**TB testing: How the October 2014 Regulation and testing changes affect camelid owners**

Since 2008 owners with camelids suspected of TB at post mortem have been asked by AHVLA to sign a form of agreement to allow testing of their herds using the skin test and the StatPak blood test. In return for a non-statutory payment of £750 per animal owners agreed to surrender any TB reactors.

The industry-funded research into TB blood tests led Defra to revise its testing approach – using two blood tests primed by the skin test was found to be better than a single blood test.

Earlier this year Defra consulted on new camelid regulations and used that opportunity to explain to the industry the changes it proposed to make to testing (which don’t need to be underpinned by new regulations)

The key changes brought about by the regulations on 1 October are:

- Making the £750 payment statutory means APHA (formerly AHVLA) inspectors can enter premises test, camelids and remove any TB reactors;
- Owners must get the prior agreement of APHA for any private testing of their camelids and report the results;
- Vaccinating camelids against TB is banned; and TB therapeutic treatments require the written consent of APHA.

**Testing** of camelids for disease control purposes can be grouped into 3 scenarios:

(i) If TB is strongly suspected because for example lesions are present:

- APHA will serve precautionary movement restrictions pending culture results – see (ii); and
- With owner’s consent arrange an initial tuberculin skin check test.

(ii) If TB in the herd is confirmed by culture; and also for any tracings by APHA from herds with confirmed *M. bovis* APHA will:

- Put in place herd movement restrictions;
- All the owner’s herd will be given a single (bovine tuberculin only) intradermal skin test. For non-reactors this will be followed 10-30 days later by two blood tests\(^1\) (at Government expense);
- A TB reaction to any of these tests will lead to the animal being removed.
- For APHA to lift movement restrictions the whole herd must test negative to at least one round of skin and dual blood tests.

(iii) Where *M. bovis* infection is suspected but not confirmed for example the herd is contiguous to, co-located with or back-traced from an infected domestic farmed herd, APHA testing arrangements will be as follows:

- A comparative skin test followed for test negative animals by a four antigen Enferplex blood test (at owner’s expense) or the dual blood test (at Government expense).
- A TB reaction to all of the blood tests will lead to the animal being removed and the herd being placed under movement restrictions – see above.

\(^1\) The StatPak/IDEXX combination will be used and DPP will replace StatPak in due course. Where these tests are negative APHA may consider requests from owners to have their animals tested using Enferplex – at their own expense.