



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 38/24

Delayed Removal of TB Reactors, Direct Contacts and Compulsory IRs in Wales from 04 November 2024

Date issued: 04 November 2024

Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OV) that, subject to a satisfactory veterinary risk assessment (VRA) by APHA Wales and compliance with defined conditions, delayed removal of bovine animals disclosed as TB reactors (including blood-test positive cattle), Direct Contacts (DCs) and compulsorily-removed Inconclusive Reactors (compulsory IRs) can be considered. This policy will be implemented in full from 4 November 2024, replacing the current interim process.

Background

2. On 15 April 2024, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, the Welsh Government (WG) Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs, announced the membership of the Bovine TB Technical Advisory Group for Wales (TAG). The TAG's inaugural meeting was held on 17 April 2024 with their first priority being to discuss and produce advice regarding on-farm slaughter. On 17 May 2024, the Cabinet Secretary announced that he had received and accepted their advice, leading to changes in Welsh Government (WG) TB on-farm slaughter policy, with the aim of reducing the number of cattle slaughtered on-farm in Wales. The Cabinet Secretary's Written Statement can be found at [Written Statement: Bovine TB Technical Advisory Group Review of Existing On-Farm Slaughter of TB Reactors Policy \(16 May 2024\) | GOV.WALES](#)
3. At the request of the WG TB policy team, APHA Wales implemented an interim process from 29 May 2024 to offer delayed removal for only those cattle that are due to calve within 60 days of their identification for removal. This interim process required the keeper to comply with the conditions specified but without the completion of any declarations.

4. A full process has now been developed that allows for consideration of delayed removal of in-calf cattle that are in the last 60 days of gestation whilst also providing mitigation against the risk to disease control of retaining such animals. Detailed guidance on the conditions has been developed for cattle keepers and to inform private veterinarians. This information will be available from APHA. The conditions will also be detailed in the veterinary and keeper declaration documents (TB211(W) and TB212(W)) which will be made available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) in due course.
5. In addition, to allow removal to a slaughterhouse, subject to a satisfactory VRA by APHA Wales, compliance with defined conditions and with the keeper's consent, APHA Wales will delay removal until no later than the 15th working day after disclosure as TB reactors, DCs or compulsory IRs (day of disclosure is day 0) of animals that:
 - are recently calved
 - are within a medicine withdrawal
 - have a passport or identification discrepancy that can be easily resolved
6. Current requirements relating to the removal of reactors, compulsory IRs and direct contacts are unchanged, including that:
 - the animals must be kept in isolation
 - the keeper remains responsible for the welfare of the animal until it leaves the farm
 - if the animal dies or is culled for any reason whilst it is still on farm, no compensation will be paid
 - valuation of the reactors, DCs and IRs will take place within ten working days of them being identified as such, unless there is an unavoidable delay by APHA. The valuation given will remain valid until the removal of that animal
 - apart from movements to slaughter, no movements on or off will be licensed while a reactor, compulsory IR or direct contact remains on farm
7. If the valuation visit is delayed or refused, there can be no agreement for delayed removal and, if the delay or refusal results in removal being delayed beyond the target date specified on the Notice of Intended Slaughter (TB03), the compensation received may be reduced.

What's changing?

Delayed removal to allow for calving

8. A keeper can request delayed removal of in-calf bovine animals which have been disclosed as TB reactors (including blood-test positive cattle), Direct Contacts (DCs) or IRs for compulsory removal. The animals must be due to calve within 60 days of their disclosure.
9. APHA will carry out a preliminary VRA to assess the situation on the holding. If it is concluded that delayed removal is an option, then the following will be required:

- a declaration completed by the keeper (form TB212(W)/TB212(W)(Welsh))
 - a declaration completed by a veterinarian of the keeper's choice and at the keeper's expense (form TB211(W)/TB211(W)(Welsh))
 - a Pregnancy Diagnosis Declaration completed by a veterinarian of the keeper's choice and at the keeper's expense (form TR531)
10. APHA will inform all keepers by telephone of the option to delay removal when contacting them to arrange the valuation. The required information and declaration forms can then be emailed to the keeper. However, if the keeper does not have an email address, these will be emailed to their nominated veterinary practice for forwarding to the keeper. This is necessary to ensure that the keeper receives the declaration forms in a timely manner so that the 5 working day turnaround for return of the declarations can be met.
11. All the forms must be returned to APHA Wales within 5 working days of them being sent. If not received within this timeframe, the option to request a delayed removal will expire and APHA Wales will arrange removal of the cattle following normal processes.
12. The veterinarian completing the TB211(W) declaration is not expected to monitor compliance with the conditions of approval and will not be responsible for ensuring that the conditions are met throughout the period of retention.
13. However, should any veterinarian become aware that the conditions for approval are not being met at any time during the retention period, they are expected to notify APHA without delay.
14. APHA may carry out ad hoc inspections at any time during the period of retention and such visits may be unannounced.

Delayed removal for animals recently calved, in a medicine withdrawal period or with minor identification discrepancies

15. For animals disclosed as TB reactors, DCs or compulsory IRs, subject to the satisfactory outcome of a VRA, in order to allow their removal to a slaughterhouse, APHA will delay the removal of the following:
- animals that are recently calved, provided they have calved on or before the 9th working day after their disclosure
 - animals within a medicine withdrawal period that ends before the 15th working day after their disclosure
 - animals with a passport or identification discrepancy that can be resolved before the 15th working day after their disclosure
16. APHA will only delay the removal in these cases if the animals are expected to be fit for consignment to a slaughterhouse on or before the 15th working day after they were disclosed as reactors, direct contacts or compulsory IRs.

17. For these delayed removals, the signed declarations from the keeper and private veterinarian are not required.

General information applicable to all delayed removals

18. The day of disclosure as a TB Reactor, IR or DC is day 0.

19. No compensation will be paid for any other animals valued at the same valuation visit until after the delayed removal of the final reactor/DC/compulsory IR.

20. No herd testing will be instructed whilst a reactor/DC/compulsory IR remains on farm and any subsequent Short Interval Tests will be delayed until at least 60 days following the removal of the final reactor/DC/compulsory IR.

21. Where a high disease risk is identified at any time following approval to delay removal, an additional earlier test (a Check Test (CT)) will be instructed. If required, this CT will be carried out immediately after removal of the reactor/DC/compulsory IR but not less than 60 days since the last herd test.

22. When a reactor is identified at a test of part of the herd, for example at a pre-movement test or IR retest, an immediate CT will be required and an agreement to delayed removal will not alter this requirement.

Actions

23. Veterinarians carrying out TB tests are encouraged to discuss the option for delayed removal with keepers at the time of disclosure of any reactors.

Further Information

Please refer any queries to APHA.CymruWales@apha.gov.uk