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***Mycoplasma bovis* 2018 Response**

Frequently Asked Questions

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What, Where, How

What is *Mycoplasma bovis*?

Mycoplasma bovis is a bacterium that causes disease in cattle. It has never before been found in New Zealand. The disease has productivity and animal welfare implications as it can cause untreatable mastitis, abortions, pneumonia and arthritis, and can result in significant losses to beef and dairy producers. The disease does not infect people and it does not present any food safety concerns. *Mycoplasma bovis* is widespread internationally and other dairy and meat producing countries successfully manage it and trade in animal products. Its detection in New Zealand does not present any trade concerns.

What animals does it affect?

Mycoplasma bovis primarily affects cattle. Other animals are very unlikely to be infected by the disease. It does not cause disease in humans, and is not a food-safety risk.

Where is it in New Zealand?

Cattle infected with *Mycoplasma bovis* are in two main clusters in Southland and Waitaki/Waimate (on groups of farms belonging to Southern Dairies Ltd and Van Leeuwen Dairy Group). There are also outliers in other regions including Canterbury and Hawkes' Bay (near Hastings), all appearing to be linked by animal movements. For example, calf movements around the country is a risk, as calves can catch the disease from infected milk and are sold and transported over long distances. Some of the infected properties have been depopulated already, including the infected properties first identified, and some which had received small numbers of infected calves.

What has happened so far?

On 22 July 2017 *Mycoplasma bovis* was initially identified in a South Canterbury farm, in the Oamaru area. This bacterium has never previously been identified in New Zealand. The farm is part of a 16 farm group and all of them have been under MPI movement control through Restricted Place Notices since the start of the Response. Strict cleaning and disinfection protocols are in place for people moving on and off infected farms. Some have been depopulated, with the entire herds sent to meat processors.

Since the initial detection of the disease, subsequent testing found the disease on several other farms in the original group, and on some farms where animal movements had been linked (trace farms). The second cluster of farms affected in Southland was identified through this tracing process.

MPI is still tracing farms, and when they are identified farmers are contacted and given directions on what steps they should take, and whether samples will be taken from these farms.

While new trace properties are being identified, testing has shown some properties to be clear of the disease. When cleared, properties can have less stringent controls, and while movements of risk goods are still restricted, it is the first step in removing all movement restrictions from these farms.

Some infected properties have had all animals culled. After depopulation, a programme is put in place to decontaminate and repopulate them. This process includes an initial clean-up and 2 rounds of disinfection with 14 days between rounds. Following this work, there is a 60 day period where no cattle will be allowed on the farms (stand-down period). At the end of this 60 days we aim to get cattle back on the farms as quickly as possible. Surveillance, monitoring, and testing will keep happening as a protection measure.

For more information refer to the MPI website - <http://mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/mycoplasma-bovis/>

Looking out for *Mycoplasma bovis*

What should farmers do to protect their farms and animals?

Mycoplasma bovis is a bacterial disease and can be managed through good on-farm hygiene. Basic on-farm biosecurity is recommended, and is particularly important during disease outbreaks such as this one.

Basic farm biosecurity includes monitoring of visitors who interact with cattle, washing and disinfecting of footwear and gear worn between farms, checking and cleaning if necessary any farm vehicles prior to leaving the farm, restricting (as much as possible) movement and mixing of cattle, keeping good, up-to-date health records, and other measures. MPI has produced a cleaning and disinfection guide:

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/19532>

If you buy cattle or use service bulls talk with the vendor and/or your vet to understand their health status.

Practice good on-farm biosecurity:

[Beef+Lamb NZ Dry stock biosecurity guidelines](#)

[DairyNZ Farm biosecurity](#)

Implement three elements of on-farm hygiene

Separate – limit the movement of people and equipment on to the farm

Clean before disinfecting

Disinfect according to the manufacturer's instructions

Keep your **NAIT movements up-to-date** and **accurate**. All farmers should take the time to **update NAIT movement data online**. MPI was able to rapidly trace the animals moved from the infected properties where the farms kept their NAIT movement records up to date and accurate. NAIT is one of the most important tools used by MPI disease investigators when exotic disease is suspected, and it allows investigators to determine where they should search for disease next.

How can I recognise *Mycoplasma bovis* in my herd?

Farmers should look out for:

- unusual mastitis in cattle that doesn't respond to treatment,
- arthritis in cows and calves,
- late-term abortion,
- pneumonia in calves.
- See [Mycoplasma bovis - what to look for](#)

I think I may have infected animals - who should I contact?

Contact your vet in the first instance, otherwise contact the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on 0800 80 99 66. You will be asked for your name, contact details, and any other details you wish to provide (all details are confidential). An investigating veterinarian will phone you back and help with assessment and follow-up of the case. All response testing for *Mycoplasma bovis* is covered by MPI.

Can I move animals off my farm?

Yes, unless your farm has tested positive for infection or you have had a notice issued on you, you can move animals freely.

However, if you have cattle infected with *Mycoplasma bovis* on your property, you will have been given full instructions about what to do. Infected farms are put under legal restrictions and cannot move stock without permission from MPI. Permits may be given to move animals to slaughter or to other infected properties (to prevent for animal welfare issues such as under-feeding), but these will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What should trucking companies be doing? How do I know the trucks coming onto my property are safe?

Trucking companies should work with the farmers to meet their hygiene requirements.

All the properties under Restricted Place Notice require permits to move animals. The permits requires that the truck is cleaned and disinfected at the end of each movement.

Is it safe for contractors, transport operators, and others who come from infected farms to come to my farm?

It is absolutely safe for tradies/truckies to come from infected farms to other properties as they have stringent disinfection protocol to follow.

All infected farms are under strict legal controls under the Biosecurity Act. These controls include a comprehensive cleaning and disinfection protocol which has been provided to them by MPI. This protocol ensures that vehicles pose a negligible biosecurity risk.

All vehicles are being cleaned and disinfected on leaving the properties. Vehicles carrying animals – for example transporters to the meat processing premises – are disinfecting on exit, going directly to the meat processor (not to other farms) and then being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the plant on completing the job.

Vehicles from neighbouring farms are not required to clean vehicles leaving their properties as the biosecurity risk is considered by MPI to be very small. If this situation changes MPI will notify farmers.

Can we eradicate – get rid of – this disease?

At this point in time, that's what we're aiming for. But there is a lot that we still don't know. Once we know where it is in our national herd, we can make decisions around how it can be managed, and if eradication is possible. The joint MPI/dairy industry National Milk Surveillance Programme is expected to give a reasonable picture of the disease distribution and results from this, expected in late March, will give decision-makers good information. If it transpires that it's only in a limited number of farms – there is a good chance we can get rid of it. But if we find it much wider spread, this is more difficult. It needs to be noted that no other country has ever managed to eradicate it.

How did it get here?

We are looking at 7 possible means of entry – imported live cattle, imported frozen semen, imported embryos, imported veterinary medicines and biological products, imported feed, imported used farm equipment and other imported live animals. It is possible that we never be able to identify the entry pathway. MPI is tracing movements of possible risk goods onto the affected properties as part of this investigation.

How does it spread?

Mycoplasma bovis is mainly spread between cattle in close contact. Generally prolonged or repeated contact with infected animals is required for the disease to be transmitted. It is also likely to be transmitted to calves fed with infected unpasteurised milk. Urine and faeces are not regarded as significant transmitters of the disease, but the bacterium does survive for longer in a moist environment such as in piles of moist faeces or wet bedding material.

Although it is very rare for it to infect animals other than cattle, they may possibly transfer disease from an infected animal, therefore it is important to keep infected cattle isolated from cattle and other species if possible.

Mycoplasma bovis can be spread on any equipment used between farms. Because it causes mastitis, milking equipment is particularly important to clean and disinfect if the equipment is shared between properties or herds.

This disease is not spread across long distances on the wind or in water. *Mycoplasma bovis* does NOT survive in the soil for a long period.

Refer to the [guide on the MPI website](http://mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/19532) (<http://mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/19532>) for advice on good farm hygiene practices.

Can it live in soil or silage?

Mycoplasma bovis **does not** survive in soil for a long period, the stand-down period of 60 days after depopulation, cleaning and disinfection, is long enough to ensure that cattle are not infected from the soil.

Properly made silage with a pH of 4.5 or below and wrapped correctly is not a risk for transmitting *Mycoplasma bovis*. Silage can be tested to ensure it has reached this standard.

For adult cattle, spread through feed is not thought to be a risk.

Can it be spread across farm borders?

Yes, repeated cattle-to-cattle contact across boundary fences may spread the infection.

None of the infected properties have been infected by across boundary transmission. There is some evidence overseas that there is a risk of spread over 1-2 metres however, so preventing fence line contact can prevent spread. This can be managed by planning stock rotation with neighbours to keep neighbouring paddocks vacant or by using an electric fence hotwire to keep cattle away from boundary fences.

Can it be spread through feed?

Feeding calves unpasteurised milk is a cause of spread in countries where this disease is established.

For adult cattle, spread through feed is thought to be a low risk.

Can an infection lie dormant or will it show immediately in every case?

Dormancy is one of the biggest problems with this disease, and is one of the issues with detection of disease. Some cattle may be sub-clinically infected, and never show disease. Other cattle will break with disease only late in the course of being infected, and this can be triggered by increased stress such as calving and milking.

Cattle movement of apparently-healthy but infected cattle is the greatest risk factor in whether a property becomes infected, along with feeding of un-pasteurised milk to calves.

Does it pass from mothers to calves?

Cow-to-calf transfer during birth is not considered a major route of infection. However, calves fed unpasteurised milk from infected cows can easily contract the disease.

In calves, the disease tends to cause pneumonia that is resistant to treatment with antibiotics, and also arthritis of one or multiple joints. Ear infections (causing head tilt) can also be a sign of this disease in calves.

Given that semen and embryos are considered to be a possible pathway, why allow them into New Zealand?

There is no documented scientific evidence from any country showing that *Mycoplasma bovis* has been transmitted to a cow in semen. Semen is considered a low risk due to a long international history of safe trade and strict hygiene requirements around collection and use. Currently we do not consider that there is the scientific justification to stop semen and embryo imports, however we are continually assessing the risk.

Farmers can continue to make their own decisions around the use of artificial insemination (AI). AI providers have developed biosecurity protocols for use following the outbreak. Ask your technician to tell you about them.

To put some perspective around the current situation, the *Mycoplasma bovis* outbreak is New Zealand's first detection, and semen has been imported for many years at the rate of around 250,000 straws a season. If semen was a significant risk factor, we could expect to see a lot more disease than we are.

MPI Management of Affected Properties

What happens to infected animals?

Animals on the infected farms have restrictions in place to prevent them coming into contact with other farms/animals. Some animals have been euthanised by the farmer for welfare reasons. As *Mycoplasma bovis* is not a food safety risk, infected animals that are fit for transport are being permitted to go to slaughter, though sick animals will not enter the human food chain.

Farmers on the Restricted Places must have a permit from MPI to move animals to other farms or direct to slaughter. Each permit includes requirements for cleaning and disinfection of the stock truck/s involved.

MPI has culled a large number of animals on the infected farms found last year, as part of the efforts to control any spread of the disease. MPI then put a hold on culling while the extent of the disease discovered on further properties is investigated. While MPI is not presently carrying out whole-herd culling, there is some targeted culling of animals for testing or animal welfare reasons (including some unwell calves which are sick from a range of conditions and may not be infected with *Mycoplasma bovis*). MPI is also allowing animals from some farms under movement restrictions to go to slaughter as part of normal business practice.

What happens to the meat from animals from the infected farms?

Mycoplasma bovis is not a food safety risk and there are no restrictions on the meat.

It is common in many food producing nations (like Australia, the United States, and in Europe). In these nations, infected animals that aren't showing symptoms are processed for human consumption.

Most cattle that we culled as part of the depopulation operation were processed at meat processing plants. Before animals left the farm, they were assessed by veterinarians to confirm that they were suitable for transport.

At the processing plants, MPI veterinarians assessed the health of each animal before \ slaughter. Animals are never used for human consumption if they are sick, or are severely injured, or have medicine in their system. This is a requirement of New Zealand law.

After animals are slaughtered, the carcass and organs are also subject to meat inspection. This is to ensure the meat is safe and suitable for consumption.

All meat processors have a Risk Organism Response Plan (RORP) to work to when handling stock exposed to an unwanted organism. This includes how to manage the waste safely for the environment.

The meat from unhealthy animals can be rendered or used in pet food.

Can I eat the meat/drink the milk of cattle from infected farms?

Yes, *Mycoplasma bovis* is not a food safety risk. There is no issue with eating beef or drinking milk from infected herds.

What is MPI doing?

A full biosecurity response is underway. Response HQ is at the Animal Health Laboratory in Wallaceville, and Field HQs are in Oamaru, Invercargill and Ashburton where MPI and AsureQuality staff are now based.

Response staff are working closely with the affected farmers and their veterinarians, as well as with industry stakeholders, including DairyNZ, Dairy Companies Association of NZ (DCANZ), Beef+LambNZ, NZ Veterinary Association, Dairy Vets, and Federated Farmers.

MPI has a 3 pronged strategy to managing this outbreak

Contain – Minimise any further spread of the disease.

The farms under Restricted Place Notices require permits to move cattle between farms and to transport cattle direct to slaughter at agreed premises. The meat processor has procedures in place to clean and disinfect the transport trucks before they leave the processor.

Each farm has farm hygiene measures in place to clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles that may have come into contact with cattle or effluent.

Survey – Determine how widespread *Mycoplasma bovis* is

To be able to make decisions we need to understand the extent of the disease. MPI has a multi-layered survey that is taking samples from infected and restricted farms, farms that border those farms, movement traces of stock that have moved to and from farms in the previous 12 months, and a series of regional and nationwide surveys (such as bulk milk samples, mastitic and discard milk samples). So far, around 100,000 samples have been tested.

MPI is working with NAIT to trace the movements of cattle to and from the restricted farms over the past 12 months.

Assess the feasibility of eradication – Determine if it is possible to cost-effectively eradicate.

MPI is working with industry and international experts to understand the impacts of the disease and the potential costs of eradication. Based on the information from the surveys we will continue to assess the feasibility of eradication.

What legal directions are issued under the Biosecurity Act 1993?

Restricted Place Notice (RPN) issued under section 130 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

- RPNs are issued to properties that are believed to have, or are suspected of having *Mycoplasma bovis* present (infected properties and other restricted properties).
- The RPN prohibits all unauthorised movements of stock and other risk goods onto and off the farm to minimise the likelihood of the disease spreading from the property.
- Any movement of cattle requires a permit from MPI. The transport vehicles are required to follow a cleaning and disinfection process when they leave the Restricted Place.
- AsureQuality staff are ensuring cleaning and disinfecting and permit protocols are being met.
- Any incidents of non-compliance are followed up by MPI.

Notice of Direction (NoD) issued under section 122 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

- NoDs are issued to farms when an inspector or authorised person considers that movement of stock and other risk goods from a property poses a risk of spreading *Mycoplasma bovis*. For example, this can be when animals from infected properties have been moved to that property but testing has not yet taken place or results of testing are pending.
- NoDs are also issued when specific directions need to be given, for example to cull stock.
- NoDs are more flexible than RPNs and allow the inspector or authorised person to choose what activities should be prohibited.
- In this response, the NoD does not restrict movement of stock or goods on to the farm but cattle can only move off the farm with a permit.
- Other steps such as cleaning and disinfection of vehicles may be required.
- Any incidents of non-compliance are followed up by MPI.

Why can't I know who is being contacted by MPI?

MPI is contacting individual farms where there is potential risk of the disease being present. It's a case of no news is good news. If you don't hear, it's not of immediate concern to you as far as MPI knows.

If, however, you think you may have animals sourced from a risk property, that MPI doesn't know about, please advise MPI as soon as possible and we will check it out. Call 0800 80 99 66 or email mbovis2017_liaison@mpi.govt.nz

In particular we are keen to hear from any farmers who have animals bought from the Southern Centre Dairy Group Limited. We also would like to hear from people who have used milk for calf feed from this company.

MPI is not naming affected properties without their consent. This is the law under the Privacy Act.

We are encouraging farmers under controls or investigation to talk to their neighbours and customers, but we are not revealing details of individual farms.

Why aren't you putting restrictions on all neighbouring properties to infected properties?

We are only putting such stringent conditions on properties where we know there is a definite connection to a confirmed infection. There is no indication that neighbouring properties are infected – we know the disease moves slowly outside of direct contact between cattle. It's quite a complex legal process with some very tough conditions to meet and we can't just slap restrictions on properties without there being justification of a significant risk. We are testing neighbours as part of our building a picture of the disease spread. But this doesn't mean they're highly suspect. Quite simply we don't need to have the neighbours under controls.

Why aren't you putting restrictions on all the trace farms and neighbouring properties?

See above. Animals on the farms traced from the infected properties are being tested urgently and the farmers given directions on what they should do. Legal restrictions are used when required.

Why aren't you stopping transport of stock between North and South Islands?

It's a question of risk. We know that we have animals on high-risk properties under lock-down. To stop movement out of the South Island to the North Island we'd need to impose a larger control – creating a Controlled Area.

If we do this, there are consequences. Our markets tend to react to the imposition of controls under the Biosecurity Act; so putting in an unjustified control could affect our ability to trade and export.

Have neighbours been informed/ Are neighbours under any controls?

In other countries where *Mycoplasma bovis* is widespread, across-fence contact is thought to be a low risk method of farm-to-farm spread. MPI is investigating neighbouring properties, including evaluation of likelihood of stock interaction over the fence, and other risk factors. Depending on the level of risk, properties will be tested to ensure they are free of disease. If any neighbouring properties are positive by laboratory testing, they will also be subject to movement controls and tracing of any in-contact properties. MPI intends to continue this tracing of infected properties until it can define the full extent of disease.

Is there a risk it may be present in other areas? How likely is this?

The disease is believed to have been present on the infected properties for at least a month before it was identified, possibly longer. In that case, there may be other infected properties in other regions of New Zealand.

How do I know that any stock I'm buying (particularly calves) is free from *Mycoplasma bovis* infection?

At this point in time, MPI believes that the infection is contained and that most animals across New Zealand are free of disease.

In general, buying in healthy-looking stock from a single property is the best way of reducing disease risk (of any sort) to your herd.

DairyNZ has developed a [pre-purchase checklist](https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5787884/myco-bovis-pre-purchase-checklist-aug-2017.pdf) to help when you're buying stock - <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5787884/myco-bovis-pre-purchase-checklist-aug-2017.pdf>

How can I assure people that any stock I'm seeking to sell (particularly calves) are free from *Mycoplasma bovis* infection?

At this point in time all stock believed possibly infected has been placed under movement control. If that changes, MPI will provide updates as it is able to.

If you suspect that you may have received animals from a risk source, please advise MPI as soon as possible, and we will investigate for you.

Protecting your Business

How should lease bulls be managed once they are returned to their home farm?

Farmers should ensure that they know the health status of the farm that they leased their bull to or from. If they are concerned then they should not bring a bull leased from someone else onto their property, or return their own leased-out bull back to their property or keep the bull separate from other cattle. Your veterinarian can provide more animal health advice.

DairyNZ has worked with MPI and industry to produce advice on "Managing service bulls" that is available for download from the MPI website – <http://mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/mycoplasma-bovis/>

What can farm service providers do to protect their business and customers?

Farms should be using routine on-farm biosecurity practices to minimise risk to their animals. Service providers can help minimise risk by complying with each farm's required biosecurity practices and with the farm's cleaning and disinfection requirements.

- Don't arrive unannounced. Let the farmer know you plan to visit their farm and ask their requirements.
- Work with the farmer to comply with any farm biosecurity requirements.
- Clean and disinfect footwear, protective clothing and equipment before coming on farm.
- Be proactive, assure farmers of your hygiene practices.

What sort of impact is it likely to have on the New Zealand dairy and cattle farming industries?

Mycoplasma bovis is primarily a production and animal welfare issue. Infected animals can become significantly ill with unresponsive mastitis, pneumonia and arthritis, as well as late abortions.

It is not a trade concern as most countries with animal production industries live with it, farm meat and dairy products, and successfully trade in them.

All cattle-rearing businesses will be impacted. For the dairy industry, intensive beef operations, and calf-rearers, where animals are in closer and more regular contact with other animals, the risk of contact with a diseased animal is increased. Beef production is also at risk, in particular if animals are sourced from infected properties. Dryland grazing and winter graziers will also be affected when managing movements of animals on and off their properties, and keeping them healthy.

Dairy production will be affected (if the disease is established here) and overseas experience gives us confidence about what to expect. Internationally it has shown to have an impact, however, best practice is effective in minimising losses over time - good farm management and well managed animal husbandry, in

conjunction with standard on-farm biosecurity behaviour, can minimise the effects on production over time.

What are the implications for management of winter grazing?

Guidance is in preparation by MPI and Industry and will be put on MPI's and Industry websites.

Testing

How do you test for *Mycoplasma bovis*?

We test for *Mycoplasma bovis* using blood samples, milk samples and vaginal or nasal swabs. Two test methods are in use.

- PCR (Polymerase chain reaction) that multiplies distinctive segments of DNA and detects the presence of the bacteria itself.
- ELISA (Enzyme Linked Immune Sorbent Assay) which detects antibodies in blood. This test has now been established and validated and will allow improved screening of suspect properties, particularly dry stock (non-milking cattle).

See Fact sheet on MPI's surveillance and testing for more information,

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/20093-testing-for-mycoplasma-bovis-fact-sheet>.

Why is it taking so long to get us test results?

Testing for *Mycoplasma bovis* is complex and it's a big job. Up to 140 animals in each herd are tested using samples of milk, blood, or swabs from the nose and vagina; the lab expects to test well over 100,000 samples during the surveys.

Mycoplasma bovis can hide in an infected cow, not showing up until weeks or months later. This means that herds could be tested 3 or more times over 3 – 4 months before we have definite results for each farm.

Unfortunately because *Mycoplasma bovis* is a complicated disease to rule out farmers will have to wait for some time before we can confirm that their herds are not infected. We have to be absolutely thorough in diagnosing positive and negative farms so we can give farmers and the New Zealand public certainty.

Interim test results should be reported back to farmers within 2-3 weeks from samples being taken.

Currently we have 30 scientists working in the lab on this, and also staff from other laboratories helping.

How accurate are the available tests?

The PCR tests (which detects DNA from the bacterium) are very accurate, and we double-check them by sequencing the DNA to ensure positive results are true. However, PCR may show a slight positive signal that *Mycoplasma* DNA is present and further tests (e.g. DNA sequencing) are needed to determine if it is *Mycoplasma bovis* or another species of mycoplasma. The PCR test detects the presence of genetic material in samples and is very sensitive. Unfortunately other mycoplasma species and mycoplasma-like organisms are being identified in samples. This has added complexity to the interpretation of results and repeat tests are often needed to confirm the presence of *Mycoplasma bovis*.

The ELISA serology (looking for antibodies in the blood) can have poor ability to detect infection in new cases, or in apparently-healthy animals. However, when applied to a herd (e.g. testing multiple animals) it becomes more accurate at detecting the herd status of disease. The ELISA testing is useful for determining

a property's infection status, particularly for stock that are not milking. The test has a low sensitivity and at least 130 serum samples from a large herd are needed to give a 95% confidence of detecting an animal with antibodies. It is not useful for individual animals.

Do test results show immediately?

No, because *Mycoplasma bovis* can hide in infected cattle multiple testing rounds are needed before we can confirm that a herd is not infected.

For more information on testing refer to MPI's web page - <http://mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/mycoplasma-bovis/>

What will the National Milk Surveillance Programme tell us?

To assess the feasibility of eradication, MPI continues intensive testing and surveillance to build a picture of where the disease is. This includes the National Milk Surveillance Programme which involves testing three milk samples from all dairy farms currently in production throughout New Zealand. This programme will help MPI to ensure there are no unknown clusters of *Mycoplasma bovis* infection. Samples are currently processed with final results known around late March.

When a farm has had its 3 rounds of testing completed and they are all negative MPI will report the results to that farmer (via their dairy company) 10 working days after the 3rd test has been completed.

MPI will reporting back when testing is completed for each region.

Please note, positive results are notified to the farmer, immediately on confirmation.

Why do you need to test my animals even though they have already been tested in the national milk surveillance?

Bulk milk testing is thought to be a very sensitive way of detecting *Mycoplasma bovis* in lactating animals if at least one animal in 1000 is shedding *M bovis* at the time of milking. However, if no animals are shedding, or if shedding is intermittent, or if the disease is present on the farm but not within the lactating herd, then this test will not detect disease. The bulk milk testing undertaken across New Zealand is a way of evaluating the chance that other disease clusters exist beyond our knowledge. The bulk milk testing is not a way of ruling out the possibility of disease on individual farms, particularly those considered at-risk through animal movements or other contact with infected farms. Even if such a farm has been subject to multiple rounds of milk testing, it will still require further testing before it can be declared negative for the disease. This include several rounds of testing of animals from across all management groups on the farm, as well as extra testing of any trace animals from an infected farm.

Where can I get my animals tested?

Commercial laboratories now have the ability to undertake testing of healthy service bulls for *Mycoplasma bovis*. This testing is not done through MPI and you should contact your veterinarian for sampling and testing of these animals.

If meat processors see animals with suspect symptoms arriving for slaughter anywhere around the country, can they be tested for *Mycoplasma bovis*?

As with all exotic diseases, if inspectors at meat processors suspect that animals are infected they report to the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline – 0800 80 99 66 and the case will be followed up.

Support for affected farmers during tough times

Need help?

If you or anyone you know would like support or needs someone to talk with, please contact the *Mycoplasma bovis* Farmer Support Line on 027 444 9380 for a chat, or email: MBovis2017_Welfare@mpi.govt.nz. All calls are confidential.

Rural Support Trusts are in contact with every known affected farm family giving personal support and referring them to other sources of help and assistance as needed (such as MSD for emergency grants and benefits, IR for tax advice, their own accountant/banker/financial advisors, counsellors or GP, and MPI's compensation team). The Trusts are also promoting greater understanding of *Mycoplasma bovis* with the wider industry to minimise the negative impact to those farms affected. They are encouraging the sharing of the Stakeholder Updates, in a bid to raise awareness and understanding of the *Mycoplasma bovis* disease and response activity. Anyone else who needs support is welcome to phone the Rural Support Trust on 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP) for a confidential chat.

A fact sheet has been prepared, with information on looking after yourself if you're affected by the *Mycoplasma bovis* outbreak [Download the looking after yourself fact sheet](#) [PDF, 489 KB]

Compensation

How do I find out about Biosecurity Act Compensation?

There is a compensation scheme in place for those affected by legal directions from MPI (Restricted Place Notices or Notices of Direction). Compensation is available for damage or destruction of property or restrictions imposed under the Biosecurity Act 1993 on the movement or disposal of person's goods. Good record keeping is essential to any claim.

Several compensation claims can be made, and interim compensation applications are being lodged all the time. They take time to assess and verify, and some have been paid.

Information on eligibility and the process for compensation is on the MPI website: [Compensation under the Biosecurity Act](#).

Questions on compensation may also be emailed to compensationcoordinator@mpi.govt.nz.

Further Information for Affected Farmers

How do I get more information?

Information is on the MPI website: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/mycoplasma-bovis/>.

A regular update for farmers and stakeholders is emailed by the Response team. It has details about the incursion and Response, and a covering summary about what's new since the previous Update. Subscribe [here](#) or email mbovis2017_liaison@mpi.govt.nz and ask to be added to the distribution list.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

Please contact your local vet, or MPI through the Info line: [0800 00 83 33](tel:0800008333) or the Response Liaison email address – Mbovis2017_Liaison@mpi.govt.nz

MPI is appointing dedicated case managers for all farms under testing so that these farmers will have their own contact person to talk to and discuss results with.

Farmers seeking information about their property are encouraged to speak to their Case Manager (if they are under legal controls) or to contact MPI on 0800 00 83 33.

More Information

Where do I find more information?

- MPI website - *Mycoplasma bovis*

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/mycoplasma-bovis/>

[Guidelines for farmers](#)

[Farm hygiene poster](#)

[Managing service bulls](#)

[Testing herd and service bulls](#)

[Advice on using imported or local semen](#)

[Mycoplasma bovis what to look for](#)

[Potential impact on the beef sector](#)

- DairyNZ - *Mycoplasma bovis*

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/cow-health/mycoplasma-bovis/>

[Pre-purchase checklist](#)

[Mycoplasma bovis what to look for.](#)

[Biosecurity WOF](#)

- Beef + Lamb NZ

<http://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/factsheets/drystock-biosecurity-guidelines>

<http://beeflambnz.com/news-views/m-bovis-update-keep-calm-and-carry>

- Dairy Australia - Mycoplasma in Dairy Herds

<http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/Industry-information/About-Dairy-Australia/~media/Documents/Animal%20management/Mastitis/Countdown%20news/2016%20-%20Mycoplasma%20in%20dairy%20herds%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

- Expert Q&A on the Science Media Centre

<https://www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2017/07/27/cattle-disease-found-nz-expert-qa/>

- The Society of Sheep and Beef Cattle Veterinarians

They have published three documents on the New Zealand Veterinary Association website to support veterinarians and their clients with testing for *Mycoplasma bovis*. Information documents now available include:

[Standard Operating Procedure for Nasopharyngeal Swab Technique for Cattle](#)

[Standard Operating Procedure for Preputial Swab Technique for Bulls](#)

[Testing of Service Bulls for Mycoplasma bovis in New Zealand](#)