

Bull fertility testing

With calving underway for most Spring calvers, it's time to start thinking about the upcoming service period. For those of you using natural service, it's worth planning ahead to get your bulls fertility tested in plenty of time before service is due to start. That way, any problems can be dealt with to ensure you have a fully capable team of bulls from the start of service. Fertility testing is a quick and economic procedure which includes a full physical exam of the bull, assessment of the scrotum and testes and an internal examination. We then take a sample of semen and use a microscope to check the activity levels and swimming ability of the sperm whilst still on-farm. The sample is then taken back to the lab at the practice for further assessment of the shape and appearance of individual sperm.

Why is it important to perform a bull fertility test?

- To identify a sub-fertile or infertile bull
- To avoid significant economic losses in dairy and beef units
- To promote genetic progression

Contact the office to book in a fertility test or for any queries you may have.

Poultry housing measures lifted

Those of you that keep any poultry will be pleased to hear that as of 1st April the compulsory housing measures have been lifted. The housing measures, which were introduced in December have been a vital tool in protecting flocks across the country from the disease which is circulating in wild birds.

Poultry and captive bird keepers are advised to be vigilant for any signs of disease in their birds and any wild birds and seek prompt advice from us if you have any concerns. You can help prevent avian flu by maintaining good biosecurity on your premises, including:

- Fencing off ponds, streams, boggy areas or standing water and draining them where possible
- Netting or covering ponds
- Removing any wild bird feed sources
- Deterring wild birds by regularly walking through the area or by using predator decoys
- Cleansing and disinfecting concrete or other permeable areas
- Putting down wood shavings in wet areas
- Limit the number of people who come onto the site
- Use disinfectant foot dips when entering and exiting enclosures or houses



Volunteers required for TB in badgers research project

The Animal and Plant Health Agency is conducting a research project to detect the presence and location of TB infection in badgers in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and East Sussex, collectively known as the Southern Edge Area.

The Government is implementing an ambitious and evolving, evidence-based strategy to eradicate TB in England. A key feature of the strategy is the division of the country into three bovine TB risk areas – High Risk, Low Risk and the Edge Area which lies between the two. These risk areas determine the disease control measures used in both cattle and wildlife. Evidence of the presence and location of TB infection in badgers within each area is extremely valuable to inform future policy as the eradication strategy evolves.

Starting in April 2021 and ending in March 2022, the aim is to collect a significant number of fresh, found-dead badger carcasses in these counties. These will then be examined and tested for TB.

How to get involved:

The project is looking for volunteers to help collect badger carcasses. Carcasses will need to be fresh and collected according to a simple protocol that will be provided along with collection kits containing everything you need. Carcasses will then be collected from our premises by a specialist courier and taken to the University of Nottingham. Carcasses will NOT be frozen as part of this project.

They offer a contribution of £25 towards any personal expenses associated with the collection of carcasses. Should you wish to be informed, they will also let you know the TB test result of your collection. Testing will require a minimum of 12 weeks incubation time to provide a TB test result and you will be advised of the positive or negative result after this time.

Please let us know if you are interested in being involved with the project, we will provide you with the kits and any further information you might need.

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