

£500,000 funding for innovative research to diagnose TB in cattle faster

Ground-breaking scientific research aimed at detecting tuberculosis in cattle (bTB) will take place after five projects were awarded a combined investment of £500,000, the government has announced today (Friday 28 August).

bTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. More than 30,000 cattle are slaughtered each year due to bTB and cattle diagnostics are one of a range of tools that will help the country eradicate the disease in England by 2038 as we shift away from badger culling.

The programme, run by Defra on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales, will fund innovative research projects using cutting-edge technologies such as machine learning aimed at detecting infection in cattle herds faster.

Five schemes, led by various leading research institutes, have been selected to receive up to £100,000 each for up to 12 months for proof of concept research.

UK Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Richard Irvine said:

Bovine TB leads to the slaughter of over 30,000 cattle every year and considerable trauma for farmers as they suffer the loss of highly prized animals and valued herds.

This investment, which we hope will enable infection to be diagnosed and acted upon more quickly in the future, underlines the government's commitment to invest in world-leading scientific research in our battle to tackle this insidious disease.

Christianne Glossop, CVO for Wales, said:

We are pleased to work alongside colleagues across the UK in introducing this new diagnostics programme, which will help give farmers across Wales and the UK the confidence that instances of TB will be identified early, allowing farmers and relevant authorities to respond accordingly and limiting the spread of the disease.

The rapid, early identification of infection is a cornerstone of our eradication programme. We look forward to viewing the results of the project once new diagnostic methods are in place.

These research proposals will use a range of new concepts and technologies which aim to detect TB infections in cattle, including:

- machine learning for improved interpretation of the bTB skin test
- rapid and increased sensitivity test to determine bTB status
- mass spectrometry profiling of non-invasive cattle samples (mainly saliva or nasal fluids), to accurately detect bTB at early infection stage
- mid-infrared spectroscopy of milk samples as a rapid and accurate non-invasive tool for monitoring the bTB status in a herd
- identifying novel diagnostics antigens to underpin a future test for Detecting Infected amongst Vaccinated Animals (DIVA)

Alongside this, the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) research to speed up the diagnosis of TB in cattle and other livestock will soon be put into practice. From next year we expect to be able to use a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, which can identify bTB in post-mortem tissue samples significantly faster than traditional methods, and produce results with seven days rather than the usual two months.

The test should be ready for routine use at APHA laboratories from early 2021, initially on suspected lesions of TB detected at routine slaughter of cattle, and from non-bovine animals. This will bring benefits to affected animal keepers by reducing the time taken to determine whether TB is present in a sample and, if the PCR results are negative, lift the herd movement restrictions much sooner than under the current protocols.

The [government's response to an independent review of its 25 year bTB strategy](#), led by Professor Sir Charles Godfray, set out plans to phase out intensive culling in the next few years, and outlined the need for a combined approach which includes improved testing, alongside other measures such as badger and cattle vaccination to eradicate the disease in England by 2038.

In July, it was announced that [APHA had been given the green light for trials of a new cattle vaccine](#) and DIVA (Differentiating Infected amongst Vaccinated) skin test thanks to world-leading research from government scientists. We are now preparing to start field trials for these tools in 2021.

Defra has today published a report on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales which highlights the financial impact of TB on our beef and dairy sectors. The [report](#) shows the cost of a TB breakdown directly borne by cattle farms varies significantly, with a median value of around £6,600 across all farms in the survey. Across England and Wales median costs for herds of more than 300 cattle are around £18,600 whilst those for herds up to 50 cattle are around £1,700. Median costs for chronic breakdowns over 273 days are around £16,000.

The latest statistics on bTB in England show the overall number of new herd incidents of the disease is down by 10% in the last year (to May 2020), with a 15% reduction in the number of herds not officially free of the disease due to an incident. [Full details of these statistics are available here](#).

The latest statistics on bTB in Wales show the overall number of new herd incidents of the disease is down by 10% in the last year (to May 2020), with a 11% reduction in the number of herds not officially free of the disease due to an incident. [Full details of these statistics are available here](#).

Foreign Secretary statement on Prime Minister Abe stepping down

Press release

The Foreign Secretary has paid tribute to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I was sorry to learn that Shinzo Abe is stepping down as Prime Minister, and I pay tribute to the great things he has achieved as Japan's longest serving leader.

He leaves a strengthened UK-Japanese friendship, which we look forward to continuing in the years ahead. I wish him well for the future.

Further information

Published 28 August 2020

Family Public Law Reform: National rollout of digital care and supervision applications resumes in September

News story

The new online service to process care and supervision applications will resume its national roll out from 14 September 2020 to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.



The new online service to process care and supervision applications will resume its national roll out from 14 September 2020.

The service allows local authorities and legal representatives to create and manage care and supervision applications under Part 4 of the Children Act 1989, or an Emergency Protection Order under section 44 of the Children Act 1989 online. It was paused in March due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Since then, the project team has been improving performance of the service in time for national roll out, which will follow a phased approach with an initial 8 court sites with others to follow.

The new service will improve the progression of cases to support the best outcome for the most vulnerable children by:

- allowing local authorities to create new digital applications for care supervision and Emergency Protection Orders
- enabling cases to be progressed by the court, legal professionals, local authorities and judiciary in a timely manner
- giving legal professionals, including parents' solicitors and Cafcass the ability to access cases digitally and view tasks that need to be completed before a hearing
- allowing court users to see the status of their case and to progress it

online

- enabling court users to upload and access documents and evidence digitally
- enables documents and evidence to be added to case and court bundles which can be uploaded, annotated, presented in court and used in the hearings.

Family Public Law will transition into Court and Tribunal Service Centres as the roll out progresses. This means support for some administrative tasks relating to case management will move to a central function. Local courts will continue to carry out tasks such as listing and will also continue to support the offline process as they currently do now.

For more information about the family courts [read the latest blog by Adam Lennon – Responding to a global pandemic within the family courts](#).

[More information on Justice Reform and Family Public Law](#)

Published 28 August 2020

[Illegal waste activities targeted in Chelmsford, Essex](#)

Press release

Essex residents are being urged to get rid of their waste properly after around 8 houses-worth of rubbish was discovered illegally dumped in Chelmsford.



The mountain of waste was uncovered when enforcement officers and police swooped on a suspected illegal waste site last Wednesday (19 August 2020).

Officers from the [Environment Agency](#), [Essex Police](#), [Chelmsford City Council](#) and [Braintree District Council](#) were acting on intelligence when they visited

the site.

Mountain of waste

The rubbish they discovered included plastics, metals, glass, paper and textiles.

Householders and business have a legal duty to ensure they give their waste only to those legitimately registered to handle it. If they don't, they could be held responsible for where it ends up.

To check whether a waste carrier is legal, people can ask to see the carrier's licence and check it [online](#) or by contacting the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.

Lesley Robertson, Environment Agency enforcement team leader, said:

Waste crime undermines legitimate business, can cause harm to the environment and misery for local people.

We are continuing to work with our enforcement partners to disrupt illegal waste activities and remain committed to the closure of illegal waste sites.

We urge anyone with information about waste crime, or who suspects illegal waste activities are taking place to contact our hotline 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, either on 0800 555 111 or their website [crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

PC Nigel Wright from Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team, said:

We are happy to provide support during these operations. Fly-tipping is not only unpleasant to look at, it can also be a danger to local residents and wildlife. We would encourage anyone who has information on this to please report it as we can only help if we know about it.

Waste crime crackdown

The Environment Agency is cracking down on serious and organised waste crime and taking tough action to deal with criminal behaviour. It is working with the police and other enforcement agencies to put waste criminals out of business and take back the profits of their crimes.

Waste crime is estimated to cost the UK economy £600 million every year. It can pose a serious risk to the environment and people's health, and make life a misery for local people.

[The influence of family on prisoners during parole – CEO blog](#)

The Parole Board is all too aware of the distress felt by the families of prisoners going through a parole review. When a person is sent to prison, it is not just the prisoner who serves the sentence – their families serve it alongside them, often describing it as “the hidden sentence”.

For the families of people serving indeterminate life or IPP sentences, the challenges and stresses can be severe. Any such prisoner cannot be released unless the Parole Board deems it no longer necessary for the protection of the public that they remain confined.

Whilst our sole focus is risk. I am aware that, a parole review can be an anxious period for families as they await the decision which will determine their loved one’s freedom and future. This is compounded by a common misconceptions and lack of understanding of how parole works among many people in society.

It is therefore my responsibility as Chief Executive of the Parole Board to do everything in my power to increase the understanding of how we work and the transparency of our processes and decision making for the general public, victims, prisoners and their families.

We have just announced the publication of a new information leaflet, entitled Information for family and friends of prisoners having a parole review. I hope this booklet will provide a useful go-to document for anyone wishing to support someone in prison going through parole.

The in-depth, but easy to understand, booklet takes families and friends through the entire parole process, who is involved, what happens and how it works. It also gives guidance on how to find a solicitor, how a loved one might attend a parole oral hearing and also provides sign-posts to information and services that may offer other support and advice, for example helplines, information about licences and further reading about the parole process.

There is also a section for family members of friends who may want to write something to the Parole Board in support of the prisoner and how best to do this. The booklet explains licence conditions, what they mean, how they will affect a newly released prisoner and how to support them in abiding by the conditions.

The uncertainty of the situation can make it difficult to manage the feelings

of hopelessness that can sometimes arise. We explain in the leaflet that IPP prisoners can ask the Parole Board to consider terminating the licence completely after ten years from when they were first released from prison. Many prisoners may not be aware of this avenue and so we provide clear advice in the booklet on how to make such an application.

I am grateful to Dr Anna Kotova for bringing the creative work of Dr Pen Mendonça to the Board's attention. Pen's eye catching and creative graphics have provided visually striking artwork for the booklet and some insightful thoughts that illustrate the very real struggles families of people in prison face. I would like to thank Lucy Gampell, a Parole Board member for over ten years, whose expertise and experience was vital in the creation of the leaflet.

The research drew on two areas: the IPP sentence and the fact that over 2000 prisoners are still serving the sentence, as well as the role of families in rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders.