

# Brucellosis

## A reminder for all Cattle farmers

### Brucellosis in Great Britain

Brucellosis was eradicated from cattle herds in Great Britain in 1979; since then it has been reintroduced on several occasions by imported cattle. In 2003, brucellosis was confirmed in four cattle herds in Scotland and most recently in March 2004 it was confirmed in a beef suckler herd in Cornwall.

The brucellosis surveillance strategy in Great Britain includes:

- Monthly bulk milk testing of dairy herds
- Blood testing of beef breeding herds every two years
- Post import checks
- Post calving checks of imported cattle
- Investigation of cattle abortions

A feature of Brucellosis is that it cannot always be detected by blood testing until around the time an infected animal calves or aborts ('slips the calf'). Testing soon after abortion or calving, therefore has a greater chance of picking up infection at an early stage, especially in beef herds where the milk cannot be routinely tested.

### Reporting abortions and early calvings

The law requires cattle keepers to report every abortion or premature calving to an appropriate officer (a Veterinary Inspector) as required by Article 10 of the Brucellosis (England) Order 2000, Brucellosis (Scotland) Order 2000 and its equivalent in Wales. An abortion or premature calving is defined as "an abortion or calving which takes place less than 271 days after service, or 265 days after implantation or transfer of an embryo, whether the calf is born dead or alive".



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



In the first instance you must report any bovine abortion or premature calving to the duty Veterinary Officer at your Divisional Animal Health Office of Defra/SEERAD. He or she will ascertain if an abortion investigation is required. In the case of dairy cows that are contributing to a regular monthly bulk milk sample that is tested for brucellosis, an abortion investigation may not be required. In all other cases an abortion investigation will be required. In most cases the investigation will be carried out by your private veterinary surgeon who will be instructed by the Divisional Veterinary Manager to carry out the investigation. The cost of an abortion investigation for Brucellosis is met by Defra: your private veterinary surgeon will not charge you unless you require an additional private investigation.

## Notify normal calvings in imported cattle

As a further safeguard, Defra/SEERAD will take additional samples from all normal calvings from imported cattle. If you have purchased imported cattle you should notify your local Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) of the date when an imported cow or heifer calves for the first time in Great Britain. This information should be provided on the first working day after calving, so that a post calving blood test of the dam can be arranged.

### Remember:

Notify the DVM of all abortions and early calvings.

As a further safeguard, Defra/SEERAD will take additional samples from imported cattle after their first calving in Great Britain.

**Further copies of this leaflet are available, free of charge from:**

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