

TR454 Cymorth TB frequently asked questions

September 2022

Frequently asked questions

This Cymorth TB Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is intended to assist Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Delivery Partners (DPs) with answering questions they may receive from their clients whilst discussing Cymorth TB and the purpose of the Cymorth TB visit.

Q1) What is Cymorth TB?

Cymorth TB is a programme funded by the Welsh Government (WG) which provides a fully funded specialist visit by a trained OV to farms affected by TB. During the visit the OV from the farm's chosen private veterinary practice will provide:

- support to the farmer on the disease management regime (including restrictions)
- advice on minimising the impact and understanding the risks associated with the disease

Your Private Veterinary Surgeon (PVS) has local knowledge, an overview of the health of your herd and an established working relationship with you.

Q2) When is a farm eligible for a Cymorth TB visit?

A Cymorth TB on-farm veterinary advice visit is available to:

- all farms in Wales experiencing a TB breakdown
- all farms in Wales where the TB breakdown has recently ended
- farms not experiencing a TB breakdown but which have a contiguous test (CON) scheduled due to a TB breakdown in their vicinity, provided the farm is located in one of the specifically allocated spatial units or clusters of the Low and Intermediate TB Areas in North Wales

Q3) My farm is Officially TB Free (OTF) but is due a contiguous test. How do I know if I'm eligible for a Cymorth TB OTF visit?

If you are eligible for a visit, APHA will send you a letter with a voucher for a Cymorth TB OTF visit. You will be eligible for this fully funded 'Keep it Out' visit if your herd is due a contiguous test and your farm is located in the:

- Intermediate TB Area North (ITBAN), including the spatial units that temporarily moved into the ITBAN from the Low TB Area in November 2021
- Pennal cluster which covers particular farms in the Low and Intermediate TB Areas near Pennal

Q4) How do I arrange a Cymorth TB Visit?

To make accessing support easier, if your farm is eligible for a Cymorth visit due to a TB breakdown or a recently concluded TB breakdown, your PVS will automatically get an instruction to liaise with you to arrange a Cymorth TB visit to your farm. They will get this instruction a few weeks after the start of a TB breakdown and again immediately after a breakdown has ended.

However, the programme is not compulsory so you can choose to opt out. APHA will also send you a Cymorth TB Farm Visit Letter/Voucher which explains the Cymorth programme.

If your herd is scheduled a contiguous test and is eligible for a Cymorth TB OTF visit, APHA will send you a Farm Visit voucher which explains how you can arrange a visit. The programme is not compulsory. If your farm is eligible, you can request a visit at any time while your herd is going through the contiguous testing regime, provided your herd remains Officially TB free (OTF). If your herd has a TB breakdown, you will be eligible for a TB breakdown Cymorth TB visit.

You can arrange a visit or opt out of a visit in any of the following ways:

- return the Cymorth TB Farm Visit Voucher, sent to you by APHA Wales, by post
- email the APHA Wales Cymorth TB mailbox APHAWalesCymorthTB@defra.gov.uk (the email address can also be found on the voucher)
- telephone the APHA Wales office on 0300 303 8268 and ask to speak to Cymorth TB Admin
- through your PVS, OV Practice or Delivery Partner who can contact APHA Wales on your behalf

Q5) How long is a Cymorth TB visit?

The first Cymorth TB visit you have during a TB breakdown is scheduled for a maximum of three hours. If your TB breakdown has recently ended and you have not had a Cymorth TB visit already during the breakdown, this visit is also scheduled for three hours.

If you had a Cymorth TB visit while your TB breakdown was ongoing, the visit scheduled after the end of the TB breakdown is for one hour.

The Cymorth 'Keep it Out' visit for OTF herds is scheduled for three hours.

Q6) What happens during a Cymorth TB visit?

During the visit the PVS will:

- discuss the current TB situation on your farm and in the vicinity
- complete a farm walk, including buildings and boundaries where possible and discuss risks they identify with you
- provide you with information on the disease and how infection can spread
- provide you with information about processes and controls during a TB breakdown

- investigate management on your farm to assess risks for disease introduction and spread and provide advice on reducing these risks
- provide advice on biosecurity and how best to protect your herd from the introduction and spread of TB
- assess and provide advice on future options in terms of your business continuity if you are experiencing (or were to experience) a TB breakdown on your farm
- provide you with advice on best practice to reduce the likelihood of a TB breakdown on your farm
- make recommendations to help eradicate TB if your herd has a TB breakdown

Q7) I've already had a disease investigation visit (known as a Disease Report Form (DRF) visit) by an APHA vet as my herd has a TB breakdown, why do I need a Cymorth TB Visit? What is the difference between an APHA DRF Visit and a Cymorth TB Visit?

A DRF visit is carried out at the start of a TB breakdown. It is carried out by an APHA Wales Veterinarian and where possible this will also be your TB Breakdown Case Vet. The purpose of the DRF Visit is to investigate the origin of disease and give you guidance on the statutory processes and controls which apply after TB reactors are found.

A Cymorth TB breakdown visit is carried out by your own PVS and can be timed to suit you at any time during your TB Breakdown. You may choose to have the visit slightly later in the TB breakdown, once more results are available and you have had the chance to consider the impact of the TB breakdown and what further actions may be needed. You can also request a Cymorth TB Visit within two months of the end of your TB Breakdown.

Q8) I would like a Cymorth TB Visit but I'm too busy now, can the visit be carried out at a later date?

Yes, the Cymorth TB breakdown visit can be arranged to suit you at any time during your TB Breakdown. You can also have a Cymorth TB visit within two months of the end of your TB Breakdown. You can arrange a Cymorth TB OTF visit if you have received a Cymorth TB voucher by contacting your PVS after you have been notified that your herd is due a contiguous test.

When you are ready for a visit, just let your PVS or APHA Wales know.

Q9) What difference will it make to the TB breakdown on my farm?

Better team-working between you, your PVS and APHA Wales Veterinarians will help in understanding the TB breakdown on your farm and provide you with recommendations tailored to your farming business.

Q10) I've received a letter confirming no lesions typical of TB were detected in the animals removed and slaughtered from my farm, why would I need a Cymorth TB visit?

The tuberculin skin test and the blood tests for TB detect an immune response in the animal. This response occurs before any signs of TB can be detected at slaughter.

So, animals may be in the early stages of disease when they are found to be reactors and subsequently slaughtered. However, at this stage the animals are still capable of spreading disease to other animals so, even though no signs may be found at slaughter, the animals may present a risk to other cattle. Your PVS can discuss this further with you, and how to reduce the risk to other cattle, at the Cymorth TB Visit.

Q11) What is the benefit of the Cymorth TB Visit when the WG TB Eradication Programme is ignoring badgers?

Though the culling of badgers is forbidden in Wales, the WG TB Eradication Programme does not ignore badgers and addresses the involvement of wildlife in several ways. The All Wales Badger Found Dead scheme, the Badger Vaccination Grant Scheme and support for research into TB including wildlife factors are all examples. Encouraging biosecurity improvements in the farming industry is a significant element of the Programme and the Cymorth TB visits are part of this. At the Cymorth TB Visit, your PVS will be able to provide specific tailored recommendations that you can implement now to protect your cattle from possible infection by badgers and to reduce the risk of the disease returning or getting into your farm in the future.

Q12) If I have a Cymorth TB Visit, will there be any penalties if I don't take any improvement actions recommended?

No, the recommendations given by your own PVS during or after a Cymorth TB visit are advisory to help improve disease control and to reduce future risks. We strongly advise that you carry out these actions as they are designed to help you and the health of your cattle.

Q13) Can the Cymorth TB Visit be more than just talking about TB, can it be a holistic discussion of the health of my herd?

Yes, discussing the overall health of your herd is an essential part of Cymorth TB.

Q14) I've seen a Cymorth TB leaflet and would like a Cymorth TB Visit, but there is no current TB Breakdown on my farm, nor has there recently been a TB Breakdown - can I still have a visit?

Yes, if you are eligible for an OTF Cymorth TB visit because your herd is undergoing contiguous testing and your farm is in the particular areas of North Wales. APHA will have sent you a Cymorth TB Visit voucher.

If you are not eligible, you can arrange for your own PVS to carry out a herd health planning visit.



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