



Guidance Notes on the Conditions of Approval and Operation of a TB Isolation Unit in Wales

Approved TB Isolation Unit: to allow the isolation of TB Restricted Cattle from a single source with the aim of achieving Officially TB Free status

Background and Purpose

TB Isolation Units are approved for cattle only

TB Isolation Units (IUs) were introduced to enable the isolation and testing of a group of cattle in order to achieve freedom from TB restrictions. The intention is to create a distinct group of cattle with a similar infection risk (same herd, same age group, same previous exposure to infection risk) and status (hence the limited entry window), so that a breakdown testing regime is likely to find infection if present.

Cattle can be moved to the TB IU, where they will undergo a testing regime and, if appropriate, may regain Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status.

They provide an outlet for calves or store cattle from TB restricted holdings lacking the facilities for rearing and they provide an opportunity to isolate and test cattle in order to regain the TB free status of those cattle. Single animals should not be kept in isolation.

TB IUs are not intended for pregnant animals and no breeding should take place in these units. However where all the facilities that may be required in the event of prolonged restrictions are provided within the confines of the unit these scenarios may be considered subject to a satisfactory veterinary risk assessment and provision of a contingency plan e.g. there must be provision of:

- calving areas
- milking facilities for dairy females, and
- calf accommodation

Where applicable animals that are due to calve within the minimum period for which they will be required to remain in the unit should not be licensed into the unit.

TB IUs can only be approved on an OTF premises. They cannot be approved, nor can a new County Parish Holding (CPH) be issued, on a premises that is under movement restrictions (TB02/TB02(Welsh))

The following will apply to the unit:

- must be under movement restrictions (TB02/TB02(Welsh))
- must have a separate and unique CPH which will only be allocated after approval of the unit
- must not have a temporary CPH (tCPH) or Temporary Land Association (TLA) registered against it, nor can land/premises registered against a TB IU CPH be associated temporarily through a TLA, or as a tCPH to another CPH.
- must only be filled with cattle from a named single source
- must only be allowed a period of six weeks to fill the unit
- must not include grazing, and
- must be wildlife-proof.

Source of Cattle

- TB IUs may source cattle from a single TB restricted premises, but not from multiple premises
- all cattle must have tested clear within the previous 60 days or be untested calves under 42 days old at the time of the movement

- cattle can only be moved onto the TB IU under the authority of a movement licence (TB16/TB16(Welsh)) which will be issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) office responsible for the premises of destination
- all movement requests will be subject to a Veterinary Risk Assessment (VRA) by APHA and those considered to be high risk will be refused
- the TB IU will be closed after a period of no more than six weeks and no further licences issued for movements on to the premises. Once closed, the operator must forward the completed Appendix to the Approval Letter for a TB Isolation Unit (TR139) with details of the first and last movements into the unit and a list of all the animals within the unit to APHA
- if the source herd is a persistent breakdown (of 18 months duration or more) when cattle are moved into the TB IU, the final test in the TB IU that results in OTF status being regained cannot be used as a pre-movement test unless all the cattle that moved into the TB IU were under 180 days old when they moved.

Destination of Cattle

- until OTF status has been gained, cattle cannot leave the TB IU, except under licence and subject to a satisfactory risk assessment. The destination will be limited to slaughter, or possibly to an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU). Once OTF status is gained and a Withdrawal Notice (TB10/TB10(Welsh)) lifting restrictions is served, cattle will no longer be under movement restriction and may move without the need for a licence
- if a batch of cattle going through the TB IU is sourced from a persistent breakdown (of 18 months duration or more) and any of the cattle are 180 days old or over on the day they enter the unit, once OTF status is regained, the final test in the TB IU cannot be used as a pre-movement test. Until a further test can be completed at least 60 days later, cattle can only leave directly to slaughter or to an AFU.

TB Testing on TB Isolation Units

- once the TB IU has been closed, and the operator has forwarded the completed Appendix to licence TB16 to APHA, testing within the unit will be at 60 day intervals. The first Approved Segregated Group (ASG) test at severe interpretation will be carried out at least 60 days after the last animal entered the unit
- all cattle within the unit will be tested
- after two clear consecutive tests have been completed, and providing the last test commences at least 120 days after the date that the last animal moved into the unit a Withdrawal Notice (TB10/TB10(Welsh)) may be issued to lift restrictions
- if the unit is set up after a clear Short Interval Test (SIT) in the herd of origin and the herd of origin has a subsequent clear SIT, the cattle in the unit can regain OTF status after a single clear ASG test carried out at least 60 days after the last animal entered the unit.

Conditions

The conditions listed below are aimed at ensuring that the TB IU remains a discrete, self-contained cattle unit clearly isolated from other cattle herds. Grazing cannot be included in TB IUs.

The approval of a TB IU can be considered if the proposed premises complies with the following conditions:

- each unit should meet all the criteria required to qualify for a separate CPH
- units should be biosecure with no other cattle or other livestock present, have strict biosecurity protocols and a dedicated entrance and exit which allows no risk of direct or indirect contact with other livestock
- the boundaries of the unit should be:
 - well defined
 - discrete
 - effective, and
 - secure
- there should be separate:

- housing
- management
- equipment (refer below)
- machinery (refer below)
- yards etc, and a double fence with a 3m gap or something that effectively serves the same purpose
- 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
- buildings must have sufficient space to allow for the growth of the cattle to be allowed into the unit and a maximum capacity stated in the conditions for approval. It is the responsibility of the owner/operator of the unit to ensure that the welfare of the cattle is not compromised by overcrowding. The number of cattle which the unit can hold must be included on the approval and the owner/operator must consider contingencies to exclude potential adverse welfare conditions if cattle need to remain in the unit for longer. The contingency plan should be recorded and agreed
- units must be wildlife proof, and wildlife proof in this context refers to species of wild mammals that can act as reservoirs of *M. bovis* e.g. badgers
- an alternative to adapting the buildings is to ensure a wildlife-proof boundary to the unit, such as electric fencing, following official guidelines, and this can be in addition to a stock-proof boundary fence. Any boundary fencing must eliminate the possibility of any access to the unit by wildlife
- suitable conditions include:
 - sides of the building should not be open, but of a smooth and solid construction (i.e. not to allow wildlife to get a purchase) and a minimum of 1.5m high
 - doors should be of smooth and solid construction (i.e. not to allow wildlife to get a purchase) and a minimum of 1.5m high (solid sheets of metal can be added to a five bar gate)
 - gaps at the sides and under doors and walls should be no greater than 7.5cm and must not be able to be enlarged by digging or chewing
 - where effluent or waste water drains into a soak away ditch, wildlife and livestock access must be prevented, for instance by the use of electric fencing. This is to prevent the contamination of the environment and wildlife
 - where electric fencing is to be used at the boundary of the TB IU to ensure access to wildlife is denied, it is important to note that official recommendations are that strands of wire should be at 10, 15, 20 and 30cm above the ground
- there must be no drainage of effluent or wash offs from the unit into areas where TB susceptible stock have access. Dedicated access to and vehicle movements within the unit must be considered as part of the biosecurity protocol
- equipment must be dedicated
- manure will be treated as normal once OTF status is gained, but before this time stacked for 30 days on the site of the unit, or at an approved site. The approved site must be livestock and wildlife-proof and have no run-off from the site
- slurry will be treated as normal once OTF status is regained, but if it is necessary to empty slurry tanks before that time, it should be either:
 - stored for six months and 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, camelids and farmed or park deer) and there will be no access to the treated ground by TB susceptible stock for:
 - at least 60 days following spreading during the period 1 April to 30 September

- at least 120 days following spreading during the period 1 October to 31 March
- where the required time period overlaps the April and October cut-offs, if more than 30 days is in the colder months, then 120 days must be used
- or not stored but spread by injection into the ground.

Application and Inspection

- persons seeking approval for a TB IU should either contact APHA for an application form or obtain the form from the GOV.UK website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-tb-isolation-unit-application>
- an officer/inspector will consider the application on receipt of the following:
 - a completed application form
 - a plan of the premises
 - the biosecurity protocol and
 - the contingency plan
- if the officer/inspector considers that approval may be possible, they will visit and inspect the proposed premises
- following a satisfactory inspection report and indication that the application is suitable for approval, APHA will request a new CPH number from Rural Payments Wales (RPW). Once the new CPH number has been allocated, APHA will send written confirmation of the approval and the CPH number to the operator, along with the conditions and requirements for continued approval
- the TB IU will be served with a TB Restriction Notice (TB02/TB02(Welsh)) prohibiting movement of bovine animals which will be copied to the relevant Local Authority (LA)
- a licence (TB16/TB16(Welsh)) will be issued to the keeper of the origin herd to enable the movement of cattle to commence
- the operator is responsible for ensuring the TB IU CPH is registered with the British Cattle Movement Service
- the TB IU will be issued a Withdrawal Notice (TB10/TB10(Welsh)) removing restrictions once the OTF status of the cattle within the unit has been regained. Once depopulation is complete the owner may apply for re-approval if they wish to operate again as a TB IU
- the re-approval process may involve an inspection visit to the premises and/or a check of the movement records. Whilst in use, every unit will be inspected at least once annually, but the frequency of inspections will be determined by APHA
- once re-approved, a movement restriction will be served (TB02/TB02(Welsh)) and a movement licence issued (TB16/TB16(Welsh)) to the origin keeper so that the unit may restock
- 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 an APHA investigation and a VRA. Movement restrictions (TB02/TB02(Welsh)) will continue in force until OTF status can be achieved. Subject to the outcome of the VRA, this may be achieved by testing, or slaughter of the animals in the unit followed by cleansing and disinfection (C&D) of the premises. Further requests for re-approvals are unlikely to be authorised following non-compliance.

Action in the event of a TB incident in the TB Isolation Unit

- the standard APHA procedures for compensation, removal and post mortem examination of reactors will be applied. A compensation reduction will be applied to any animals removed for TB control purposes as the animals moved on while under movement restrictions
- the normal procedures for regaining OTF status will apply, with a Short Interval (SI) testing regime
- a contingency plan is needed for all units in case of a TB incident, as the SI testing programme will be extended. The plan should address any potential welfare issues that may arise, e.g. in the event that the stock outgrow the accommodation available to them and cover the treatment and management of manure, slurry and bedding during the incident.

Management of the CPH once OTF status is gained

- once the Withdrawal Notice (TB10/TB10(Welsh)) is issued and OTF status gained, a six month test will be scheduled for the unit
- if the unit is depopulated and cattle are no longer registered to the TB IU CPH, APHA should be notified and the six month test will be cancelled. A new application for re-approval of the unit can then be made if required
- the CPH applies to the TB IU only. It should not be used for any other purpose. If the unit is no longer to be used, APHA will temporarily archive the CPH. APHA will also request that Rural Payments Wales (RPW) archive the CPH. The premises can then be managed as part of the original CPH as it was before approval. The TB IU CPH can be reinstated should re-approval be sought and granted in the future.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency 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.