



PHASED ERADICATION OF **MYCOPLASMA BOVIS**



What is phased eradication?

The Government and dairy and beef industries have agreed to attempt to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis*. This means we'll try to completely get rid of *Mycoplasma bovis* from New Zealand's dairy and beef herds. It will mean continuing to trace all potentially affected cattle, testing, and then culling those herds with infected animals in them. This will continue until regular surveillance and testing reveals no remaining sign of the disease.

'Phased' means it will take place over a number of years and the culling will be done in cooperation with affected farmers to allow flexibility around the timing to offset production losses. For example, providing biosecurity controls are met, a farmer could milk out a season or a beef operation could finish the cattle before slaughter. We expect to do most of the eradication work in the next one to two years. But it could take up to ten years to complete the testing and checks required to be sure the disease is gone.

How many animals will be slaughtered?

We think some 126 000 cattle will need to be culled over and above the cull of some 26 000 animals underway already. These will be animals from known and future infected farms we discover, and also highly suspect farms – those under Restricted Place Notices. While this sounds like a lot of cattle – to put it in perspective, some 4.2 million are slaughtered annually in New Zealand.

The disease is very difficult to test for and can't be reliably identified at an individual animal level. Seemingly healthy animals can still carry *Mycoplasma bovis* and infect others. Therefore we need to work on a whole-herd basis. If one animal in a herd is infected, it is likely that others are too; so we need to cull the whole herd to control the disease.

Of more than 20 000 beef and dairy farms and lifestyle blocks, we expect around 200 will need to be depopulated.

Why this decision?

This is the best decision to protect the national dairy and beef herds. Getting rid of the disease means there won't be on-going impacts including production loss for farmers and animal welfare issues. It gives everyone certainty for the future.

We believe the disease is still limited to one network of farms that are connected by animal movements, it is not widespread and there is just one strain of the disease out there. Both the animal sector groups and government have reached this decision after intense analysis. If we don't try this now, we won't have another chance.

Support for farmers

We know this is painful for the relatively small number of farmers who have the disease on their farms and who have to lose their herds. We're committed to looking after those that have *Mycoplasma bovis* on their farms. All affected farmers receive their own case manager and help from the Rural Support Trust.

Please look after others in your community. If you or someone you know needs help, please reach out – contact a GP, friends or your other community support services.

(See over for compensation information)



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Compensation

Farmers that are directed to have animals culled or their farm operations restricted under movement controls will be eligible for compensation. The compensation claim process has been accelerated and MPI advises that a substantial part of a farmer's compensation claim for culled cows should now take 4–10 days, with payment of a fully verified claim taking 2–3 weeks.

Claims that are supported with good documentation are able to be processed quickly. In addition, partial payments can be made to help with business continuity and top-ups can be paid to cover any shortfall between the assessed compensation paid for culled animals and any increased replacement cost. MPI has increased the number of staff we have working on compensation to ensure payments are made as quickly as possible.

What is the cost of phased eradication?

The full cost of eradication over 10 years is projected at \$886 million. Of this, \$16 million will be loss of production and borne by farmers, and \$870 million is the cost of the response (including compensation to farmers).

Government will meet 68 percent of this cost and DairyNZ and Beef+Lamb New Zealand will pick up 32 percent.

More information

Full information is at:

- www.mpi.govt.nz/bovis
- www.dairynz.co.nz/mbovis
- www.beeflambnz.com/news-views/topics/M-Bovis

For support, contact your local Rural Support Trust: **call 0800 78 72 54 (0800 RURAL HELP)**.