



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Oxfordshire Bovine TB Cluster Project: North-West Oxfordshire Cluster Newsletter

Issue 5 (October 2023)

Welcome back to our newsletter for farmers, vets and interested parties who live or work in the **North-West Oxfordshire** cluster area of **Defra's Oxfordshire Bovine TB Cluster Project**. This newsletter will keep you informed about the project and provide you with information on opportunities to get involved in - and benefit from - the planned activities. We will also provide you with general information on bovine TB (bTB) control.

Background and project aim

To find out more about the project, including our aims and initiatives, please take a look at the dedicated **Oxfordshire Bovine TB Cluster Pilot** page on the **TB Hub**: <https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/oxfordshire-bovine-tb-cluster-pilot/>.

bTB in wild deer – free training at Cornbury Park



The steering group is working hard to lead initiatives and respond to local stakeholders' concerns relating to bTB. A concern that has been raised is the potential increase in wild deer numbers. Wild deer have the potential to transmit *M. bovis*, but most deer populations in England are generally believed to behave as spillover hosts of infection from cattle or badgers. It is important that people controlling deer are aware of the signs of bTB

infection and how to report them.

The steering group has developed a plan to support local farmers to better understand this issue, upskill local stakeholders and improve the reporting of suspicion of bTB in wild deer.

The group are **offering free training days** for anyone involved in deer management within the cluster area to learn how to **identify and report visible signs that might be indicative of bTB in wild deer**.

These will take place at **Cornbury park** on 1 November (9am – 12pm and 1pm – 4pm) and will be led by Kit Heawood of Tyndale Deer Vets. The sessions are **free of charge** and funded by the Oxfordshire bTB Cluster Project. Future additional dates are planned.

The steering group wishes to encourage you to get involved and **support your local community in understanding bovine TB**. To book a place please contact: oxfordshirecluster.project@defra.gov.uk.

Reporting suspicion bTB in wild deer

Reporting suspicion of bTB in animals such as wild deer is legal obligation. The steering group are working on initiatives to help raise awareness of the importance of reporting these cases, as well as making it as easy as possible to do so.

Defra would like to assure you that in the High Risk and Edge Areas of England (including all of Oxfordshire) confirmation of bTB infection in wild animals will not lead to TB testing changes for cattle herds on the land where the animal was found or neighbouring ground.

The information gathered by APHA during this reporting process is important. The confirmation of bTB in wild deer can be valuable information used to guide herd management and biosecurity decisions by local cattle keepers. More information about bTB and wild deer can be found on the following information sheet on the TB Hub: <https://tbhub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/APHA-information-sheet-TB-in-wild-deer.pdf>.

Wildlife cameras

Do you want to find out what wildlife you have on farm so you can tailor your biosecurity measures in practical, cost-effective ways by targeting areas of concern?

Please contact us at the oxfordshirecluster.project@defra.gov.uk email or contact Amy Brant at Hook Norton vets directly to **borrow the project's wildlife cameras for free**. If you need advice on set up or interpreting the information, please do get in touch.

Stay in touch: sign up to our mailing lists

Email oxfordshirecluster.project@defra.gov.uk to receive project updates including our monthly newsletters direct to your inbox or share your mobile number to receive **text alerts** about upcoming events.

Useful links

- **TB Hub:** is a one-stop shop for all things TB. It has latest advice on biosecurity, TB testing regimes and types of tests, as well as how whole genome sequencing works. Details can be found at: [TB hub - Bovine TB Advice & Tuberculosis Information for Cattle Farmers](https://tbhub.co.uk). (<https://tbhub.co.uk>)
- **ibTB:** Information bTB (ibTB) is a free-to-access, online interactive mapping tool set up to help cattle farmers and vets understand the level of bovine TB in their local area and manage the risks when purchasing cattle. Details can be found at: [ibTB - Mapping bovine TB \(bTB\) in England and Wales](https://www.ibtb.co.uk/) (<https://www.ibtb.co.uk/>)