



WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER

Bovine Tuberculosis - the increasing risk in Norfolk and what can be done about it...

With the current high cost of store cattle, many Norfolk farms are understandably looking further afield to source replacements. In recent months, however, we've already seen the consequences of this: two of our clients have been contacted to say that an animal they purchased had been in contact with a TB reactor - triggering additional testing, restrictions and a great deal of stress. We want to highlight the risks of buying cattle from higher TB risk areas and what it can mean for your business.

Why buying from higher-risk areas increases your TB risk

Areas outside Norfolk, particularly parts of the West and South West, have much higher levels of bovine TB. Even if an animal passes a pre-movement test, it may still:

- Be in the early stages of infection
- Have been exposed shortly before testing
- Have been part of a herd where TB later breaks down

This means that risk can follow the animal onto your farm - even when all the correct legal testing has been done.

What happens if one of your animals is linked to a TB reactor?

If an animal you've bought is later found to have been in contact with a reactor:

- The animal in question will be placed under movement restrictions. It is possible that your whole herd may also be placed under movement restrictions
- The in-contact animal will require further testing, but you could be required to carry out additional whole-herd TB tests



- Cattle sales and movements can be delayed
- It creates stress, extra labour and business uncertainty
- There is a real risk of a full herd breakdown

Even if no reactors are found, the disruption alone can be costly, time consuming and frustrating.

The Hidden Costs

While cheaper stores can look attractive on paper, the true cost may include:

- Extra testing and vet visits
- Lost sales opportunities
- Cashflow disruption
- Time and emotional strain

TB risk isn't just a disease issue - it's a business risk.

How to Reduce Your Risk When Buying Stores

If you are sourcing cattle from outside Norfolk or from higher-risk areas, we strongly recommend:

- Asking about the TB history of the source herd
- Checking when the last breakdown occurred
- Avoiding cattle from herds with recent or frequent TB problems
- Quarantining bought-in cattle for at least 60 days
- Using separate airspace, feed, and water during quarantine
- Testing cattle post-movement where appropriate/as advised

We are very happy to advise before you buy, a quick phone call can prevent months of trouble.

Talk to Us First

If you're considering purchasing stores from higher-risk TB areas, please speak to us before cattle arrive. We can:

- Assess the risk
- Help plan quarantine and testing
- Protect your herd and your business

TB control is about more than ticking boxes - it's about keeping your farm safe long-term. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us on 01328 864444.

