine-tuberculosis/>

Information disclosed in response to this FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOI and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

An Annex is attached which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Postal requests during the COVID-19 outbreak

APHA are currently experiencing delays in replying to post received. You should send queries to the relevant email address (details below) wherever possible. Please remember to include a return email address.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can also be used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request, you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Manager at the address at the top of this letter or email enquiries@apha.gov.uk and the team will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Coronavirus

If you need to contact the ICO during the Coronavirus pandemic, it's best to do so online. Please click [here](#) for contact details. You can also call them on 0303 123 1113.