

TB133(E) Conditions of approval and operation of a TB Isolation Unit (IU) in England: Guidance

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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. No other animal species are permitted within these units.

1. TB Isolation Units (TB IU) provide an outlet for calves or store cattle from TB-restricted holdings lacking the facilities for rearing and allow isolation and testing of cattle to regain officially TB free (OTF) status. Single animals must not be kept in isolation in such units.
2. 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 move under licence to the TB IU.
3. 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 a contingency plan e.g. there must be provision of:
 - calving areas
 - milking facilities for dairy females, and
 - calf accommodation where applicable.
4. Animals that are due to calve within the minimum period for which they will be required to remain in the unit will not be licensed into the unit.
5. TB IUs can only be approved or re-approved on an OTF premises. They cannot be approved nor can a new County Parish Holding (CPH) issued on a premises that is under movement restrictions (TB02).
6. The following will apply to the unit, it must:
 - be under movement restrictions (TB02)
 - have a separate and unique County Parish Holding (CPH) which will only be allocated after approval of the unit

- not have a temporary CPH (tCPH) or Temporary Land Association (TLA) registered against it nor can land/premises registered against an TB IU CPH be associated temporarily through a TLA or as a tCPH to another CPH
- only be filled with cattle from a named single source
- be filled over a maximum period of 60 days.

Source of cattle

1. TB IUs may only source cattle from a single TB-restricted premises. Cattle cannot be sourced from multiple premises.
2. All cattle must have tested negative to a tuberculin skin test within the previous 60 days or be untested calves under 42 days of age at the time of the movement.
3. Cattle can only be moved onto the TB IU under the authority of a movement licence (TB16) issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA):
 - all movement requests will be subject to a Veterinary Risk Assessment (VRA) by APHA and those considered to be high risk will be refused
4. The TB IU will be closed after a 60 day filling period after which no further licences will be issued for movements onto the premises. Once closed, the operator must forward the completed Appendix Approval Letter for a TB Isolation Unit (TR139) with the dates of the first and last movements into the unit and a list of all the animals within the unit, to APHA.

Destination of cattle

1. 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 an Approved Finishing Unit (AFU) or to slaughter. Once OTF status is gained and a Withdrawal Notice (TB10) lifting restrictions is served, cattle will no longer be under movement restriction and may move without the need for a licence.

TB testing on TB Isolation Units

1. Once the TB IU has been closed, and the operator has forwarded the completed Appendix to the Approval Letter for a TB Isolation Unit (TR139) to APHA, TB testing within the unit will be at 60 day intervals. The first Approved Separate Group (ASG) test at severe interpretation will be carried out at least 60 days after the last animal has entered the unit:
 - all cattle within the unit will be tested
2. After two consecutive tests have been completed, and providing the last test commences at least 120 days after the date that the unit was closed, a Withdrawal Notice (TB10) may be issued to lift restrictions. However, if reactors or inconclusive

reactors are disclosed at either of these tests, additional TB testing may be required and TB02 restrictions will remain in place until this is completed.

Conditions

TB Isolation Units without grazing

The approval of a TB IU can be considered if the proposed premises complies with all the conditions listed below. These are aimed at ensuring that the TB IU remains a discrete, self-contained cattle unit clearly isolated from other cattle, other livestock and wildlife. The objective is to prevent disease spread within the locality of the unit from undetected infection within the unit.

1. The premises must be OTF at the time of approval or re-approval.
 2. The unit must be biosecure with no other cattle or other livestock, horses or poultry present at any time.
 3. It must have strict biosecurity written protocols detailing controls for preventing disease transmission via personnel, equipment and vehicles entering and leaving the unit. All such movements must be limited to those essential to the running of the unit.
 4. Each unit should meet all the criteria required to qualify for a separate CPH.
 5. Units should have a dedicated entrance and exit which allows no risk of direct or indirect contact with other livestock
- the boundary of the unit must be:
 - well defined
 - discrete
 - effective
 - secure
 - there must be separate:
 - housing
 - management
 - equipment (see below)
 - machinery (see 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

6. The unit must be livestock proof with no opportunity for straying or for nose-to-nose contact with other livestock. There must be a solid barrier (e.g. a solid wall) or a distance separation of at least three metres between cattle in the unit and any livestock outside the unit.
7. No activities unrelated to the operation of the unit are allowed within the boundary of the unit e.g. residential dwelling, storage of lorries/machinery, livery yard, farm shop, farm workshop.
8. Cattle may only move into the unit under licence issued by APHA. No other cattle or livestock, horses or poultry must have access to the unit at any time.
9. Units must not be co-located on a yard where another herd exists, including any type of TB unit.
10. Multiple units cannot co-exist within the same yarded area but multiple buildings within a yarded area may be acceptable as one single unit.
11. Units must have strict biosecurity with 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.
12. If personnel, equipment or vehicles are to be used/have access to other cattle outside of the unit, the written biosecurity protocol must refer to this.
13. 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 livestock or wildlife have access.
14. Protocols must include prevention of access to animal feed by wildlife.
15. Buildings must have sufficient space to allow for the growth of cattle in the unit. 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 have contingency plan in place to exclude potential adverse welfare conditions if cattle need to remain in the unit for longer. The contingency plan should be recorded and agreed with APHA.
16. Units must be fully wildlife proof. Either the buildings and the yards containing the cattle must be fully wildlife proof or the boundary of the unit must be fully wildlife proof.

17. Wildlife-proof in this context refers to species of wild mammals that can act as reservoirs of *M. bovis* (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) and greater than 1.5m high
- gates/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 in the walls and at the sides and under doors and gates 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 suitable fencing should be used to prevent such access. This is to prevent contamination of the environment and wildlife
- where **electric fencing** is used to deny access to wildlife, the following points must be observed:
 - fence strands must be taut to prevent badgers pushing between them
 - electric fencing must be continuously powered by a mains energiser to provide at least 4-6kV at the farthest point of the fence
 - the system must be adequately earthed
 - minimum of four strands of wire set at 10, 15, 20 and 30cm above the ground to prevent access by badgers
 - maintenance is essential to make sure that electric fences are working properly. Regular inspections should be made, and recorded, to check the fence condition, fence voltage and ensure conducting wires are kept clear of vegetation unless erected over a hard surface, e.g. hardcore or concrete
 - mesh alone (tornado-type fence) is not accepted as a suitable barrier for preventing badger access

18. Equipment should be dedicated, unless:

- contamination is at a level that can be satisfactorily cleaned using a power wash and disinfectant
- any contamination should be dealt with immediately and certainly before contact with other TB susceptible stock
- contamination will be assessed according to risk and generally shared feed wagons will be acceptable, whilst dung scrapers will not
- either dedicated outerwear or waterproof clothing must be worn and a protocol provided to demonstrate elimination of risk of disease spread
- a full and effective biosecurity protocol will be required for all shared equipment

- a full and effective biosecurity protocol is in place for all shared equipment recorded and agreed.
19. Personnel entering the unit must use dedicated outerwear or waterproof clothing must be worn and a protocol provided to demonstrate elimination of risk of disease spread.
 20. Manure will be treated as normal once OTF status is gained, but before this time stacked for three weeks on the site of the unit, or at an approved site to which wildlife and other livestock do not have access.
 21. 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 at least six months and 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 60 days following spread, or
 - spread by injection into the ground if six month storage is not possible.

TB Isolation Units with grazing

1. Grazing may be allowed in units in the High Risk Area (HRA) in England only, but only if APHA consider there is a low risk of local spread of TB infection. A VRA will be carried out including assessment of the TB situation in the local area.
2. 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:
 - each unit should meet all the criteria required to qualify for a separate CPH
 - the boundary of the unit should be:
 - well defined
 - discrete
 - effective
 - secure
 - there should be separate:
 - grazing
 - housing/shelter
 - 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. All gates on the boundary must also be double fenced
3. Grazing included in the TB IU must be within the same parcel of land as the buildings or on a contiguous land parcel. The entire unit including the grazing must be defined by a single outer boundary. Cattle must not have access to any premises out with the boundary of the unit to access the grazing.
 4. Housing must be available for all cattle within the unit for poor weather conditions, treatment and handling. Contingency plans for situations causing adverse welfare must be considered. The housing does not have to meet the strict wildlife proofing measures as for units without grazing, as some housing will be open to allow cattle constant access from pasture.
 5. However every effort should be made to reduce the likelihood of cattle/badger interaction. There should be no ground feeding of energy or mineral supplements. Raised/badger proof troughs should be provided for feed and water and feed stores should be fully badger proof as for units with no grazing above.
 6. There must be no opportunity for straying or for nose-to-nose contact with other livestock.
 7. Cattle may only move into the unit under licence issued by APHA. No other cattle or other livestock, horses or poultry must have access to the unit at any time.
 8. Units must not be co-located on a yard where another herd exists, including any type of TB unit.
 9. Multiple units cannot co-exist within the same yarded area but multiple buildings within a yarded area may be acceptable as one single unit.
 10. Units must have strict biosecurity with 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.
 11. If personnel, equipment or vehicles are to be used/have access to other cattle outside of the unit, the biosecurity protocol should refer to this.
 12. 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 have access.
 13. Protocols must include prevention of access to animal feed by wildlife.

14. Access to watercourses will be acceptable, providing there can be no contact with neighbouring stock. If the watercourse is shared, double stock proof fencing must be used.
15. 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 certainly before contact with other TB susceptible stock
 - contamination will be assessed according to risk and generally shared feed wagons will be acceptable, whilst dung scrapers will not
 - either dedicated outerwear or waterproof clothing must be worn and a protocol provided to demonstrate elimination of risk of disease spread
 - a full and effective bio-security protocol will be required for all shared equipment
16. Manure will be treated as normal once OTF status is gained, but before this time must be stacked for three weeks on the site of the unit, or at an approved site to which wildlife or other livestock do not have access
17. Slurry will not be stored, and may be spread as normal once OTF status is gained, but if spread before lifting of restrictions it 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 and camelids, farmed or park deer) and there will be no access to the treated ground by TB susceptible stock for 60 days following spread.

Application and inspection

1. Operators seeking approval for a TB IU should either contact APHA for an application form or download a copy from the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-tb-isolation-unit-application>
2. On receipt of a completed application form and other required documents, an APHA Veterinarian will consider the application and if they consider that approval may be possible, they will arrange to visit and inspect the proposed premises.
3. Following a satisfactory inspection report and indication that the application is suitable for approval, a request for a new CPH must be submitted by APHA to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). Once the new CPH number has been allocated, RPA will forward it to APHA. Written confirmation of the approval will then be sent to the operator, along with the conditions and requirements for continued approval.

4. The TB IU will be served with a TB Restriction Notice (TB02) prohibiting movement of bovine animals which will be copied to the relevant Local Authority (LA).
5. The TB IU will be issued a Withdrawal Notice (TB10) 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 continue to operate as a TB IU.
6. The re-approval process may involve an inspection visit to the premises and/or a desktop check of the movement records of movements. Whilst in use, every unit will be inspected at least once annually, but the frequency of inspections will be determined by APHA.
7. Once re-approved, a movement restriction will be served (TB02) and a movement licence issued (TB16) so that the TB IU may restock.
8. Failure to comply with any of the conditions set out in the approval form (including failure to TB test the cattle on the unit at the prescribed interval) will result in APHA investigation and a VRA. Movement restrictions (TB02) will continue to operate 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 in the latter scenario. Further requests for re-approvals are unlikely to be authorised following non-compliance.

Action in the event of a TB incident in the TB IU

1. The standard APHA procedures for compensation, removal and post-mortem of reactors will be applied.
2. The normal breakdown procedures for regaining OTF status will apply with a minimum of two Short Interval (SI) tests required.
3. A contingency plan will be necessary for all units in the event of a TB incident, as the SI testing programme will be extended. The plan should address any potential welfare issues that may arise, such as the stock outgrowing 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

1. Once the Withdrawal Notice (TB10) is issued and OTF status gained, a six month test will be scheduled for the unit.
2. 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.

3. **The CPH applies to the 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 RPA archive the CPH. The premises can then be managed as part of the original CPH as it was before approval.
4. The TB IU CPH can be reinstated should re-approval be sought and granted in the future. However, if the original CPH is not OTF at the time of re-application, the TB IU will not be re-approved.



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