

New research project to help detect *M. bovis*

The fight to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis* from New Zealand has taken another step forward, with the *M. bovis* Programme announcing a new science project that aims to make it easier to detect the cattle disease.

New Zealand-based biotechnology company Pictor has been appointed to undertake research to enhance the antibody (ELISA) detection method, one of two tests used to detect *M. bovis* in cattle.

"The Programme's testing regime is really good for this stage of the eradication programme, but, in 12-18 months, as the prevalence of the disease in the cattle population gets lower and lower, the ability to detect it will get harder and harder. The development of a more sensitive test has the potential to optimise future testing," explains Dr John Roche, Chair of the *M. Bovis* Strategic Science Advisory Group and Chief Science Adviser, Ministry for Primary Industries.

"To provide confidence New Zealand is free of *M. bovis*, background surveillance will continue for some years after the current delimiting stage of the eradication, which is focused on eliminating *M. bovis*."

Dr Roche says science and better diagnostics in particular will play a critical role in accelerating the eradication of *M. bovis* from New Zealand and in preventing another incursion.

The Pictor project is expected to take 14 months to complete, and is the first of several diagnostic projects in the research pipeline.

The *M. bovis* Programme has allocated up to \$30 million for *M. bovis* research projects identified as priorities in the Strategic Science Advisory Group's [Science Plan](#), including the diagnostic research.

About Pictor

Pictor is an Auckland based company (www.Pictordx.com) that has a novel diagnostic technology platform. The platform enables testing for a chosen panel of diseases and/or multiple markers of a single disease, from one small sample.

