



Western Stock Growers' Association

BULLETIN # 8

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UPDATE: Bovine TB in Alberta

The following information is from conference calls with CFIA on January 10 and 12, 2017.

What we know:

- There has been no change to the number of positives. Farm testing continues and reactor animals are being scheduled for slaughter and enhanced post-mortem examinations. The number of reactors waiting for slaughter is estimated at around 200 with the number growing with every farm tested (2-4% of any herd will have reactors to the testing). CFIA is investigating options to increase the weekly reactor slaughter numbers.
- As planning for calving season starts, so do questions of capacity for these animals and concerns on overstocking. CFIA will be contacting all producers in quarantine to establish a rational order to move reactors off the farms in order to help alleviate some pressure on farms. CFIA staff will gather information about each producer's situation and then establish a removal and destruction schedule that takes into account factors such as date that quarantine was issued, date that calving is expected to start and whether there are animal welfare concerns related to crowding because of 2016 calves still on the farm and date of any other events such as planned sales, shows or special events. CFIA hopes to complete all these call by January 18 and have a schedule soon after that.
- CFIA continues to try to find additional slaughter capacity for calves coming from ranches that need to be depopulated. There is one facility in Alberta that has been taking calves but cannot increase capacity. The capacity there is about 400 per week. A facility in Saskatchewan was running a trial for calves this week and CFIA is hoping to have them sign on for a weekly run as well.
- CFIA is introducing a supplemental testing option available to ranchers to further test the caudal fold reactor animals waiting for slaughter. The supplemental testing has a two-fold implication: 1) to alleviate the pressures associated with limited slaughter facility capacity for reactor destruction and post-mortem exams through supplemental testing of eligible reactors to screen out non-bovine TB reactors and 2) to provide an opportunity for producers who are concerned about loss of genetics to potentially retain animals that can be screened out with supplemental testing.
- Trace-out herds will continue to be tested by caudal fold skin test and ELISA blood tests. Animals that react to the ELISA test will be ordered destroyed (with compensation) for post-mortem exam and laboratory testing. Animals in trace-out herds that react only to the caudal fold skin test will be eligible for supplemental testing.
- CFIA has completed the risk evaluation on non-livestock companion animals on one farm with a positive result. All animals are being released from quarantine. The evaluations for non-livestock companion animals will be done on a farm-by-farm, animal-by-animal basis and are fueled by producer request. On farms where there is no confirmed bovine TB positives the outlook is good. The most difficult evaluations will be farms where there is confirmed positives.
- CFIA has also released a one-pager on conditional release of quarantine and movement controls prior to final lab culture results.



INFORMATION FROM CFIA

RE: Destruction scheduling and supplemental testing options for trace-out and contact herds

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) continues to work on expanded capacity for the destruction and post-mortem examination of reactor animals. The CFIA has also listened to the concerns from producers about the need to get reactors removed as quickly as possible because of calving season starting soon.

The CFIA has identified options for supplemental testing of certain reactor animals which may:

- alleviate the pressures associated with limited facility capacity for reactor destruction and post-mortem exams through supplemental testing of eligible reactors to screen out nonbovine TB reactors
- provide an opportunity for producers to potentially retain higher value animals that can be screened out with supplemental testing

Trace-out herds

Trace-out herds will continue to be tested by caudal fold skin test and ELISA blood tests. Animals that react to the ELISA test will be ordered destroyed for post-mortem examination and laboratory testing. Animals that react to only the caudal fold skin test will be eligible for supplemental live animal testing to screen out false positive results. This testing will be completed with either:

- a comparative cervical test (CCT) which allows the field testers to determine if the animal has reacted to potential avian TB or bovine TB
- the BOVIGAM Interferon-gamma (IFN-gamma) blood test which allows laboratory analysis to determine if the animal has reacted to potential avian TB or bovine TB

The CFIA will determine which test is best for each herd but generally intends to use the BOVIGAM blood test.

Producers will be given the option of having supplemental testing done for caudal fold skin reactors. If the supplemental testing confirms the initial result was a false positive, destruction for the individual animals will not be required. If the CCT or BOVIGAM test results are nonnegative, the animal will be ordered destroyed for post-mortem examination and laboratory testing.

For some herds, the BOVIGAM test can only begin 60 days after the initial TB test and as a result the quarantine period may be longer than if all reactors are scheduled for destruction immediately. For those herds, the supplemental testing will also require additional handling of animals. Therefore, producers may only want to consider this option for reactor animals with a market value greater than the compensation maximum or having highly desirable genetic traits.

The intent is to complete the calls with the producers by January 18 and provide scheduling dates soon after.

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Contact herds

As of January 15, contact herds will be tested with the caudal fold skin test only and reactors will be retested with either:

- a comparative cervical test (CCT) which allows the field testers to determine if the animal has reacted to potential avian TB or bovine TB
- the BOVIGAM Interferon-gamma (IFN-gamma) blood test which allows laboratory analysis to determine if the animal has reacted to potential avian TB or bovine TB

The CFIA will determine which test is best for each herd but generally intends to use the BOVIGAM blood test.

For contact herds that have already been tested by caudal fold skin test and ELISA blood tests, the same supplemental testing options of caudal fold reactors for trace-out herds will be available. The contact herds tested after January 15, 2017 will be eligible for the BOVIGAM test without the 60 day waiting period.

Identifying animals for supplemental testing and scheduling removal

CFIA staff will be contacting all producers from non-infected premises who have reactor animals awaiting destruction to review the supplemental testing options and determine which animals should be scheduled for removal as soon as possible.

CFIA staff will also gather some additional information about each producer's situation and then establish a removal and destruction schedule that takes into account factors such as:

- date that quarantine was issued
- date that calving is expected to start and whether there are animal welfare concerns related to crowding because of 2016 calves still on the farm
- date of any other events such as planned sales, shows or special events

The intent is to complete the calls with the producers by January 18 and provide scheduling dates soon after.

Latest information from CFIA:

CFIA has committed to keeping the TB investigation web page updated with the most current information they can share. Click on this link: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/tuberculosis/investigation-southeast-alberta/eng/1477438380160/1477438380659>

