



## MYCOPLASMA BOVIS



### Protect your farm from *Mycoplasma bovis* – managing service bulls

*Mycoplasma bovis* is still a concern for the dairy and beef industries in New Zealand. All known infected herds are under MPI surveillance, including movement controls.

The highest risk for the spread of infection is the movement of infected animals from one herd to another. Bulls who have been in contact with infected cows, and then moved to another herd are a risk for the spread of infection.

#### Testing for *Mycoplasma bovis*

*Mycoplasma bovis* is not an easy disease to test for on an individual animal basis, especially in animals not showing clinical signs. The tests available are designed to either work at a herd level, to show animals are having immune responses to circulating infection in the herd, or on animals actively shedding the bacteria. Animals only shed *Mycoplasma bovis* intermittently, and immune responses to infection vary. Therefore, negative results on a single bull can't be interpreted to mean that that animal is not infected, and a positive result on the herd test does not mean that the bull has *Mycoplasma bovis* either. The best indicator of whether an animal may be infected is the health status of the herd the animal comes from.

#### Interpreting the test results

Animals from dairy herds that have been tested and where infection is not detected can be considered low risk for spread of infection. Herds with test results that indicate evidence of *Mycoplasma bovis* infection will receive directions from MPI on the management and movement of animals, and owners of bulls that have been there will be contacted. Ensuring your animals' NAIT movements are recorded will assist in this situation.

#### Bulls

The recommendations on the reverse of this sheet are provided for the management of disease risks associated with service bulls.

In all cases it is essential that the bulls are properly identified and NAIT records are completed promptly for all movements.

#### Recommendations for management of bulls:

##### 1. Bulls arriving on farm – all ages

Bulls should arrive properly identified and accompanied by details of their movement history. Make sure you let the vendor or agent know that you will be expecting to be provided with these details.



On arrival the bulls should be held separately from the main herd for at least 7 days to enable an assessment to be made of their health status, and for any procedures such as drenching to be completed. If you have any concerns about the health of the bulls, contact your veterinarian before you mix the bulls with the herd.

## 2. Bulls leaving the farm

If the bulls are leased, then talk over the options with the owner.

**R2 bulls** – once mating is finished these bulls should be sent directly to slaughter. It is important that they go from the farm to the slaughter premises directly and not via saleyards or some other intermediate stopping point. If they are being held for further use (mating in autumn 2018, or spring/summer 2018/19) then the recommendations for R1 bulls should be followed.

**R1 bulls** – these bulls may be a risk for the spread of infection. The best indicator of the level of risk from these bulls is the health status of the herd the bulls have been running with. If the bulls are of dairy origin and the herd has been screened via bulk milk and discard milk tests, and the results show *Mycoplasma bovis* infection is not detected, then the risk of these bulls spreading infection is lower than those from a property where test results are unavailable.

If the bulls are from a beef property and *Mycoplasma bovis* test results are unavailable, then the best indicator of the level of risk from these bulls remains the health status of the herd(s) the bulls have been running with – pay particular attention to the herd's levels of mastitis and lameness.

If the test results show evidence of *Mycoplasma bovis* infection MPI will provide direction for the ongoing management or slaughter of any animals leaving the farm, including bulls.

**All dairy and beef farmers must ensure their NAIT records are correct and up to date.**

## If you have any questions about *Mycoplasma bovis*

Call MPI on 0800 00 83 33 or email: [MBovis2017\\_Liaison@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:MBovis2017_Liaison@mpi.govt.nz) or contact your Rural Support Trust on 0800 787 254.



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