

POLICY NOTE

THE TUBERCULOSIS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT ORDER 2014

SSI 2014/71

1. The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1, 8(1), 15(4), 25 and 83(2) of the Animal Health Act 1981.
2. It amends the Tuberculosis (Scotland) Order 2007 to provide for the legal recognition of private veterinary surgeons as 'approved veterinary surgeons' for the purpose of examination and testing of bovine animals for bovine tuberculosis (bTB). Provision is made for Scottish Ministers to both approve any veterinary surgeon who they consider to be competent to apply and read diagnostic tests for bTB and to revoke any approval granted.
3. The instrument also makes provision for automatic movement restrictions to apply where the diagnostic test for bTB identifies a reactor or an inconclusive reactor. The restrictions will remain in force until removed or amended by notice issued by a veterinary inspector.

Policy Background

4. Bovine TB is an infectious and contagious disease of cattle caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis* and is characterised by the development of tubercles in any organ of the body. Infection is usually diagnosed in the live animal on the basis of the tuberculin test. Cattle failing the test and those considered to have been direct contacts exposed to bTB are compulsorily slaughtered and restrictions imposed on the herd until it tests clear of the disease.
5. Due to a consistent low incidence of bTB in Scotland Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status was granted by the European Commission on 8 September 2009. This status provides for introduction of a flexible surveillance programme in Scotland.

Policy Objectives

6. This amendment aligns with the future training arrangements of private veterinary surgeons who wish to be able to undertake the testing of cattle for bTB and removes from those who were previously appointed as Veterinary Inspectors under the Animal Health Act 1981 the statutory powers of entry and of issuing notices and licences, which were seldom ever used. Training of private veterinary surgeons for this work is currently carried out by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency however their intention is that this should now be outsourced to ensure a more consistent approach to training and a more robust system of auditing private veterinary surgeons to ensure high standards of testing are being met. The new arrangements are to apply throughout GB and this legislative amendment is being taken forward in parallel with Defra and the Welsh Government

Consultation

7. As the policy flows from AHVLA's intended changes to the training of veterinarians in private practice the veterinary profession has been kept fully informed through a communications programme handled by AHVLA.

Financial Implications

8. The changes being introduced will not impose any financial burden therefore a Business Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared.

**Scottish Government
Agriculture Food & Rural Communities Directorate
Animal Health and Welfare Division
March 2014**