United Kingdom: report on the implementation of the bovine tuberculosis eradication programme in 2017

SCoPAFF
Brussels
12 July 2018
TB surveillance and control zones in GB

- Scotland: OTF since Oct 2009
- England - Low Risk Area (LRA):
  - 20,500 cattle holdings
  - 4-yearly default herd testing interval, but ~10% of herds tested every year
  - Very low and stable incidence
- England - Edge Area:
  - 8,900 cattle holdings
  - Annual or 6-monthly herd testing
  - Intermediate (but rising) incidence
- England - High Risk Area (HRA):
  - 20,500 cattle holdings
  - Annual herd testing
  - High, stable incidence & prevalence
Wales:
- 11,900 holdings (annual testing)
- Areas of high, intermediate and low incidence (declining slowly overall)

A refreshed TB Eradication Programme for Wales launched, 1 October 2017. This included introduction of a regionalised approach and, based on incidence, the creation of:

- **Low TB Area** – less than 0.2% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.

- **Intermediate TB Areas** - less than 5% but more than 0.2% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.

- **High TB Areas** - more than 5% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.
England: Herd incidence rate by county in 2017
(new positive herds per 100 herd-years at risk)

Herd incidence was highest in the West of England where *Mycobacterium bovis* infection is endemic in the Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*) – this native wildlife species is a true maintenance host and a major constraint to TB eradication in cattle in those areas.
Herd incidence rate by country of GB:
(total new positive herds per 100 herd-years at risk)
Annual herd incidence rate in England, by risk area: new positive herds per 100 active herds
Herd prevalence by country of GB: percentage of herds under movement restriction (OTF status suspended or withdrawn) at the end of the month
Herd prevalence in England, by risk area: percentage of herds under movement restriction (OTF status suspended or withdrawn) at the end of the month.
Northern Ireland: herd incidence & prevalence

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<tr>
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<th>December 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herd incidence</td>
<td>9.61%</td>
<td>7.45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herd prevalence</td>
<td>12.41%</td>
<td>9.63%</td>
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<td>Animal incidence</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
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Evolution of bTB eradication:
Overall UK\(^1\) herd prevalence & incidence and targets for 2018-2019

\(^1\) Combined values for England, Wales & Northern Ireland
England – Programme enhancements 2017

• Progressive expansion of badger control operations: one culling area licensed in the Edge Area and 10 areas licensed in the HRA in 2017. In addition to the 10 existing badger cull areas, this currently represents ~21% of the HRA’s land surface.

• More frequent testing of herds in enlarged Edge Area (Jan 2018)

• Increased deployment of IFN-γ blood test in HRA (Apr 2017)

• Lifetime movement restrictions of inconclusive skin test reactors that clear a re-test in High Risk and Edge Areas (from Nov 2017)

• Re-launch of the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme in Sept. 2017 (grants to support private badger vaccination projects)

• Prevalence survey of roadkill badgers completed in Edge Area

• Still aiming for OTF status in the whole of England by 2038

• Independent review of the Government’s bTB Strategy (due to report September 2018)
Wales – Programme enhancements 2017

• Launch of an enhanced TB Eradication Programme for Wales and TB Eradication Delivery Plan on 1 October 2017, building on existing measures.

• The refreshed Programme includes a new regionalised approach to TB eradication and a number of region-specific measures. Key changes include:
  • Post-Movement Testing is required for all cattle moved into the Low TB Area;
  • The cap on TB compensation payable per animal was reduced to £5,000. The TB compensation regime will be subject to a wider review;
  • Exempt Finishing Units were phased out before end of 2017.
  • As part of the ongoing Action Plan process there were also a range of measures implemented in chronic herd breakdowns, focusing initially on those that have been under restriction for 18 months or longer.
N. Ireland – Programme enhancements 2017

- Public consultation on DAERA’s response to the TB Strategic Partnership Group’s recommendations
- Use of disease indicator statistics to inform programme/policy development and monitor the effect of policy changes
- Enhancements to field mapping systems for investigation of TB breakdowns
- Increased use of ‘severe interpretation’ of the skin test
- Year 4 field work of the ‘Test and Vaccinate or Remove’ wildlife intervention project
- Badger TB Detection Surveys in two areas of high TB incidence
- Launch of a Biosecurity Questionnaire to be carried out by an Approved Veterinary Surgeon for every herd at least once a year
- A Reactor Quality Assurance pilot to establish baseline data on skin reactors and inform future counter-fraud policy
Conclusions

• Bovine TB remains the most serious and costly animal health problem for the UK cattle industry & taxpayer

• Wide regional variations in bTB frequency, distribution and epidemiology (largely determined by infection in badgers)


• EC’s targets for 2017 and beyond not realistic for a control programme which requires tough short-term measures for long-term accelerated eradication

• UK continued to strengthen its programme in 2017 & 2018

• EU financial contribution provides essential support

• Application submitted for EU financial support in 2019