



Terms and Conditions of the Approval and Operation of an Approved Finishing Unit Without Grazing

Approved Finishing Unit (AFU): to allow the purchase of TB restricted cattle from multiple sources for rearing, fattening or finishing (without grazing)

Background and Purpose

AFUs were introduced to provide an outlet for the rearing, fattening and/or finishing of clear tested cattle from TB restricted holdings. They can also source cattle from unrestricted premises. Cattle may be sourced from multiple premises and from any area of England, Scotland and Wales.

AFUs are approved by the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).

AFUs cannot be approved in the Low Risk Area (LRA) of England. The Licensed Finishing Unit (LFU) has replaced the AFU in the LRA.

AFUs are approved for cattle only.

AFUs are not intended for milk production nor for pregnant animals and no breeding must take place in these units. Written contingencies must be in place for any calves born unexpectedly in an AFU as part of the approval.

The conditions of approval and operation of AFUs without grazing have been formulated to ensure disease security:

- the unit must be under TB movement restrictions
- the unit must have an individual County Parish Holding (CPH) number allocated and be registered as an AFU with the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) on the Cattle Tracing System (CTS)
- the unit must not have a temporary CPH (tCPH) or Temporary Land Association (TLA) registered against it nor can land or premises registered to an AFU be associated temporarily through a TLA or as a tCPH to another CPH
- in England, AFUs without grazing may be approved in the High Risk Area (HRA) and Edge Area only.

Source of Cattle

- AFUs without grazing may source the following cattle:
 - from TB restricted (breakdown) premises under the authority of a movement licence (TB16). Cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days preceding their movement to an AFU, except calves under 42 days of age
 - from a TB dedicated sale in England or Wales under the authority of a movement licence (TB16b). Cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days of the movement, except calves under 42 days of age
 - **in England only**, from an on farm herd dispersal sale under the authority of a movement licence (TB16). Cattle from a herd dispersal sale must have had a negative tuberculin test within 90 days of the movement (except calves under 42 days of age)
 - from an AFU in England or Wales directly under the authority of a movement licence (TB16) or via a TB dedicated sale in England or Wales under licence (TB16b) without the

requirement for a pre-movement TB test provided that no outstanding non-compliance was identified at the last annual APHA audit of both the origin and destination AFUs. If there is any unresolved non-compliance, pre-movement testing will still apply

- from premises not restricted for TB under the authority of a movement licence (TB15a):
 - without the requirement for a pre-movement test
 - that are exempt from pre-movement testing
 - that have been pre-movement tested
- resolved Inconclusive Reactors (IRs) restricted for life from premises not restricted for TB, under the general licence on GOV.UK, either direct from the farm or via a TB dedicated sale:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-licence-for-the-movement-of-resolved-inconclusive-reactor-cattle-to-slaughter>

- all movement requests will be subject to a risk assessment by APHA and those considered to be high risk will be refused
- cattle moved from TB incidents at other premises will not be traced and/or notified to AFUs. AFUs will consequently accept responsibility for any reduction in value of any carcase following slaughter as a result of TB lesions being disclosed in such cattle.

Destination of Cattle

After finishing at the AFU, cattle can leave for slaughter:

- directly under general licence (TB24h)
- via an approved TB slaughter gathering in England for TB restricted cattle under general licence (TB24h), except in the LRA of England
- via an approved TB slaughter gathering in Wales for TB restricted cattle under licence (TB24b). Cattle must have had a negative tuberculin test within the previous 90 days

The movement of cattle from an AFU directly to another AFU or AFUE in England or Wales may be allowed under licence (TB16).

Since 1 July 2021, cattle may also move under licence (TB16b) from an AFU to a TB Dedicated Sale in England or Wales, from where they can be licensed:

- to slaughter
- to another AFU (England or Wales) or back to the AFU from which they originated
- to an AFUE (England only).

TB Testing on Approved Finishing Units Without Grazing

- no routine surveillance TB testing is required in AFUs without grazing. However, APHA retains the option to test in exceptional circumstances e.g. if there is extensive evidence of TB identified post-slaughter, suspicion of clinical TB cases in animals held in the AFU. This would be informed by a veterinary risk assessment (VRA) that would consider the local disease situation and any other relevant factors. If the decision is taken to test, moves to approved TB slaughter gatherings without a negative skin test within the previous 90 days would not be permitted until testing at the AFU is completed
- cattle moved between AFUs are not required to have a pre-movement test for TB provided that no outstanding non-compliance was identified at the last annual APHA audit of both the origin and destination AFUs. If there is any unresolved non-compliance, pre-movement testing will still apply
- no tracing tests will be undertaken of animals moved to AFUs where the source herd subsequently has a TB incident

- no post-import testing will be required for cattle imported into the AFU as long as all other conditions for import have been met.

Conditions

The conditions listed below are aimed at ensuring that the AFU remains a discrete, self-contained cattle unit clearly isolated from other cattle herds. The objective is to prevent disease spread within the locality of the unit from undetected infection within the unit.

Approval of AFUs without grazing can be considered if the proposed premises complies with the following conditions:

- in general can only be approved on an Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF premises)
- in England consideration can be given to approval of an AFU without grazing on a premises that has lost OTF status subject to satisfactory VRA and where it complies with the following criteria:
 - where the premises for the proposed unit is an intensive housed fattening unit that only sells animals to slaughter (direct or via an approved collection centre/slaughter gathering) and the origin for the breakdown is recently purchased animals with no evidence of spread within the herd, an AFU can be considered for approval. In all cases the first post-breakdown Short Interval Test (SIT) must have been completed in order that a VRA can be carried out before a decision on approval can be made
 - where disease is believed to be established on the premises, breakdown testing and return to OTF status is required before an AFU can be approved
- each unit must meet all the criteria required to qualify for a separate CPH
- the boundaries of the unit must 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 e.g. a solid wall to a building with no openings or opportunity for leakage of drainings from the unit would be an acceptable part of a boundary
- there must be no opportunity for straying or for nose-to-nose contact with other livestock (livestock-proof boundaries)
- 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
- as part of the approval, units must have strict biosecurity with written protocols in place for movements of personnel, equipment and vehicles entering and leaving the unit. All such movements must be limited to those essential to the running of the unit
- if personnel, equipment or vehicles are to be used/have access to other cattle outside of the unit, the written biosecurity protocol should refer to this
- written protocols must also be in place for drainage of effluent and washings from the unit. There must be no drainage of effluent or wash offs from the unit into areas where TB susceptible stock or wildlife have access
- written protocols must include excluding access to cattle feed by wildlife
- cattle may only move into the unit under licence issued by APHA. No other cattle must have access to the unit at any time
- buildings must have sufficient space to allow for growth of the cattle in 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 comfortably hold must be included on the approval and the owner/operator must have written contingencies to manage potential adverse welfare conditions, which must be recorded and agreed as part of the approval

- units must be fully **wildlife proof**. Either the buildings containing the cattle must be fully wildlife proof or the boundary to the unit must be fully wildlife proof. This can be achieved for example by the use of electric fencing as a boundary around the building(s). The boundaries of the unit must also be livestock proof
- wildlife-proof in this context refers to species of wild mammals that can act as reservoirs of *M. bovis* (e.g. badgers and potentially wild deer) and suitable conditions include:
 - sides of the building should not be open, but of a smooth and solid construction (i.e. to prevent wildlife from gaining access to the building) 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 the outside of 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 must not have access and wire, suitable electric fencing or other suitable fencing should be used to prevent such access. This is to prevent the contamination of the environment and wildlife
 - where electric fencing is used at the boundary of the AFU to deny access by wildlife, strands of wire should be at 10, 15, 20 and 30cm above the ground
- equipment should be dedicated, unless:
 - contamination is at a level that can satisfactorily be cleaned using a power wash and disinfection
 - any contamination should be dealt with immediately and before contact with other TB susceptible stock
 - contamination is assessed according to risk and generally shared feed wagons may be acceptable, whilst dung scrapers are not
 - either dedicated outerwear or waterproof clothing must be worn and a protocol provided to demonstrate minimisation of risk of disease spread
- a full and effective written biosecurity protocol is required for all shared equipment
- manure should be stacked for a minimum of three weeks on the unit, or at an approved site to which wildlife or other livestock do not have access
- slurry should either be:
 - stored for at least six months from the last addition and must then 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 and camelids, farmed or park deer), or
 - spread by injection into the ground if six month storage is not possible
- additionally, there must be no access to the treated ground by TB susceptible stock for at least 60 days following slurry spreading.

Application and Inspection

- An application form for the approval and operation of an AFU can be downloaded from GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-finishing-units-for-cattle-application> or alternatively can be provided by APHA on request
- on receipt of a completed application form with a plan of the premises to be approved and the appropriate biosecurity plans, APHA will assess the application and if the unit appears to meet the criteria for approval, a Veterinary Inspector (VI) will visit and inspect the proposed premises

- following a satisfactory inspection report, written confirmation of the approval will be sent to the applicant. The approval will contain the conditions for operation of the unit
- if the unit does not meet all of the conditions required, approval will not be given and APHA will inform the applicant of the reasons
- if approved, a new dedicated CPH will be obtained by APHA for the unit although an existing CPH can be considered for use where all the premises under the existing CPH are to be included in the unit
- if approved, the AFU will be served with a restriction notice (TB02), prohibiting the movement of bovine animals, which will be copied to the relevant Local Authority (LA)
- the premises, records of movements, etc. will be subject to inspections by APHA, which may be unannounced
- failure to comply with any of the conditions set out in the approval (including failure to complete any testing that may be required) may result in revocation of the approval. If approval is revoked, TB02 movement restrictions will continue to operate until the unit is depopulated and thoroughly cleansed and disinfected (C&D), with a satisfactory inspection of C&D by APHA before OTF status can be achieved
- AFUs are commercial enterprises and promotion and publicity cannot be carried out by APHA. However, APHA maintains a list of approved premises on GOV.UK:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/finishing-units-for-cattle-approved-premises/approved-finishing-units-england-and-wales>

Action in the Event of a TB incident in the Approved Finishing Unit Without Grazing

AFUs are subject to the standard APHA procedures for compensation, removal and post-mortem of reactors. APHA will continue to arrange retest of IRs, however operators have the option to privately slaughter IRs without the need for further testing.

Further to a breakdown in the unit:

- no breakdown testing will be carried out except in exceptional circumstances e.g. if there is extensive evidence of TB identified post-slaughter or suspicion of clinical TB cases in animals held in the AFU. This will be informed by a VRA that will consider the local disease situation and any other relevant factors
- the owner/operator may wish to depopulate the AFU rather than completing a testing programme. In these cases the AFU must be C&D as stated in the conditions on the C&D Notice (BT05). This will be inspected by APHA before restocking is approved
- the Veterinary Head of Field Delivery (VHoFD) may stop the movement of cattle onto the AFU if a severe TB incident is disclosed in the unit as a whole or in a part of it.

Action on the Farm of Origin when Animals have been Consigned to an AFU

- slaughterhouse cases from AFUs will be routinely back traced to the farm of origin and any implications for management of the breakdown at the farm of origin need to be considered
- if the supply herd has passed two 60 day tests since the movement, then normally no action would be required, but the APHA Veterinarian may consider the need to instigate further check tests.

Premises of Origin in Wales Only

- the TB status of animals consigned to an AFU cannot be ascertained unless they undergo a TB testing regime or are slaughtered without becoming a slaughterhouse case
- therefore, cattle aged 42 days old and over from TB breakdown herds cannot be licensed to an AFU unless the herd of origin is due two further herd tests after the movement. The second test at the farm of origin must be a minimum of 120 days after the movement before OTF status can be regained and restrictions can be lifted by service of a Withdrawal Notice (TB10).

Re-gaining Officially TB Free (OTF) Status (Lifting TB Restrictions on the AFU)

- if the operator decides to cease functioning as an AFU, they must notify the VHoFD in writing of the intention to seek OTF status
- the requirement to undertake trace testing will recommence at the point that an AFU seeks to regain OTF status
- AFUs can regain OTF status when the operator depopulates the unit and completes satisfactory C&D
- as soon as the unit is empty, C&D must be carried out as per the conditions stated on the C&D Notice (BT05). Disinfection will have to be confirmed as satisfactory on inspection by APHA
- when all of these conditions are satisfied, OTF status will be achieved and a Withdrawal Notice (TB10) can be issued. Restocking with livestock will then be permitted
- in all cases, restrictions will remain on manure/slurry until the treatment prescribed in the general conditions listed above has been completed
- once OTF status is regained, the operator must reapply in the normal way if they wish to reinstate the AFU.

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.