

# Malta's 2009 Bovine Brucellosis Programme

Malta and Gozo are considered as one region.



## DATA ON HERDS

Region	Total number of herds under the program	Number of herds checked	Number of new positive herds	Number of herds depopulated	% Herd Coverage	% new positive herds Herd incidence
Malta and Gozo	353	248	1	0	70%	0.4%

### Measures taken for positive herds:

After the positive animals are slaughtered, testing of the whole herd is repeated after a month from the slaughtering of the positive animals and the herd is kept under more intense monitoring.

## DATA ON ANIMALS

Region	Total number of animals	Number of animals to be tested under the programme	Number of Animals tested	Number of animals tested individually	Number Of positive animals	Slaughtering		Indicators	
						Number of animals with a positive result	Total number of animals slaughtered	% coverage at animal level	% positive animals Animal prevalence
Malta and Gozo	16,861	14,450	14119	14119	1**	1**	4***	97.7%	0.007%

\*\* 1 bovine animal tested CFT positive and was slaughtered. No samples were lifted for microbiology.

\*\*\* 3 bovine animals tested positive and were slaughtered. Samples were sent for microbiology but brucellosis was not isolated.

The actual number of animals that should have been tested was 14,450 but some of the animals were young bulls that were difficult to handle and not tested. These young bulls will then be tested at slaughter.

There is no vaccination for brucellosis in Malta and Gozo. Malta monitors according to EU legislation. Malta carries out serology tests, the rose Bengal as a screening test and then the complement fixation test (CFT). Slaughtering of animals is carried out if animals are positive for serology CFT. Following this, lymphnodes from the positive animals are sent for microbiology analysis to the VLA, UK for the definite confirmation. The herd is then retested again a month after the positive animals are slaughtered.

Out of the 4 bovines positive serologically, samples were taken from 3 animals on slaughter and tested abroad and all were negative. An animal that was positive serologically was slaughtered but the tissues were not sent for further microbiology analysis therefore it still appears as one positive bovine animal even though it is positive only to the serology CFT.

**Diagnostic tests used:**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Type of sample</b>	<b>Type of test</b>	<b>Number of tests performed</b>
RBT	Blood serum	Routine Test	21880
CFT	Blood serum	Confirmatory	211
MRT	Milk	Routine Test	526

There were some technical difficulties and difficulties with achieving targets as there was not correct data collection on animals which were not actually on farm yet tested at the slaughterhouse. Samples taken during slaughter could not be crosschecked with samples that should have been taken from farms.

There is now a full check of animals present on farm and the National Veterinary Laboratory receives information on the animals not tested. Since there is also the food chain information connected to the animal registration database, cross reference is now taking place.

### **Conclusions / results of this programme:**

The prevalence of brucellosis is practically negligible at 0.007%.

Particular effort is being made to include the young bulls or heifers that are restless and cannot be caught.

The National Veterinary Laboratory is now also introducing ELISA testing even though all positives from serology still get sent for microbiology.