

# Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

## EPC(2) 01-06(p3)

### THE TUBERCULOSIS (WALES) ORDER 2006

#### Purpose

At the request of the Business Committee, this paper brings the above order to the attention of Members of the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee.

#### Background

The need for new measures on bovine TB (bTB) stems from the continuing increase and spread of this infectious disease in cattle, despite surveillance and control measures already in place. Costs are rising for both Government and industry. There is clear evidence that cattle movements contribute to the spread of this infectious disease problem. As set out in the Government Strategic Framework for the sustainable control of bovine TB in GB, published 1 March 2005, pre-movement testing is not seen as a risk elimination measure but a step forward in reducing the risk of the risk of spread to low incidence areas, which are largely in the North and also within high incidence areas in Central and South Wales. An independent stakeholder group, which included Welsh representation, made recommendations to Government on the introduction of a statutory requirement for pre-movement testing. The new requirements are based largely on the group's recommendations. Reduction of the risk from cattle movements across GB will be tailored according to the geographic circumstances and degree of risk. There will be a staged approach across GB. SEERAD have already announced and introduced both pre- and post movement testing requirements for movements of cattle from high risk areas in order to protect their relatively disease-free status. Defra proposes to introduce new pre-movement testing requirements in England on 20 February 2006.

#### Consultation

There has been extensive consultation on the introduction of pre-movement testing. The main message from respondents was the importance of protecting areas of low incidence of bovine TB and reducing the incidence of disease in high incidence areas. Pre-movement testing will apply to cattle over 15 months of age moving from 1 and 2 year tested herds. In early 2007 testing requirements will be extended to movements of cattle over 42 days old. Routine herd surveillance tests can be used as a pre-movement test as long as the animals are moved within 60 days of a clear test. Otherwise, farmers must arrange for and pay their LVI for the tests. Government will provide the tuberculin.

## **Financial Implications**

*A Regulatory Assessment (RA) has been prepared which highlights the possible costs to industry of bringing in pre-movement testing in line with the recommendations of the stakeholder group. Option 2, pre-movement testing with exemptions, as recommended by the RA, indicates that pre-movement testing in Wales will cost approximately £1,020,000 per annum; of which, £259,000 will be borne by the taxpayer and £761,000 by the industry. Total annual benefits are estimated to be £1,766,000, giving an annual net benefit for the proposed measure of £0.7million per year, with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.7:1. ABPM have noted there are no additional financial implications for the Assembly which are not already covered by existing budgets. BP Clearance No 1170.*

## **Press and Publicity**

All cattle herd owners are being sent detailed guidance on the requirements. Further publicity arrangements have and will be taken forward through the Welsh Assembly Government GWLAD magazine, which is circulated to farmers in Wales on a monthly basis.

## **Compliance**

**The Order is to be made under sections 1, 7(1), 8(1), 15(4), 25, 32(2), 83(2), 87(2) and 88(2) of the Animal Health Act 1981. Responsibility for issues relating to the contents of the Order has been delegated to the portfolio of the Minister for**

Environment, Planning and Countryside. The policies supporting the Order are consistent with the Government strategic framework for the sustainable control of bovine tuberculosis in Great Britain and with the guiding principles set out in that framework. The aim of UK Government policy, and that of the devolved administrations, is to slow down and prevent the geographic spread of bovine TB to areas currently free of the disease, and achieve a sustained reduction in disease incidence in cattle in high incidence areas. There are no issues of regularity or propriety.

**Carwyn Jones AM**  
**Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**