

Protect your farm from *Mycoplasma bovis*

- *Mycoplasma bovis* has recently been found on a farming operation in South Canterbury.
- This bacterial disease affects only cattle and can limit production. It poses no food safety or human health risk. It is not a threat to trade.
- The main way it spreads is through close contact between animals. If you have any concerns about your animals, contact your vet as soon as possible for advice or call MPI on 0800 80 99 66.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR ARE:

In dairy and beef cows:

- untreatable mastitis;
- abortions, swollen joints, and lameness (severe arthritis/synovitis) in all ages of cattle.

In calves:

- severe pneumonia, starting as a hacking cough;
- ear infections, the first sign typically being one droopy ear, progressing to ear discharges and in some cases a head tilt;
- conjunctivitis.

ON FARM BIOSECURITY PROTECTION MEASURES

- Nose to nose contact with your neighbours' stock should be prevented as *Mycoplasma bovis* is spread through direct contact between animals. This can be achieved by creating boundary fence buffer zones using electric outrigger fencing or a separate electric fence two metres back from the boundary.
- Thorough farm hygiene can reduce the risk of the disease entering your farm. Make sure that footwear, protective clothing and equipment that has been in contact with animals on other farms is not used on your farm, or is properly cleaned and disinfected before use.
- Second hand milking equipment and other equipment that has been in contact with animals, especially bodily fluids, presents a higher risk of transmission and should be cleaned and disinfected prior to use.
- Vehicles coming on and off your farm should be confined to the tanker track or main access track. Use your own vehicles to transport visitors around your farm.
- Keep tanker tracks as clean zones by not moving stock across the tanker track, or allowing stock to graze the tanker track area. By doing this, any visiting vehicles, including the milk tanker will remain in a clean state.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- This is a two-step process. Disinfectants won't work through dirt, so it is important to remove all visible dirt and dung from gear and vehicles that have been in contact with stock.
- Once items are clean, use a disinfectant. It's best to leave disinfectant on items for a few minutes – ten minutes is best.
- Suitable disinfectants are: 1% Virkon (made by mixing 50g standard sachet Virkon with 5 litres water), 0.2% citric acid (made by mixing 1 tsp of citric acid with 1 litre of water), Trigene, or any appropriate disinfectant used to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Provide a foot bath with disinfectant and a scrubbing brush for visitors to clean their boots when they come on and off the property.
- Have clean hot water and soap available so visitors can effectively clean their hands and any equipment that they need to take off farm (e.g. vet's equipment).

MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS

- Where practical, limit cattle movements onto your farm. *Mycoplasma bovis* can be present in apparently healthy animals and there is currently no pre-movement test that can be applied to detect infection.
- When sourcing animals, seek to understand the health history of the source herd, particularly with respect to mastitis and lameness in cows, and pneumonia and lameness in calves. There is a pre-purchase check list that can help with this. (See MPI and industry body websites).
- Maintain NAIT records and ensure Animal Status Declarations are fully completed and retained. Investigation of the spread of this disease is being assisted by access to good movement records that have been completed and maintained by farmers.

CALF MILK

- Feeding raw milk from infected cows to calves is known to present a high risk of disease spread. Ideally only feed milk from your own farm to your calves and not milk from other farms. Also do not feed milk from cows with mastitis.
- Calf rearers should minimise the number of farms milk is sourced from and consider using powdered milk to completely remove this risk.

ABOUT MYCOPLASMA BOVIS

Moplasma bovis is a bacterium that causes a range of diseases in cattle including mastitis that doesn't respond to treatment, arthritis, pneumonia and late-term abortion.

Mycoplasma bovis is mainly spread by direct contact between infected animals and on equipment that has been used on infected animals, e.g. used for milking, artificial insemination, veterinary procedures. It spreads through bodily fluids including mucus and vaginal secretions. It is not thought to be transmitted in urine or faeces. It is not windborne or spread in water. It is a relatively slow-moving disease.

Until now we have not had *Mycoplasma bovis* in New Zealand, no tests are commercially available, and it is not routinely tested for here.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

DairyNZ website: <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/cow-health/mycoplasma-bovis/>

Beef + Lamb New Zealand Drystock Biosecurity Guidelines: <http://www.beeflambnz.com/news-events/media-releases/2013/june/drystock-biosecurity-guidelines-released/>

www.mpi.govt.nz

www.nzva.org.nz

