



Update – Ongoing screening of bulk tank milk

3 February 2020

The *M. bovis* Programme is conducting ongoing nationwide Bulk Tank Milk Surveillance (BTMS) for all supplying dairy farms to help identify any possible outlying infected properties.

A milk sample is taken in the first two weeks of each month and is screened for *M. bovis* using the ELISA test. Farms with a 'detect' result are contacted by *M. bovis* Programme staff and are placed under a Notice of Direction restricting cattle movements out of the supplying herd while on farm sampling takes place. A detect result is not a positive result, and over 95% of farms with a detect result are found to not be infected.

Since the update provided in November 2019, we have confirmed infection on one additional dairy farm first found through the BTMS autumn-winter 2019 screening. This brings the total number of infected dairies identified through the BTMS 2019 screening to eight.

Of the farms with a 'detect' result in spring 2018, 5.3% were confirmed as infected ('the conversion rate'). To date, the conversion rate for autumn-winter and spring 2019 screening is 3.8% and 2.7%. Declining conversion rates are consistent with a reduction in the number of infected dairy farms nationally.

Currently, non-detect results are not communicated to farmers, and dairy companies do not have visibility of test results. An automated system for reporting BTMS non-detect results is being developed. Our goal is for farmers to be able to access results in time for the spring calving period.

The Programme is currently reviewing the outcomes of the 2019 screening in order to further optimise the way that the test results are interpreted in 2020.

The table below is a summary (as at 3 Feb 2020) of the outcomes of bulk tank milk screening for the 2019 autumn-winter and for the ongoing regime.

Screening period	Number of ELISA tests performed	Number of farms screened	Number of farms with a detect result	Number of new farms confirmed as infected
Autumn-Winter 2019	34,033	10,556	157	6
July-December 2019	54,661	11,217	74	2
January 2020	11,108	11,108	14	0