

**A call for your views on
strengthening our TB
eradication programme
and new ways of working**

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August 2012

Animal Health and Welfare Board for England
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Email: bTBengage@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.defra.gov.uk/ahwbe/work/bovinetb

10 September 2012

Dear Colleague

Inviting your views on strengthening our programme to eradicate TB in cattle, and new ways of working

I am writing to invite you to take part in a conversation about the challenges we all face in tackling bovine TB. It is a conversation that many in the livestock industry have called for over many years and one which the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) and the Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group (TBEAG) have now enabled to happen.

We are all aware that TB has a significant impact on our livestock industry, and we need to work together to overcome it. Government has already taken some solid steps to tackle the disease. In July 2011, it published a comprehensive TB Eradication Programme for England. And over the last year or so Defra Ministers and the livestock industry have worked hard in partnership, despite vociferous opposition, towards effective badger control policies, including badger culling.

However, we are not yet winning the war on bovine TB in England. The Board's view is that we need to do more, and find new ways of working to overcome the disease.

TB eradication is the long term goal, and there are some choices that we need to make and opportunities to be seized. So the AHWBE now wants to stimulate an open discussion about the options.

The attached invitation to share your views poses a number of fundamental questions:

- What further measures do we want to see put in place to reduce transmission of the disease?
- Can Government and industry do more to crack down on risky practices?
- How can we stop the disease moving into new areas?
- Does the livestock industry see opportunities to do things differently and more for itself?
- What is the right division of future responsibilities between Government and industry when it comes to TB testing and compensation arrangements?
- How can we make the right changes happen with, in these times of national budget deficits, a reducing Defra budget?

The MacDonald task force recommended that Government should engage with industry far more at the pre-consultation stage – i.e. to develop proposals jointly. So that's what we are now trying to do. In the enclosed document we're presenting you with facts and some possible approaches. We're just as keen to hear new ideas and suggestions as we are to hear your thoughts on the possible options outlined in the attached paper.

The Board believes that finding new ways of working through dialogue and partnership will give us the best chance of eradicating the disease in a way that is sustainable for industry and the taxpayer. So this public call for views is the start of an open dialogue about finding solutions to difficult problems. You can help to answer these questions by:

- Emailing us at bTBengage@defra.gsi.gov.uk
- Writing to us at AHWBE (Bovine TB Call for Views), Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.
- Looking out for details of events in your region of the country over the coming weeks, at which you can directly contribute your thoughts and ideas.
- Take part in an online survey and post comments in a dedicated forum hosted by the Farmers Weekly website which will run from 14 September to 19 October. Go to www.fwi.co.uk for more details.

More details of how to get involved can be found on the website www.defra.gov.uk/ahwbe/work/bovinetb.

On behalf of the AHWBE and TBEAG I am very grateful to you for your time in considering these issues. So, if you have comments or suggestions – and I know from my experience that there are interesting, innovative ideas out there – this is your opportunity to let us know. If you know of colleagues or other organisations who might be interested in contributing, please do share this letter and the enclosed document with them.

Please join in the conversation.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Seals." The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Michael Seals, Chair AHWBE

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The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England and the TB Eradication Advisory Group for England

The Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) brings together independent people with relevant experience and senior Government officials. The AHWBE makes direct recommendations to Defra Ministers on strategic policy affecting the health and welfare of kept animals in England including farm animals, horses and pets (excluding the welfare of zoo and circus animals).

Our role is to advise Ministers on strategic animal health and welfare matters. The TB Eradication Advisory Group for England (TBEAG) is a sub-group of the AHWBE. TBEAG advises on the development and implementation of the strategy for eradicating bovine TB.

Finding the right way forward on bovine TB is probably one of the toughest issues we face, not least because of the need to find the right balance between robust disease control measures and helping to support sustainable rural businesses. But with your help we are determined to find the right path.



**Michael Seals,
Chair AHWBE**



**John Cross,
Chair TBEAG**

Understanding the problem

Why bovine TB matters

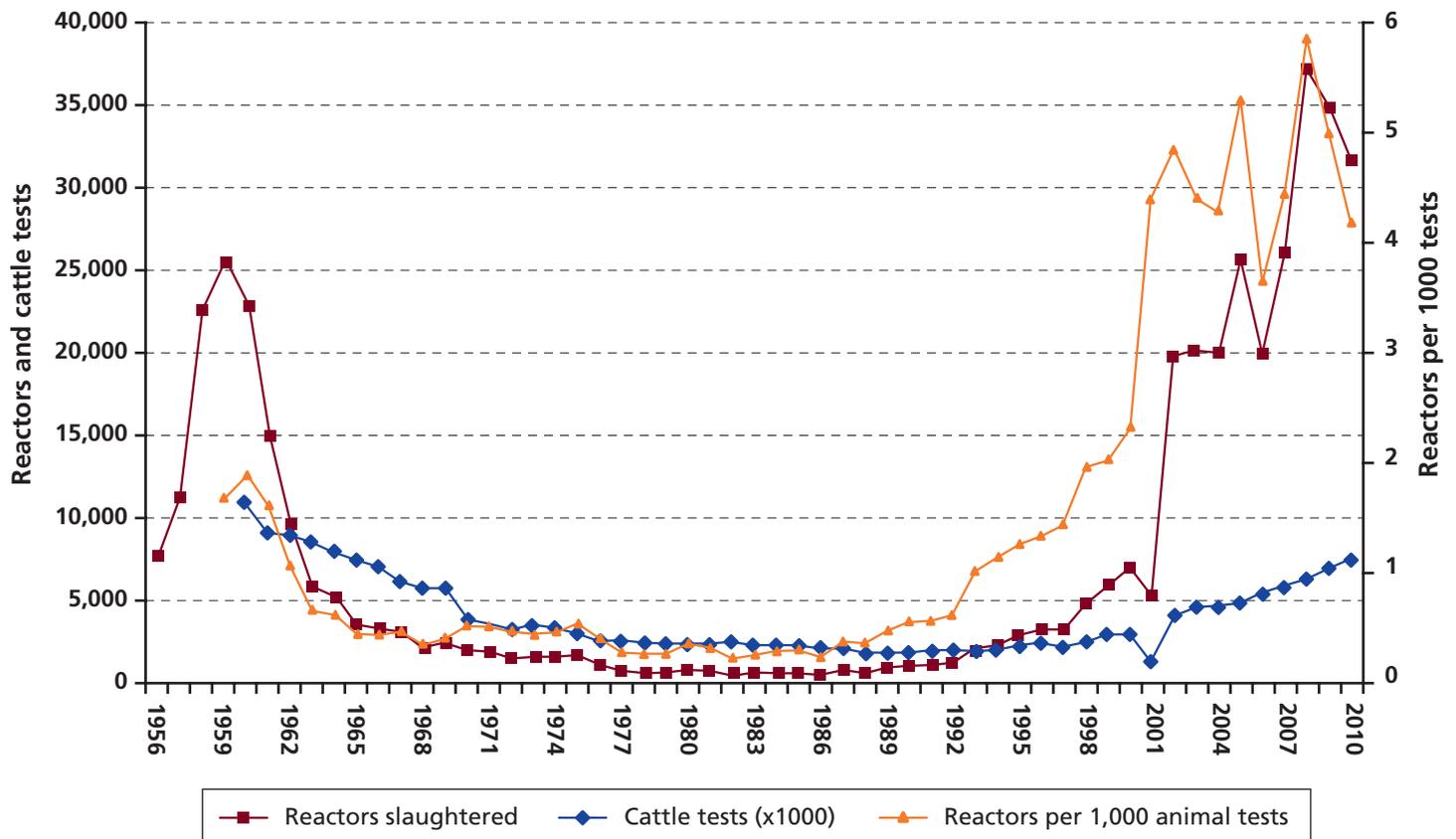
Bovine TB is one of the most pressing animal health problems faced by the cattle industry in England. Large numbers of animals are slaughtered each year, which, combined with the comprehensive testing programme and movement restrictions, results in significant pressures on farmers and rural communities. We know that the disease has a significant financial and emotional impact on farmers. And we can't ignore the cost to the taxpayer - around £100 million a year in England alone this year.

The disease has got significantly worse in recent years. Following the introduction of eradication controls in the 1950s, impressive progress was made in reducing the number of incidents. Much of England and all of Scotland have remained TB free since that period. However, in the early 1970s, in two areas, in Cornwall and Gloucester, the disease managed to get new footholds.

Since then, these problem areas have expanded and we have seen more disease, and completely new areas of disease, appear. Since the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001, the disease has been significantly worse, with much higher numbers of affected cattle as the graph below shows.

Our scientific analysis shows that different types of TB are clustered in certain areas. This implies that we now have a series of local bTB epidemics, rather than one large epidemic – making the problem greater and the task of reversing the worsening trend even harder.

Animal number and rate of tuberculin skin test reactors disclosed in GB



There are a number of reasons why Government, the farming industry and the veterinary profession need to work together to tackle bovine TB, including to:

- Maintain productive and sustainable beef and dairy sectors in England by securing opportunities for international trade and minimising environmental impacts.
- Protect the health of the public and maintain public confidence in the safety of animal products entering the food chain.
- Protect and promote the health and welfare of animals.
- Meet international and domestic legal commitments, and maintain the UK's reputation for safe and high quality food.
- Reduce the cost of TB to taxpayers.

Achieving all of these objectives needs a comprehensive and balanced package of measures to tackle bovine TB, with eradication as the ultimate, long-term goal. The Government's approach was set out in the Bovine TB Eradication Programme for England, which was published on 19 July 2011.

The Programme includes the following key measures:

- Cattle surveillance and control measures to address cattle to cattle transmission.
- Promoting good biosecurity, to address transmission between cattle, and between badgers and cattle.
- Control of TB in badgers to reduce transmission from badgers to cattle in TB endemic areas.
- Measures to tackle TB in non-bovine farmed species (including pigs, goats, deer, sheep, alpacas and llamas).
- Advice and support for farmers.
- A targeted research and development programme.
- Robust governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements to ensure compliance with controls.

Why is the disease still getting worse?

Government deserves credit for having already put in place a wide range of cattle measures in place to address cattle-to-cattle transmission and its determination to tackle the difficult and sensitive issue of badger control.

But there is clearly no room for complacency. It is clear to us that the Government's eradication programme must be further improved and strengthened since the disease is continuing to get worse. We can't be absolutely sure why that is, but the evidence clearly suggests:

- Badgers play a role in making the disease worse in some parts of the country.
- Cattle movements and trading also play a role in spreading the disease, and some movements are riskier than others.
- The TB tests we have available at the moment are the best we have but are still imperfect.
- We need to make sure that our existing policies and regulations are implemented and complied with effectively.

Where do we go from here?

Government, the farming industry and veterinary profession must work together

The Board's view is that now is the right time to challenge Government, the livestock industry and the veterinary profession to build on the current approach to bovine TB eradication and ensure that we are all doing everything we can to eradicate the disease, whilst making sure that our programme of measures is financially sustainable.

A step change is needed and the Government, the farming industry and the veterinary profession need to work together to put additional measures in place to tackle the disease. But what do we need to do?

To begin to answer that question we have held a series of workshops with key industry representatives, including the NFU, BVA, NBA and Dairy UK. The key messages we gained from these interactions were:

- A clear desire in the industry to work towards eradication. You told us that living with TB is not an option.
- The need to tailor any solutions towards the specific disease situation in England.
- The importance of ongoing compliance with EU legislation, and particularly the importance of maintaining trade (both live exports and products) with other member states.

The Board's view is that tackling the disease in badgers is crucial. It is reassuring, therefore, that despite vociferous campaigns against it, the Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to **a badger control policy**.

However, it is clear that we cannot simply sit back and wait for further progress on badger control before taking other robust measures to tackle a disease that is getting worse. That is why we now need to start looking at additional measures to strengthen our disease control programme.

We need to make sure that **movement controls** strike the right balance between combating the disease and allowing businesses to trade. Changes made by the Government on 1 July 2012 strengthened movement controls, and although we know that these may be challenging for some businesses, we have to accept that we will not eradicate this disease if the risk of cattle to cattle transmission is not managed. Although the prospect is not palatable for some livestock farmers, there is little doubt that some further strengthening of movement controls is needed – in particular:

- To manage the risk of disease spread from movements onto new breakdown premises.
- To tighten pre-movement testing arrangements for cattle from TB-restricted herds, in line with EU legal requirements.
- To better managing the use of Approved Finishing Units (AFUs).

Given that there are different disease statuses in different areas of the country, we need to consider what measures should be put in place to stop the disease being spread through cattle trading. Ministers have recently established a group to make recommendations on the introduction of **risk based trading measures**, and we expect them to report by the end of the year. If voluntary measures can be agreed the Board's view is that it will be in the farming industry's interests to make them work.

The Board also takes the view that we must improve the **surveillance testing** regime. We need to build on our recent consolidation of testing areas, make sure that we get ahead of the disease front with our programme of annual testing, and make sure that testing is targeted where the risk is highest. Defra is currently reviewing the types of diagnostic test it uses, which could result, for example, in greater use of the gamma interferon blood test.

One size does not fit all

These three elements -badger control, strengthened movement controls and improved surveillance—are crucial components of an effective disease control policy. However, we also know that the disease situation is very different in different parts of the country, and we must, therefore, tailor our approach accordingly.

In **high incidence areas**, bovine TB may be endemic, but we mustn't resign ourselves to simply living with it. We need to take more action to reduce the incidence of the disease – and eventually eradicate it. The Board's view is that measures to tackle the disease in high incidence areas must include:

- A tough surveillance regime – Those counties in the high incidence area should be on an annual testing regime, and we should look at how to improve the quality of surveillance testing. Slaughterhouse surveillance also plays an important role, and we must look at strengthening this too.
- Badger control – After some very difficult decisions, we welcome the plans for pilots of the badger control policy in two areas, with the potential for further areas if pilots are successful.
- Sensible, risk-based pre-movement testing requirements – not a crackdown on all movements such that livestock businesses can't operate, but a focus on the risks of disease transmission from trading practices.

We need to stop the spread at the **edge of the endemic area**. In recent years, we have seen the area where TB is found steadily expanding, and we need to get ahead of the disease front. That's why the Board welcomes the idea of putting all counties at the edge of the endemic area on annual testing. But that's not enough. We would like to see a strategy for the edge areas which could include:

- Improved collaboration and information sharing among those who have a big stake in keeping disease out of their areas.
- Enhanced epidemiological investigation of breakdowns – it's essential to know why the edge may be expanding.
- Possibly, targeted, risk-based pre-movement testing and additional diagnostic tests (e.g. gamma interferon), so that we can be more confident about where disease is present.

In the **areas with a low incidence of TB**, the focus must be on ensuring that cattle remain free from TB and farm businesses can continue to benefit from that freedom. So measures to protect the low incidence area should include:

- Background testing less frequently than other areas.
- Enhanced surveillance around TB breakdown herds – in the areas where disease has been found it must be quickly stamped out.
- Tighter, risk-based measures for the relatively small number of higher risk herds which exist in these low incidence areas.
- Enhanced epidemiological investigation of breakdowns – it's essential to know where an outbreak in the low incidence area has come from and to act on that information.

As there is a significant area of England where TB is not endemic, we may want to consider working towards **Official TB Free status for low incidence areas**. This would allow farm businesses in those areas to benefit in the same way that farmers in Scotland have benefited. There could be significant benefits for counties or areas being classified as OTF, including a reduced testing burden, and reduced trade restrictions with other OTF areas.

In order to be classified as OTF, areas must meet strict requirements on incidence of TB over the last six years. We know that this won't be easy to achieve and some additional measures may be needed to prevent the incursion of TB and protect these OTF areas. This could potentially include measures such as stronger risk-based trading measures or strengthened surveillance for higher risk herds. We know that there may be challenges associated with this approach, but we believe that the rewards should be worth the effort.

Approaches to tackling TB: What do you think?

- What are your views on the measures outlined above, such as different approaches to surveillance and control in epidemiologically different areas?
- How can Government and industry ensure that TB is not being spread between cattle and into areas where there is currently a low incidence of the disease?
- Should we be working towards OTF status for regions of England over the next few years?

The costs to the farming industry and government

Bovine TB is costly to farmers and to taxpayers

Dealing with TB is costly to farmers and to the general taxpayer. The Government pays for most TB testing (apart from pre-movement tests), and meets the cost of paying compensation to farmers for affected cattle. Controlling TB also imposes significant costs on farmers – including resources expended on TB testing, as well as consequential losses resulting from compulsorily slaughtered animals.

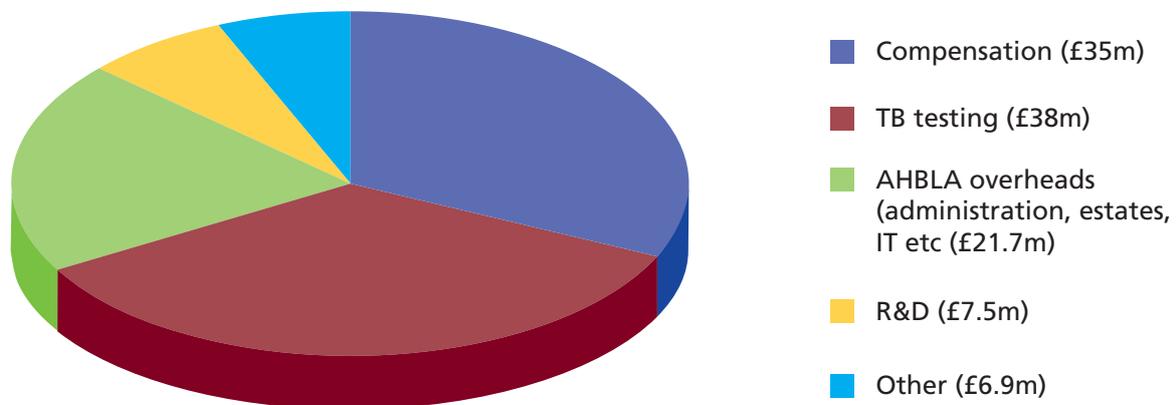
The table below sets out some high level, indicative costs to farmers and Government. They are simple averages and we acknowledge that they do not reflect individual circumstances.

	Average cost to farmer	Average cost to Government
TB breakdown (estimated average of OTFW and OTFS cost)	£12,000	£22,000
Routine TB test (estimate of average cost for 100 animals)	£350	£770

The costs to Government are based on actual costs devolved to England for the year ending 2011/12.

The pie chart below shows a simplified breakdown of Defra's expenditure on bovine TB. Given the worsening disease situation, Government spending on TB could be expected to increase to over £120 million in 2014/15 if we continue with the current arrangements. At the same time, we are facing a significant financial challenge, with the Government's spending review resulting in Defra having to cut its total expenditure by 30% by 2015. For animal health and welfare, that translates into a budget which was £244 million in 2011/12 falling to £199 million in 2014/15.

Forecast Defra spend on TB: 2012/13



Compensation is offset by salvage receipts (£10m)

Financial pressures won't just go away. So we must start thinking now about how savings could be made over the next few years. We also need to look to the long term and consider how the costs of TB can be made more sustainable in the future.

Defra's bovine TB programme, though relatively protected, must shoulder some of the burden, not least through cuts to core Defra and AHVLA funding. Savings and efficiencies have already been made in some areas. Renegotiation of slaughterhouse contracts means that Government now gets a much better deal from salvage payments. The change to table valuations in 2006 significantly reduced the Government's compensation bill. AHVLA are also looking to making significant savings. For example, AHVLA have already reduced head count leading to savings of around £4 million, and are seeking to make further efficiency savings through their business reform plan.

Roles and responsibilities

Doing things better

We know that we need to strengthen what we do and the measures we put in place to tackle the disease. But we also know that Government budgets are being cut. So now is a good opportunity to consider how we deliver those measures.

We know that many farmers and the wider industry are not always happy with the way the current policies are delivered. The Board strongly believes that we need to establish the right roles and responsibilities for animal keepers, vets and Government, whilst achieving a fair balance of costs so that we can all continue to work towards eradication and maintain a viable livestock industry.

There is always choice. If we continue with current models, we cannot ignore the reality that we need to find ways to reduce the cost to the taxpayer. The obvious options for that are transferring some of the costs of testing to farmers, or reducing compensation. However, the obvious options are not the only options and the Board's view is that we should take this opportunity to look more fundamentally at the relationship and responsibilities of Government, the farming industry and the veterinary profession. Innovative new ways of working could help us to find efficiencies and empower farmers, vets and the wider industry to take greater control. You know your businesses best, so you need to help us make the right decisions.

TB testing and reactor removal, salvage and compensation are matters that affect all farmers to some extent. Rather than let Government come up with solutions, the Board wants to see the farming industry and veterinary profession thinking about more efficient ways of delivering these activities, which could include transferring some responsibilities or more partnership working between Government and industry.

We outline in the following sections some possible approaches to rebalancing the roles of Government, the veterinary profession and the farming industry. At this stage, these are simply ideas. We know that some of them may appear challenging at first sight. However, we want to work together with you to come up with the best possible solutions within the context of the constraints we face.

We would welcome your thoughts, and particularly any suggestions you may have to help us meet these challenges. We want you to have the opportunity to help us shape options for the Board to consider and make recommendations to Ministers.

Any thoughts or ideas that you can contribute now to this discussion are part of a pre-consultation phase: you now have the opportunity to help us to shape options to be considered.

TB Testing: Responsibility and choice

New ways of working

The majority of TB testing is currently undertaken by Official Veterinarians – i.e. veterinary surgeons appointed by the Government and authorised to carry out duties on its behalf. Farmers bear the costs of the workforce required to facilitate TB testing, whilst the Government meets the costs of most testing (apart from pre-movement testing). Government also meets the costs of co-ordinating and administering the testing programme.

There are compelling reasons why change should be seriously considered, including the need to:

- Ensure consistently high quality testing.
- Maximise the efficiency of existing systems and processes.
- Maximise opportunities for farmer choice in the provision of TB testing. By increasing farmer choice we would hope to see increased competition and better value for money.
- Ensure the level of spend on TB testing is sustainable for the future.

If we kept current models for the delivery of testing, one very simple approach might be to charge farmers for the costs of testing. This could include routine testing, breakdown testing, or all testing. Government could still pay private vets to carry out tests, but would have to charge farmers for the service. The level of charges could be varied for different types of test.

But this approach would not only lead to greater costs to farmers, but would also inevitably increase the administrative burden for Defra/AHVLA. More fundamental redistributions of responsibilities which could make the whole system more efficient are possible we believe.

One approach explored in our recent stakeholder workshops envisaged cattle keepers arranging their own tests and negotiating prices directly with an AHVLA approved veterinary practice. There's real scope for efficiencies here, for example through reducing AHVLA's administrative costs, although AHVLA would still need to send reminders, process results of tests and ensure quality standards are maintained. Again, this approach could be implemented for routine and/or breakdown testing. Under this approach, Government could provide top-up payments for some or all types of tests, to help lessen the impact on farmers. However, we'd need to consider how this approach was implemented to determine the impact on administration costs.

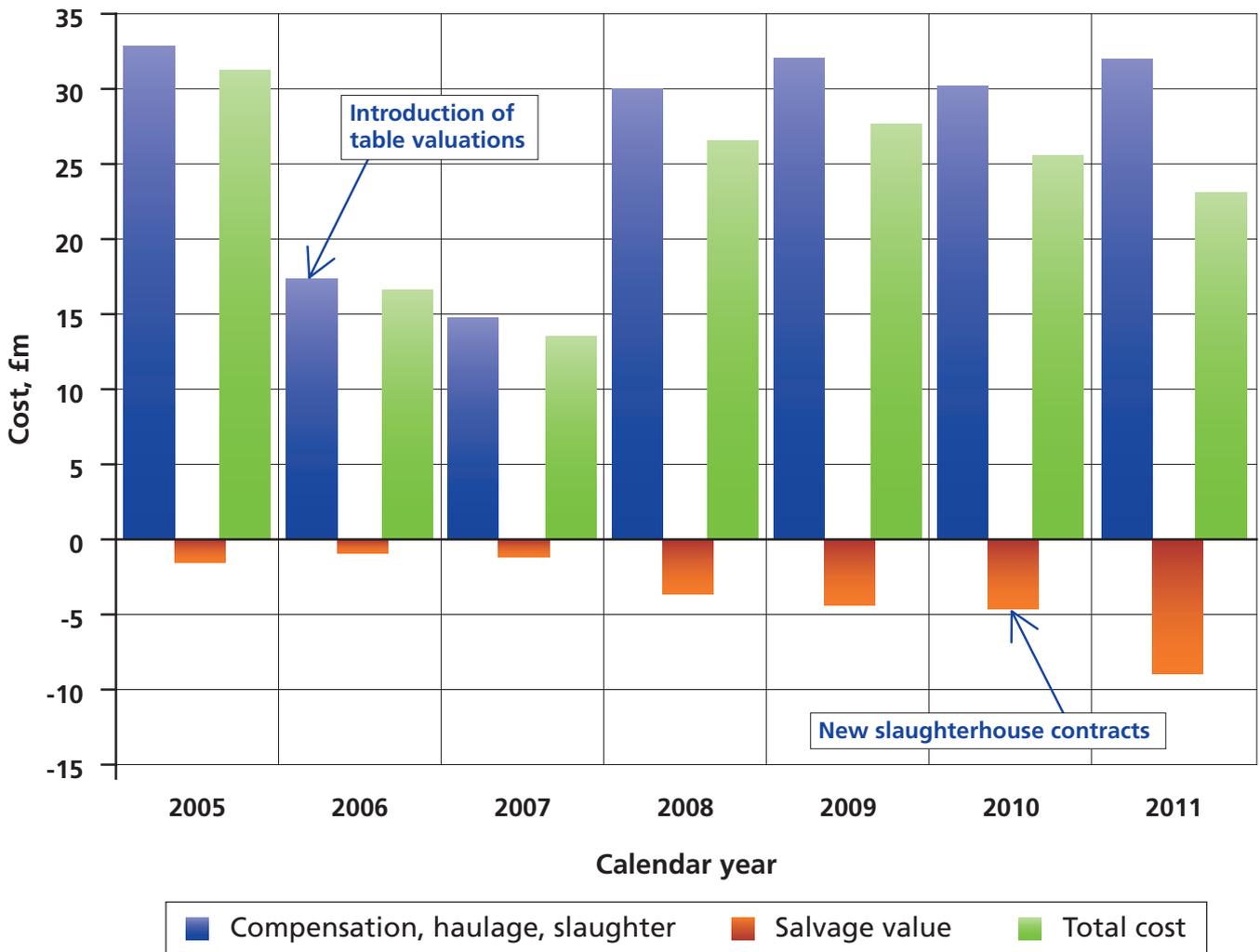
TB Testing: What do you think?

- Do you have any thoughts on approaches such as farmers arranging testing or charging for testing?
- Do you have suggestions on how these approaches could be improved?
- Can you supply any information on the possible impacts of these approaches?
- Do you have any alternative suggestions for how we might rebalance the roles and responsibilities of Government, vets and farmers in relation to testing?

Reactor removal and compensation

Giving farmers greater responsibility

Farmers are currently compensated by Government for TB affected cattle slaughtered for disease control purposes. Since 2006, the level of compensation has been determined mainly through a table valuation system based on average cattle values for different categories of cattle. This significantly reduced the total spend on compensation following its introduction. However, as the disease has continued to worsen the cost of compensation has been gradually increasing.



In 2011/12 Defra paid £31.5m in compensation. Thanks to re-negotiated slaughterhouse contracts, in the same year Defra received £10.5m in salvage payments.

Reactors are removed and slaughtered by operators contracted to AHVLA. Defra receives a payment based on the salvage value of a carcase. However no payment is made for approximately 12% of reactors either because the cattle have to be slaughtered on farm, the animal is under medication for any reason, or because the carcase is condemned following identification of TB lesions in more than one part of the carcase. Some changes were made to the cattle compensation system on 1 July 2012. These included reducing compensation for TB reactor cattle from herds with significantly overdue TB tests and introducing new cattle categories.

There are a number of reasons why we need to consider changing the current approach to reactor removal, salvage and compensation. These include:

- Maximising salvage returns for TB reactors.
- Giving farmers more choice and control – at the moment Government decides when reactors are removed and where they are slaughtered.
- Reducing the overall cost to the taxpayer.
- Enhancing disease controls – if compensation rates were reduced some cattle keepers would be motivated to take more steps to reduce their own TB risks.

Compensation options

Rather than pay compensation equivalent to 100% of average market prices for healthy animals, Defra could compensate at a specified % of the table valuation. This sort of approach has been taken in Spain and New Zealand (who compensate at 65% of full value). To allow the farming industry time to adjust, compensation could be gradually reduced over time to a given percentage of average prices.

Alternatively, levels of compensation could be varied depending on the circumstances. For example, compensation for cattle brought into TB restricted herds could be reduced or removed altogether. This would mean that the farmers, rather than the taxpayer would be liable for the increased financial risk taken when moving cattle into a herd that is not TB free.

In our conversations with industry groups the suggestion was made that compensation could be reduced for the first reactors in a herd. For example, salvage value could be paid for the first three reactors in a TB breakdown, whilst full compensation could be paid for subsequent reactors. This would ensure that all affected cattle keepers are compensated but that Government financial support is focussed most on those businesses that are hit hardest by TB.

Salvage responsibilities

Cattle keepers may be better placed than Government to negotiate terms with slaughterhouses, partly because they do not have to follow the strict Government procurement procedures and can shop around to get the best possible deal. Under this model responsibility for the removal and slaughter of reactors could be passed to the cattle keeper. The cattle keeper would retain the salvage payment.

Defra could provide top-up compensation to cover cattle transport costs and to reflect the fact that some types of cattle are not reared for their meat value.

Reactor removal and compensation: What do you think?

- Do you have any thoughts on these approaches such as reducing compensation or greater responsibility for farmers to remove reactors and negotiate salvage terms?
- Do you have suggestions on how these approaches could be improved?
- Can you supply any information on the possible impacts of these approaches?
- Do you have any alternative suggestions for how we might rebalance the roles and responsibilities of Government and industry in relation to reactor removal, compensation and salvage?

Advice, support and disease investigation

Whose job should it be?

Farmers currently get advice on TB from their private vets, and from AHVLA. AHVLA vets and employees also give ad-hoc advice and support in response to queries from farmers and vets. AHVLA are also currently responsible for investigating disease and completing disease report forms, notifying other parties, including the Food Standards Agency and local authorities, identification of epidemiological links, tracing and contiguous premises.

We know that many farmers have greatest trust in the advice of their own private vets. They may give advice to farmers about how to deal with TB in their herd or how to manage TB risks. We know that the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) have developed a proposal, which they have shared with the TB Eradication Advisory Group (a sub-group of the AHWBE) for more services and advice to be delivered by non-AHVLA Official Veterinarians (OVs). BCVA's view is that OVs could have an important role in a range of activities, including:

- Farm-specific advice on biosecurity.
- Completion of Disease Report Forms (DRF)
- Investigation of breakdowns
- Risk assessment of measures to support the farm business to include re-stocking strategies
- Continued monitoring of the implementation of such measures

We know that other groups, including the South West TB Advisory Service and voluntary organisations such as the Farm Crisis Network, also deliver support and advice to farmers. We want to understand who is best placed to deliver these services, and what is most important to farmers in the way that they are delivered.

Advice, support and disease investigation: What do you think?

- What advice, guidance and support about dealing with TB do you need or want?
- Who would you like to deliver any support to you?
- Should different organisations deliver support in different circumstances?
- Who do you think should give advice to farmers after a breakdown?
- Is this sort of advice best provided by AHVLA, vets, voluntary organisations (e.g. Farm Crisis Network) or someone else?
- Who should be responsible for investigating disease and monitoring the implementation of measures?

Protecting farm businesses: Insurance

Insuring against business risks is normal practice for many

Farmers are responsible for a wide range of business risks and mitigate many of those risks by taking out insurance policies. A transfer of some of the costs of TB could impose quite significant additional costs on to a small number of farm businesses, so it is right to think about the opportunities to introduce some kind of voluntary insurance system to cover, say, the cost of testing and the loss of reactor cattle.

The current level of compensation is such that there are very few providers offering a limited form of TB insurance– in effect the risk is being underwritten by Government and the taxpayer. But if that were to change it is likely there would be more appetite for insurance from farmers and more willingness to provide it by commercial insurers. Premiums would need to be affordable for farmers in high risk and low risk areas, but risk based premiums would, we believe, incentivise farmers to manage their TB risk more effectively.

There are variants on normal insurance arrangements. For example, if compensation were reduced and farmers were responsible for more of the costs of testing, then top-up compensation and help with breakdown testing costs might be made available to farmers who had paid a voluntary charge, similar to an insurance premium. At the same time pedigree cattle owners may decide to take out some form of top up insurance to cover any higher replacement costs of individual cattle.

There are a number of ways such a scheme might operate. It might be possible to provide such a scheme through:

- The private sector
- A mutual fund
- Defra
- A partnership approach

In order to make insurance accessible and available to all farmers, Government and the farming industry would need to work together with insurers

Insurance: What do you think?

- What potential do you think there is for an insurance type scheme to help farmers meet any additional costs?
- Would you be interested in participating in a scheme such as this?

Over to you

This is your chance to influence the decision makers – please take it!

We are open to new ideas and suggestions, and we are keen to get your views and feedback on those we have set out in this document.

Workshops

- We are holding a series of workshops around the country. If you are interested in attending, please register your interest by emailing bTBengage@defra.gsi.gov.uk by the dates below. Spaces are limited so the sessions may fill up quickly.

The locations are:

- Exeter on 18 September (register by 17 September)
- Pulborough in West Sussex on 25 September (register by 24 September)
- Telford on 2 October (register by 28 September)
- York on 11 October (register by 9 October)

Write or Email

- You can write to us at AHWBE (Bovine TB Call for Views), Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR or email us at bTBengage@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Please send us your thoughts and views by **19 October 2012**.

Online

- Farmers Weekly are hosting an online survey and forum from 14 September to 19 October. This is an opportunity for you to log on and share your views not only with us but also with a big online community. Go to www.fwi.co.uk
- You can find all the information on how to get involved on the AHWBE website at www.defra.gov.uk/ahwbe/work/bovinetb

Please join in

All questions

Approaches to tackling TB

- What are your views on the measures outlined above, such as different approaches to surveillance and control in epidemiologically different areas?
- How can Government and industry ensure that TB is not being spread between cattle and into areas where there is currently a low incidence of the disease?
- Should we be working towards OTF status for regions of England over the next few years?

TB Testing: responsibility and choice

- Do you have any thoughts on approaches such as farmers arranging testing or charging for testing?
- Do you have suggestions on how these approaches could be improved?
- Can you supply any information on the possible impacts of these approaches?
- Do you have any alternative suggestions for how we might rebalance the roles and responsibilities of Government, vets and farmers in relation to testing?

Reactor removal and compensation

- Do you have any thoughts on these approaches such as reducing compensation or greater responsibility for farmers to remove reactors and negotiate salvage terms?
- Do you have suggestions on how these approaches could be improved?
- Can you supply any information on the possible impacts of these approaches?
- Do you have any alternative suggestions for how we might rebalance the roles and responsibilities of Government, and industry in relation to reactor removal, compensation and salvage?

Advice, support and disease investigation

- What advice, guidance and support about dealing with TB do you need or want?
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- Who do you think should give advice to farmers after a TB breakdown?
- Is this sort of advice best provided by AHVLA, vets, voluntary organisations (e.g. Farm Crisis Network) or someone else?
- Who should be responsible for investigating disease and monitoring the implementation of measures?

Insurance

- What potential do you think there is for an insurance type scheme to help farmers meet any additional costs?
- Would you be interested in participating in a scheme such as this?

