What we are doing

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is carrying out a nationwide surveillance programme to find out if Mycoplasma bovis is present anywhere else in the country. Before any long-term decisions can be made, we need to have a good understanding of where the disease is.

As part of that programme, all dairy companies are assisting with a nation-wide surveillance programme that involves monitoring herds for any Mycoplasma bovis infection by testing milk from mastitis, lame and other sick cows.

From your farm, we need you to collect two pooled milk samples at 14-day intervals from mastitis, lame or otherwise sick cows, but not colostrum cows unless they have been treated for mastitis.

Tools

- **Jug** – for collecting and mixing stripped milk.
- **Labelled orange sample vials** – please check that your supplier number is correct. Note: each sample vial contains a small amount of blue bronopol preservative – like herd-test samples. Blue bronopol can be a mild irritant on mucous membranes so vials should be held away from your face when opening.
- **Polystyrene box with ice pack to keep temperature stable** – freeze or chill the ice pack prior to use.

Taking the samples

**When?**

- On two occasions at 14-day intervals.
- During the last milking before scheduled tanker pick-up (don’t combine from multiple milkings).

**What?**

- A single pooled milk sample from all 4 quarters of mastitis and other sick or lame cows not being milked into the vat.
- If you have no sick cows on your scheduled collection, please still present an empty sample in your polystyrene box.

**How?**

- Three squirts from each quarter into the jug. Milk from all cows in sick cow herd is pooled into the same jug.
- Once all sick or treated cows are sampled, swirl jug and pour into orange sample vial (at least ¾ full).
- Check that your supplier number is correctly recorded on the label and write date on label.
- It’s important that the samples are kept as clean as practically possible, with minimal contamination.
- Place sample in chilly bin with cold or frozen slicker pack.
- Leave sample in polystyrene box by vat outlet for collection by tanker driver. Place a weight (e.g. stone) on the lid.
- Tip out left-over milk and clean the jug ready for the next collection in 14 days.

For any queries contact your Dairy Company Area Manager.