



Biosecurity New Zealand

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

UNDER ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE

Information pack
for farmers

Version: January 2020



**This pack will be updated as information changes.
Please check if this is the latest version.**

For further copies:

This publication is available on Biosecurity New Zealand's website at
www.biosecurity.govt.nz/bovis

Or contact:

Email: **Mbovis2017_Liaison@mpi.govt.nz**

Telephone: 0800 00 83 33

More contact information is available at the end of this document.

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Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the information in this publication is accurate, the Ministry for Primary Industries does not accept any responsibility or liability for error of fact, omission, interpretation or opinion that may be present, nor for the consequences of any decisions based on this information.

Introduction

Your property has been placed under Active Surveillance as part of the Programme currently underway to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis* (*M. bovis*) from New Zealand.

This pack explains what it means to be under Active Surveillance and what is likely to happen next, as well as information about the wider *M. bovis* Programme.

Being under Active Surveillance does not mean you have done anything wrong. Farmers in this position are in it through no fault of their own. We all need to work together to eradicate this bacteria.

The main thing you should do at this point is continue with business as normally as possible.

We know this situation may be difficult and stressful for you and your family and your staff, and we want you to be fully informed about the process that will be occurring. There is a wide range of support available. Please see the sections '**Support available**' and '**Contact details**'.

Stay informed

Join the mailing list for weekly updates on the *M. bovis* Programme
Email mbovis2017_liaison@mpi.govt.nz and ask to be signed up.

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Under Active Surveillance

What is Active Surveillance?

Active Surveillance is a phase in the eradication programme within which farms with a low risk of having been exposed to *M. bovis* are required to undergo testing to ensure that there is no infection in their cattle. The risk is so low that the farms do not need to be placed under movement restrictions, however testing is necessary to ensure that there is no infection within these management groups.

The management groups (mobs) of cattle that might have been exposed will be tested to determine their disease status.

Note, that a farm under 'Active Surveillance' is different to an 'Active Confirmed Property', which is a farm that has been found to be infected with *M. bovis* and is under a number of strict legal controls.

When are farms placed under Active Surveillance?

A farm is placed under Active Surveillance if the risk of *M. bovis* infection in cattle is low.

For example the farm:

1. **sent cattle to a farm which later became infected**
2. **neighbours an infected farm**
3. **received cattle from an infected farm before we believe that farm was infected.**

A very small number of farms placed under Active Surveillance are found to be infected.

Testing carried out under Active Surveillance

Blood samples will be taken from cattle at risk of infection.

All cattle tested must be identified with a NAIT approved RFID tag.

If each group of cattle tested contains a minimum of 40 cattle, only one negative round of testing is required to determine that *M. bovis* infection is absent.

If all groups test negative then testing and Active Surveillance on your property will end.

Groups of cattle of fewer than 40 animals require two consecutive negative rounds of testing for the Programme to determine the absence of *M. bovis* infection in those groups.

Blood samples collected from farms under Active Surveillance are tested using the ELISA test. More information about the tests used to detect *M. bovis* is in the section '**Testing for *Mycoplasma bovis***'.

If your circumstances change (e.g. if a new infection risk, such as an animal movement is associated with your farm) your farm may re-enter the *M. bovis* Programme and testing may be carried out again in the future.

What happens if the tests are negative?

The management groups tested will be determined to be free of disease, and testing will be completed.

While testing under Active Surveillance can often be completed in just one round, sometimes a second or third round may be necessary.

What happens if tests indicate *M. bovis* may be present?

If testing detects possible *M. bovis* in your cattle, the cattle will be placed under a Notice of Direction while further testing is done.

You will be assigned an ICP Manager to work with you through this process.

How will I find out the results of testing?

Results can take several weeks under some circumstances. Our Active Surveillance Liaison team will contact you with the results of each round of testing and discuss any future action needed.

You will also receive written confirmation of your test results.

Access to a dedicated Liaison team

All farms under Active Surveillance have access to a dedicated liaison team in the Programme's national office. You can call them on **(04) 831 2197** or email:

Mbovis2017_ASL@mpi.govt.nz

Mustering costs

We can help cover the cost of mustering stock for testing if it is going to cause a disruption to business as usual operations on your farm.

For more information contact:

Active Surveillance Liaison team **(04) 831 2197**

or email: **Mbovis2017_ASL@mpi.govt.nz**

Animal welfare

Remember that you are always responsible for the welfare of animals under your care. If a farm is placed under Active Surveillance or movement restrictions, your animal welfare responsibilities do not change.

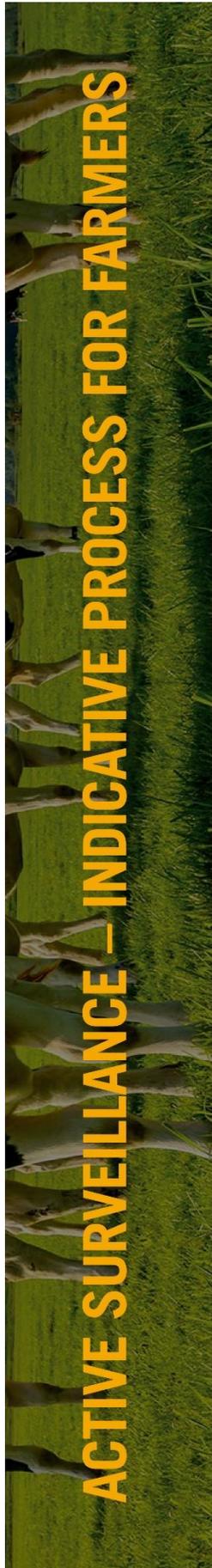
Directions given under the Biosecurity Act 1993 do not override other legislation, such as the Codes of Welfare or Animal Welfare Act 1999 and its associated regulations (2016 Calf Regulations and 2018 reissue Calf Regulations).

Your vet can provide animal welfare advice.

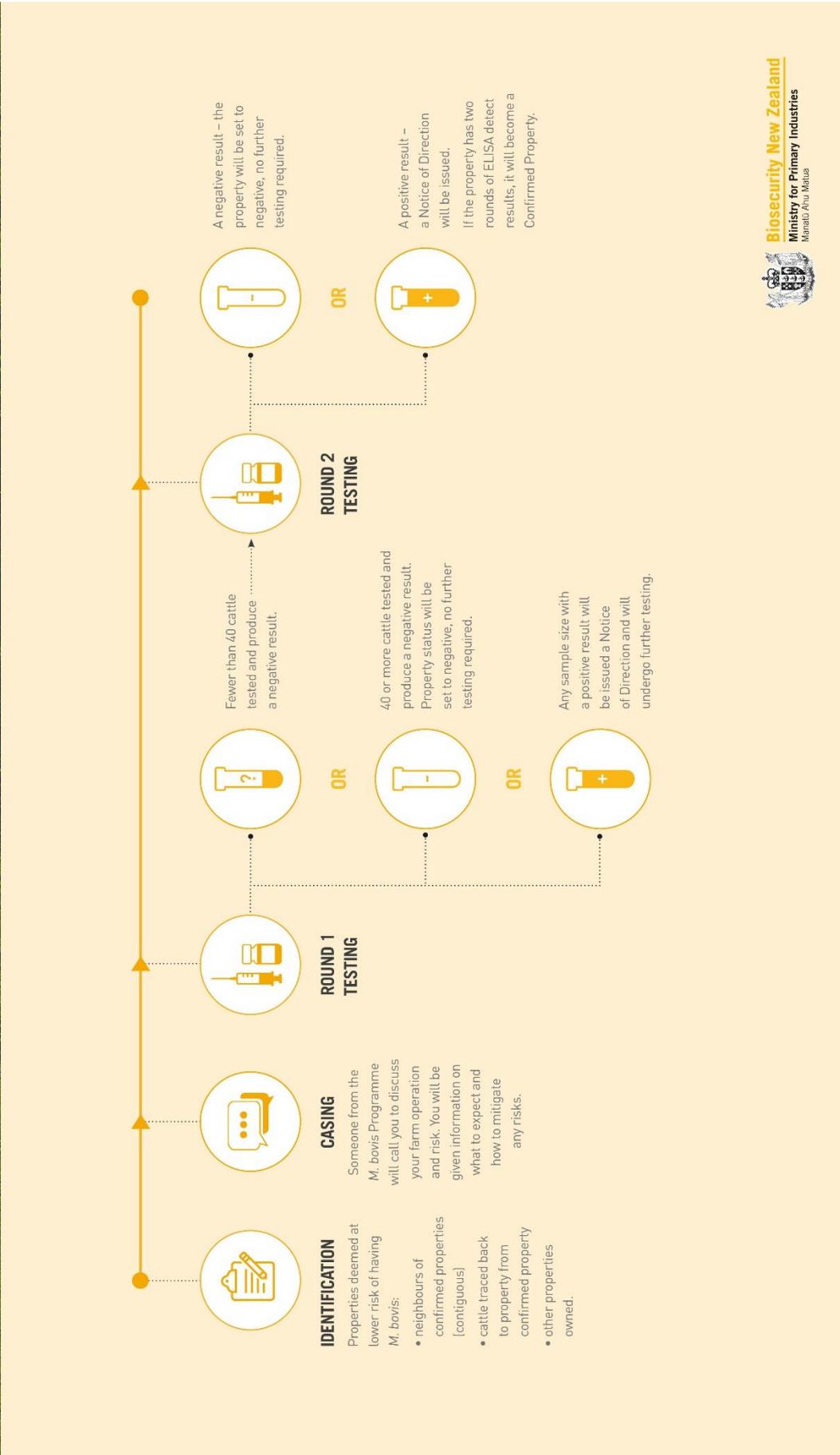
Fit for Transport app

Transporters are also responsible for the welfare of all animals when they are loaded, during transport and when off-loading.

Download the Fit for Transport app for a quick reference guide from The Apple Store or Google Play.



ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE – INDICATIVE PROCESS FOR FARMERS



Glossary

Here are some terms you may hear as part of the *M. bovis* Programme, and what they mean:

Active Confirmed Property	A farm with <i>M. bovis</i> that has a Restricted Place Notice and requires depopulation of the infected cattle.
Notice of Direction (NOD)	A legal control issued under the Biosecurity Act 1993. A farm is placed “under Notice of Direction” when there’s a high risk that it has <i>M. bovis</i> , so cattle and other items can’t be moved off the farm (without a permit) while more testing is carried out.
Restricted Place Notice	The highest level of legal controls applied to a property with <i>M. bovis</i> . It restricts the movements of cattle and risk goods (e.g. milk) on and off the farm.
Trace animal	An animal that’s come out of a herd infected with <i>M. bovis</i> during the risk period of likely infection.
Forward trace	A movement of cattle and risk goods (milk) from a farm with <i>M. bovis</i> within the risk period of likely infection.
Backward trace	A movement of cattle and risk goods (milk) onto a farm before it was infected with <i>M. bovis</i> .
Risk period	The time from when a farm is infected with <i>M. bovis</i> to when movement controls are put in place.
Contiguous property	A farm that neighbours a farm with <i>M. bovis</i>
Incident Control Point (ICP) Manager	A case manager who works with farms under movement controls to oversee <i>M. bovis</i> related activities.
In-contact cattle	Cattle that have direct close contact with trace animals, or animals that consumed milk from a farm with <i>M. bovis</i>
Direct close contact	Sharing the same grazing paddock or pen or rearing in the same facility, such as calves in a calf-rearing shed.
Management group	A group of cattle that have direct close contact, referred to by many in the farming community as a ‘mob’. A management group may or may not be composed of cattle that are similar in age or life stage.

About *Mycoplasma bovis* and its effects

What is *Mycoplasma bovis*?

Mycoplasma bovis (*M. bovis*) is a bacteria that can cause serious health conditions in cattle, including mastitis (udder infection), pneumonia, arthritis, and ill-thrift in calves. Less commonly it can cause progressive neurological disease in calves, conjunctivitis, and reproductive losses.

The infection is:

- **difficult to diagnose in an individual animal** as the bacteria can hide from the immune system within the body, making it hard for cattle to fight off infection
- **often untreatable** – in the majority of cases antibiotic treatment is unsuccessful, and symptomatic animals are culled.

More likely to reveal itself in times of stress

Cattle can be infected with *M. bovis* without showing any signs of disease. During times of stress such as during calving, early lactation, drying-off, transport or exposure to extreme weather conditions, infected cattle are more likely to show signs of infection.

Infected animals may 'shed' (release) bacteria in milk and/or nasal secretions, enabling the bacteria to spread to other cattle.

How *M. bovis* is spread

M. bovis typically spreads between cattle when they are in close contact for a prolonged period of time (i.e. when they are together in a paddock, pen, or milking shed). Usually, infection spreads between farms when infected cattle are brought into a previously uninfected herd.

M. bovis can also be spread to calves that are fed milk from infected cows.

The bacteria may be spread via genetic material containing the bacteria such as semen, but this means of spread is extremely rare compared to spread via the movement of live cattle and milk.

M. bovis is fragile in the environment – it only survives for very short times when exposed to heat, drying and UV light, but can survive longer in cool, moist and dark environments.

Equipment used as part of the milking process has been linked to the spread of infection between cattle on individual farms.

M. bovis is unlikely to survive in grazing areas and areas used in baleage and silage production. The ensiling process creates an acidic environment (approx. pH 4.5) where *M. bovis* bacteria are unlikely to survive. Silage and baleage pose an extremely low risk of spreading *M. bovis* and may be fed as usual or transferred off the farm for sale.

The risk of *M. bovis* spreading via organic material such as soil, effluent, and other feed types is also extremely low.

No food safety risk

M. bovis does not infect humans and is not a food safety risk.

It's not considered a disease of relevance to trade by the World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE) and internationally, there are no regulatory restrictions for meat and dairy products due to *M. bovis*. Infection is common in many food producing nations, and where infected cattle aren't showing signs of infection they are processed for human consumption.

In New Zealand, our laws mean any animals that are very sick, severely injured or have medications in their bodies are not processed for human consumption. All animals are also examined after slaughter to ensure the meat is safe and suitable for consumption.

New to New Zealand

M. bovis was detected in New Zealand for the first time in 2017. A law change in 2018 means *M. bovis* is now listed as an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Clinical signs of Mycoplasma bovis

Cattle

Conjunctivitis

- Sticky eyes, white eyes

Pneumonia

- Hacking cough

Abortions

- Slips, early calves, small calves

Mastitis

- Swollen (rubbery quarters), involves multiple quarters
- Not painful or hot
- Non responsive to treatment
- Affected quarters will rapidly dry off

Lame cows with swollen legs/joints

- Painful and hot

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© Photo courtesy of John House.

Calves / young stock



Ear infections

- Droopy ear
- Ear discharge
- Head tilt



© Photo courtesy of John House.

Conjunctivitis

- Sticky eyes, white eyes



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Lame calves with swollen legs/joints

- Painful and hot



Fading calves

- Inflammation of the joints, and sometimes the brain



© Photo by Fernanda Casillo-Alcala, 2017.

Pneumonia

- Hacking cough



You should contact your vet and MPI as soon as possible if:

- clinical signs consistent with *M. bovis* appear at higher than normal rates
- several animals show signs of *M. bovis* infection
- individual animals show several signs of *M. bovis* infection
- affected animals don't respond to treatment
- multiple classes of stock show signs of *M. bovis* infection (e.g. mastitis in cows and arthritis in calves).

How the eradication programme works

The *M. bovis* Programme is a Government Industry Agreement between MPI, DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand. It is co-funded, governed and operated by these three organisations.

Allowing *M. bovis* to spread would cause an estimated \$1.3 billion in lost productivity over the next ten years. Eradicating it will protect the productivity of the cattle sectors, reduce our reliance on antibiotics and ensure animal welfare.

There has only been one strain of *M. bovis* found in New Zealand, and we are confident that there has been a single incursion in late 2015/16. It is not widespread, and is only transmitted by direct and prolonged contact with infected cattle, or calves drinking infected milk.

The Programme identifies infected herds through on farm testing, and then traces the animals that moved out of that herd before it was put under restrictions. Those animals are culled, and the cattle they have come into contact with are testing to determine if they became infected.

The Programme also uses **Bulk Tank Milk Surveillance** to identify possibly infected dairy farms, which allows us to identify them faster than we could find them by tracing cattle movements.

Programme farm categories

Farms directly involved in the Programme (i.e. those that are subject to Programme surveillance) will fall into one of the following categories:

- under **Active Surveillance**
- under a **Notice of Direction**
- **Active Confirmed Property** (under a Restricted Place Notice)
- **Cleared Confirmed Property.**

Active Surveillance

Farms are placed under Active Surveillance when the risk of infection is low, but testing is necessary to ensure that there is no infection in the cattle on the farm.

These properties require at least one to two rounds of testing. The farms aren't under any movement restrictions and can operate as usual, while testing is carried out.

Farms under a Notice of Direction (NOD)

Where the risk of *M. bovis* infection is considered high, the property will be put under Notice of Direction (NOD).

This includes farms where:

- there are or have been trace animals that have come from an infected herd
- a bulk tank milk 'detect' result has been produced
- a round of Active Surveillance testing was positive.

The NOD stops cattle, milk and equipment that's at risk of spreading *M. bovis* from being moved off the farm (without a permit) while more testing is carried out.

Permits can be sought for culls that are part of business-as-usual on the farm.

Active Confirmed Properties

Active Confirmed Properties are farms that have been confirmed to have *M. bovis* and are under a 'Restricted Place Notice', which stops animal movement and at-risk goods/equipment on and off the affected part of the farm.

All cattle subject to the Restricted Place Notice will be culled.

Depending on the type of farm, it will go through cleaning and disinfection and/or a stand-down period.

Once this has been completed, and movement controls lifted, a farm becomes a 'Cleared property and can be repopulated with replacement cattle.

Cleared Confirmed Properties have had *M. bovis*, and have been depopulated, cleaned and disinfected, and had restrictions lifted.

Testing for *Mycoplasma bovis*

M. bovis is difficult to diagnose in an individual animal, as clinical signs are not seen in all infected animals, and collecting of samples for diagnostic testing is necessary to identify infected animals and groups of animals.

The tests used within the Programme identify infected groups of cattle. To ensure the testing is accurate we test a large number of animals, often multiple times.

The types of test we're using

The tests we use to detect *M. bovis* are the:

- ELISA test (Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay test)
- PCR test (Polymerase Chain Reaction test)

The number and groups of cattle that samples for testing are taken from varies from property to property depending on a number of factors such as the:

- number of cattle on farm
- way in which cattle are organised into groups.
- age of the cattle.
- way the property was identified as being at risk of *M. bovis* infection.

About the ELISA test

The ELISA test detects antibodies to *M. bovis* in blood or milk. In other words, it looks for the immune response to the bacteria, rather than the bacteria itself. An individual animal that returns a positive ELISA test result is referred to as a 'reactor'.

ELISA test results are interpreted across the group of cattle tested, often referred to as herd-level interpretation. If a certain percentage of the cattle tested in a group are 'reactors' the herd-level result is positive.

About the PCR test

The PCR test detects the presence of *M. bovis* DNA in a sample from the animal (e.g. tissue, milk or swabs from tonsils. Excludes blood).

The PCR test is used routinely to test samples from trace animals.

There are challenges in using PCR to determine the infection status of animals and groups of animals. The bacteria is shed from infected animals intermittently, and sometimes at low levels. Samples taken from infected cattle may not contain the bacteria, or sufficient numbers of bacteria, to enable detection. This means a significant proportion of infected animals will test negative in a PCR test.

A positive PCR result does confirm infection as the bacteria has to be present in the animal for it to be present in the sample and be detected by the test.

If any sample from a group of cattle returns a positive PCR result, then the group of cattle is considered infected.

Testing rounds

A 'round' of testing has occurred when the all management groups at risk of infection have been sampled.

It may take up to six weeks to receive the results. Results are initially provided over the phone, and followed up with written confirmation.

1st Round

All management groups at risk of infection will be identified and blood samples taken.

All sampled animals must be identified individually with a NAIT approved RFID ear tag.

A nasal swab will be collected from any trace cattle less than a year old.

All trace animals will be raddled with blue stock paint and tagged with a blue ear tag as they will be sent for slaughter sampling after this round of testing. See **Slaughter Sampling** further on.

Where the ELISA test detects *M. bovis* antibodies present in a group of less than 40 cattle with trace animals present, the group will be sent to slaughter for sampling. See '**Slaughter Sampling**' below.

2nd Round

Round 2 testing needs to take place at least 3 weeks after round 1, and at least two weeks after slaughter sampling, to allow *M. bovis* antibodies to build up.

Properties that require more than one round of testing include those where:

- the ELISA test detects *M. bovis* antibodies present at round 1
- trace animals were present in the group
- the group was less than 40 animals (and round 1 was negative).

All management groups that require a 2nd round of testing will be identified and blood samples taken for ELISA testing.

3 + Rounds

It is uncommon for properties to require more than two rounds to determine their infection status.

Properties that require 3 + rounds include those:

- that disease status has been unable to be determined
- the Programme have identified additional trace animals through the farm census.

All management groups that require further rounds of testing will be identified and blood samples taken for ELISA testing.

Slaughter sampling

Farms under Active Surveillance **will not have known** trace animals on their farm.

Trace animals are considered high risk and will be sampled at slaughter under Section 121 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

After round 1 of sampling all trace animals are sent to slaughter and have a blood sample and tonsillar swab collected. This is an essential element of determining the infection status of a property and removing the risk trace animals present.

Exotic Disease Investigation Report (EDIR)

An EDIR is only conducted on properties with confirmed infection.

Containing detailed information about a farm, an EDIR includes stock location and numbers, farm and animal management, animal movements on and off of the farm, and any previous or current animal health issues or disease investigations.

It is completed for all Confirmed Properties – a veterinarian will ask those who own and/or manage the farm a series of questions about the farm and the way that it operates.

An EDIR is used to determine:

- where *M. bovis* is likely to have spread within a farm
- what animals may require further testing
- if there have been any cattle movements on or off the farm not recorded in NAIT, including movements involving straying stock
- if there have been any milk movements on or off the farm
- the parts of the farm that will need to be subject to a Restricted Place Notice.

Support available

Looking after yourself and your family

The process of being put under Active Surveillance and going through testing and the census can be disruptive for farmers, families and workers.

Support is available so you don't have to go through things alone. Every farm is different and a range of support is available to suit your needs.

Rural Support Trusts (RSTs)

RSTs have trained facilitators who can support you through the issues you're facing.

They can also refer you to experts and services you might need, such as planning and management advice, health information and government agencies.

Call 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)

This line is for support for rural people: farmers, families, farm workers.

For more information see the RST flyer at the back of the pack or visit:

www.mbovis.govt.nz

Managing stress

When times get tough it's important to get a support team around you. Family, friends and trusted advisors will be able to help you. Sometimes it's helpful to seek support, assistance and expertise from someone objective and not so involved in the process.

A free service you can call or text anytime 1737 provides support from a trained counsellor. You can make a one-off anonymous call or if you consider it might be useful to call back another time then request a case number so that they can try to get the same person to save telling your situation again.

If you do find stress levels are beginning to impact on day-to-day quality of life, for example, you're not sleeping, drinking more alcohol, finding it hard to make decisions or family relationships are affected, then talk with your GP or a trusted health professional. They can help you work on improving coping strategies and keeping yourself well.



M. bovis Programme

Your regional Rural Support Trust is on-hand to support farmers being affected by *M. bovis*.

As well as someone to talk to about your concerns, we can also help you navigate through the process, as we have training in and experience with the *M. bovis* programme, and know how it works.

Whatever your experience looks like, we can help in many ways including:

- Trained facilitators who know how the programme works, and the process involved to help you navigate through.
- Listening to your concerns and issues.
- Confidential.
- Phone calls, texts, emails – at a time that suits you.
- Visiting and attending meetings with you.
- One on one support and wrap around support – for you, your family, and your farming team.
- Connecting – if we don't know the answer we will help connect you to people who do.
- Peer support – connecting with other farmers that have been through the process.
- Helping you and your family access counselling services.

Depending on the individual farming operation it can be a lengthy process, involving a number of *M. bovis* Programme teams and RST offers support throughout the process and the ability to help shift things along if they get stuck.

We are rural people, helping rural people – we are farming people who understand the challenges of rural life.

Not sure just call 0800787254, we are here to help. There are Rural Support Trust branches all over the country, by ringing the 0800 number you will be connected to help in your area.

Supporting Our Rural Community



Industry support

If you give us permission to pass on your contact details we can arrange direct support from DairyNZ or Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

Other groups you can talk to include:

- Federated Farmers 0800 327 646
- Rural Women New Zealand 0800 256 467
- Dairy Women's Network 0800 396 748.

Inland Revenue

Inland Revenue (IRD) can provide tax flexibility and other measures to help, depending on your situation. Don't wait until things get out of hand - talk to your accountant as early as possible about this.

Filing and paying – IRD understands that tax isn't the first thing on your mind during a stressful time. Please contact your tax agent with any concerns or questions about filing returns or paying tax. They will work with IRD on any tax concerns.

Working for Families Tax Credits

Working for Families Tax Credits (WfFTC) are payments for families with dependent children aged 18 or under. Find out if you're eligible at www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits or talk to your accountant or RST.

Work and Income (WINZ) – Ministry of Social Development

There is a range of assistance available for people or families whose incomes have been severely affected. Your RST can talk to you about what sort of help WINZ may be able to provide.

You can also visit www.workandincome.govt.nz

or call Work and Income on **0800 559 009**.

For more information about the support available see: www.mbovis.govt.nz

Are you keen to help out?

Call the RST on **0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)** if you want to help support affected farming families in your community.

Top tips for farmers directly involved in the *M. bovis* Programme

As a farmer directly affected by *M. bovis*, the following tips will help you minimise the impact of the Programme's activities on your farm. These tips have been developed with input from farmers, industry representatives.

- 1. Make sure you understand whether what you are being told by Programme staff are suggestions or legal directions. Keep and record the written directions that you are given.**

All legal directions will be given to you in writing, and it's important to keep your copy. It can make claiming compensation easier when there is clear evidence that your losses stemmed from a legal direction given as part of the Programme.

- 2. Read, be confident you understand and fully comply with directions given by MPI/AQ.**

You are legally obligated to meet the restrictions placed on your farm, and they are essential to stopping any possible further spread of *M. bovis*.

- 3. Work with the Programme to get trace animals identified, tested, valued and off to slaughter as soon as possible.**

Your farm can't progress until the trace animals have been processed, and it is important to determine if there is any risk to other farmers.

- 4. Keep your own log book of the details of all conversations with Programme staff including names, dates and times.**

Your ICP Manager will keep a record of every action on your farm. Keeping your own records can help with any future discussions about your situation

- 5. Update and maintain accurate NAIT records and give Programme staff all of the information they ask for. The OSPRI call centre can help you with any issues you have with your NAIT account.**

The Programme needs to know what animals are on your property, and in the worst case scenario, what animals have left it. Getting your records up to date will make the process go faster.

- 6. If your farm is placed under active surveillance keep farming as close to business-as-usual as you can. If in doubt seek clarification from the Programme.**

On the majority of farms tested *M. bovis* is not detected and you are not eligible for compensation as your farm isn't under a direction from MPI.

- 7. If affected by the Programme, use your professional team (i.e. your vet, bank manager, farm consultant etc.) who will understand the need to treat this information confidentially. The *M. bovis* Programme will not contact any third party organisations about your situation without your consent.**

These organisations or people are those that can help you get through some of the challenges you may face.

8. Reach out to friends and family and/or the Rural Support Trust for support.

It's normal to find this stressful and uncertain. Nobody is expected to handle this alone. The Rural Support Trusts are up-to-speed on *M. bovis* and the Programme, and are there to walk you through it. They can put you in touch with other sources of information or support, including financial, health, or technical options or farmers who have already come out the other side.

Share the load, you are not alone, and farmers can get through this together.

Contact details

Query	Contact	Phone	Email/Website
<i>M. bovis</i> enquiries	Active Surveillance Liaison Team	04 83 12 197	Mbovis2017_AS@mpi.govt.nz
General MPI enquiries	MPI Contact Centre	0800 00 83 33	info@mpi.govt.nz www.mpi.govt.nz/bovis
Report clinical signs of <i>M. bovis</i>	Biosecurity New Zealand Pest & Disease Hotline	0800 80 99 66	info@mpi.govt.nz
NAIT enquiries	NAIT	0800 48 24 63	info@nait.co.nz
Industry group enquiries	DairyNZ Beef + Lamb NZ Federated Farmers	0800 43 24 79 69 0800 23 33 52 0800 32 76 46	www.dairynz.co.nz/mbovis www.beeflambnz.com www.fedfarm.org.nz
Human welfare concerns	Rural Support Trust	0800 78 72 54	www.rural-support.org.nz
Income concerns	Work and Income	0800 55 90 09	www.workandincome.govt.nz
Compensation Assistance	DBCAT (DairyNZ & Beef + Lamb NZ Compensation Assistance Team)	0800 322 281	admin@dbcata.co.nz
Compensation: general enquiries	MPI Compensation Team	0800 00 77 77	CompensationCoordinator@mpi.govt.nz