



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 43/22

# Tuberculin Skin Testing of Animals in Zoological Collections - Clarification of Training Requirements for Veterinary Surgeons

**Date issued: 11 November 2022**

## Purpose

To notify OV's of the outcome of a recent review of the requirements for training of veterinary surgeons who TB test animals in zoological collections.

To inform OV's that in certain circumstances there is no longer a requirement to be authorised under the OCQ(V) - TT (Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) - Tuberculin Testing) in order to TB test animals in a zoological collection.

## Background

TB policy and advice teams in England, Scotland and Wales have recently reviewed the training requirements for tuberculin skin testing for veterinary surgeons. As a result of the review, they have identified specific circumstances when authorisation under the OCQ(V) - TT qualification is not required for TB testing in zoological collections. This only applies to a small minority of vets TB testing in zoological collections. For most veterinary surgeons, the requirement to complete the OCQ(V) - TT remains.

APHA does not normally require routine surveillance TB testing of bovine animals in zoos in GB, with the exception of domestic cattle on 'open farms' (where the public visit and come into contact with the animals). In general, bovine animals in zoos are isolated from agricultural (food-producing) holdings, so, providing that those animals are not slaughtered for human consumption or traded, APHA may exempt them from the requirement for statutory routine, targeted and pre-movement TB testing.

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Statutory TB testing is generally instructed and paid for by government (APHA), whereas non-statutory testing is voluntary and funded by the animal keeper. There are some exceptions, such as mandatory pre- or post-movement TB testing of bovine animals (which is statutory but must be arranged and funded by the animal keeper).

APHA assess the need for statutory, targeted surveillance TB testing in non-bovine species of mammals kept in zoos on a case-by-case basis.

“Non-statutory” TB testing in zoological collections can now be performed by any registered veterinarian in accordance with normal RCVS professional guidance and OV authorisation under a specific OCQ(V) qualification is not required. However:

- Veterinary Surgeons are expected to act within their own professional competence
- Prior permission must be sought from APHA for all TB tests in animals covered by the relevant TB Order(s)<sup>1</sup>, whether the test is statutory or not.
- For animals not covered in the TB Orders, non-statutory TB testing can be carried out without the permission of APHA

Testing instructions for statutory tests that are issued by APHA to an OV are also the written notification of permission to test.

Examples of statutory and non-statutory TB testing of zoo animals are in the table below.

<p>“Statutory TB testing”</p> <p>OCQ(V) - TT qualification <b>is necessary</b> to perform TB testing <b>which is legally required under the TB order(s)</b><sup>1</sup></p>	<p>“Non-statutory TB testing”</p> <p>OCQ(V) - TT <b>is not necessary</b> for “non-statutory” TB testing<sup>2</sup></p> <p>BUT</p> <p>Permission from APHA is required if testing in animals covered by the relevant TB Order(s)<sup>1</sup></p>
<p><i>Examples:</i></p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p>

<sup>1</sup> The Tuberculosis in Animals (England) Order 2021, The Tuberculosis (Scotland) Order 2007 (as amended), Tuberculosis in Specified Animals (Scotland) Order 2015, The Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010 (as amended) and The Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2011 (as amended). Animals covered by the TB Order(s) are: in England: bovine animals, deer, camelids, domestic pigs, sheep or goats; in Wales: bovine animals, deer, camelids or goats; in Scotland: bovine animals, deer, goats, pigs, sheep, alpacas, guanacos, llamas or vicuñas.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of deer, in England, Wales and Scotland OCQ(V) TT qualification is not required for non-statutory skin testing for bTB in a zoo but is required outside of a zoo (e.g. on a farm setting). However, you do need to send a completed form, “Request to Test - TB Testing of Non-bovine Species (TN184)” to APHA, which requires you to outline your competence, experience and training in testing the species you are intending to test.

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<p>Routine active surveillance, enhanced surveillance and movement testing of any domestic <i>bovine</i><sup>1</sup> animals kept on a premises where they have contact with the public (e.g. cattle on ‘open farms’).</p>	<p>Private TB surveillance in <i>bovine</i> and <i>non-bovine</i> animals (domestic or wild), as part of a voluntary zoo health management programme – including where this forms part of a zoo’s “Balai” or “Confined Establishment” approval.</p>
<p>Targeted, ad hoc surveillance of any non-bovine <i>farmed</i> species that may be kept in zoos, such as camelids, deer, goats, sheep and pigs, where required by APHA following suspicion or confirmation of <i>M. bovis</i> infection, or disclosure of an epidemiological link with an infected (TB breakdown) herd.</p>	<p>Pre-export testing where this is required by an importing country for a live <i>non-bovine</i> animal export.</p>
	<p>Private testing of wild mammals voluntarily undertaken by a zoo to support the revocation of TB movement restrictions and, if appropriate, regain “Balai” or “Confined Establishment” approval status.</p>

Table: Example of statutory and non-statutory bovine TB testing

## Action

Prior to revalidating the OCQ(V) - TT, OV's should check whether the qualification is required for the work that they carry out. The details can be found on the APHA Vet Gateway. If further clarification is sought, OV's should contact the APHA OV team.

Permission to perform non-statutory tests in animals covered by the relevant TB Order(s)<sup>1</sup> can be requested via email:

In England: [CSC.TBOS@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSC.TBOS@apha.gov.uk)

In Wales: [APHAWalesTBSlaughterNon-Bovines@apha.gov.uk](mailto:APHAWalesTBSlaughterNon-Bovines@apha.gov.uk)

In Scotland: [ScotlandEndemics@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ScotlandEndemics@apha.gov.uk) and [ScotlandDutyVet@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ScotlandDutyVet@apha.gov.uk)

An order form for veterinary surgeons to obtain tuberculin via APHA is available [here](#). APHA may request an explanation for the use of tuberculin for non-statutory purposes in

<sup>3</sup> In **England** “bovine animal” is defined as “domestic cattle of the genus *Bos*, as well as captive bovines of the genera *Bubalus* and *Bison*”, in **Scotland** as “domestic cattle of the genus *Bos*, *Bubalus bubalis* or *Bison bison*” and in **Wales** as “domestic cattle of the genus *Bos*, buffalo or bison”.

non-domestic animals and reserves the right to decline tuberculin orders for non-statutory TB tests if these are considered unjustified.

## Further Information

Details of when the OCQ(V) – TT is required can now be found on the [Vet Gateway](#).

Training is accessed via the Improve International website - <https://www.improve-ov.com/home>

For training and authorisation queries contact the APHA OV Team - [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk)

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