# Handbook

## for
## CHeCS bTB
## Herd Status Accreditation
## programme

# Contents

# Summary

Cattle farmers who take a proactive approach to controlling bovine TB (bTB) will soon have the opportunity to be recognised for this, and to market their animals as being at ‘lower risk’ of contracting or passing on the disease.

From November 2016, ‘CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation’, a voluntary programme, will be available through participating cattle CheCS-accredited Health Schemes for those adopting good biosecurity measures and working with their herd vet to minimise the risk of bTB.

As well as reducing risk of infection, the programme could present risk-based trading opportunities. In particular, there could be benefits for farmers selling cattle from regions with a high risk of the disease or who wish to minimise exposure from bought-in animals, or those who would simply like recognition for their efforts to complement Government and industry strategies to control infection.

# About CHeCS

Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS) is a non-trading organisation established in 1999 by the cattle industry to control and eradicate a number of diseases using a set of standards to which all licensed cattle Health Schemes must adhere.

This means CHeCS itself is not a cattle Health Scheme. It is the regulatory body for cattle Health Schemes. CHeCS is a stamp of approval and a quality mark signifying that the Health Scheme has conformed to an industry standard and to ISO 17025 (general requirements for the competence to carry out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling). These standards ensure that herd health status on one scheme is equivalent to that of all other schemes in the UK and Ireland. Close collaboration by CHeCS with other countries ensures that the CHeCS licensed cattle Health Schemes are as good as any in the world.

In 2004, only around 1% of UK herds were in a CHeCS scheme. By 2007 this was 4.4% of cattle farmers, and by 2012, almost 14,000 herds were in some form of monitoring, control and eradication under a CHeCS-accredited scheme; this represents around 14% of cattle holdings. Currently, about 60% of CHeCS scheme participants are beef herds and 40% are dairy herds.

The diseases CHeCS has covered until now are BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis, Johne’s Disease and Neospora. For all of these the Health Scheme will work with the farmer and his/her herd vet as the required control regime is implemented, with samples being taken and tested, the results fed back and appropriate action taken. The herd vet is an implicit part of CHeCS schemes and the CHeCS standards include a strong focus on farm biosecurity and quarantine procedures, with the vet certifying annually that these have been implemented.

# About bovine TB (bTB)

Bovine Tuberculosis is a contagious chronic, progressive, wasting condition that affects cattle and other animals. It is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*. *M. bovis* is shed in bodily secretions, especially respiratory secretions. It can be carried by a number of species but the main wildlife reservoir in the UK is the badger. *M. bovis* is infectious to humans and caused a high number of deaths in the UK prior to the introduction of pasteurisation of milk and meat inspection procedures.

Tests carried out on livestock by either skin test or blood sampling are very valuable in diagnosing and managing bTB at herd level. If a herd repeatedly tests negative for the disease the herd can be categorised as likely to be free of bTB. Research has shown that a herd has to have tested clear for 10 years to provide the highest level of confidence that latent (hidden) infection is not present.

Because of the difficulties with testing and the organism being maintained within a wildlife reservoir, eradication is more difficult compared with some of the other diseases in the cattle health schemes. Herds in parts of the country where *M. bovis* infection is endemic in wildlife may be exposed to a higher background level of 'environmental' infection compared with herds in non-endemic bTB areas where risk arises primarily from cattle movements.

A simple test and cull programme is not sufficient to maintain freedom from infection. This must be supplemented by measures to ensure that stock with undisclosed infection are not introduced into herds and implementing measures to limit contact with infected wildlife, particularly badgers.

Vaccination programmes for both badgers and cattle may have a role to play in disease control. There is a licensed vaccine for use in badgers ('Badger BCG'; Veterinary Laboratories Agency, UK) but administration requires the cage trapping and vaccination of badgers by licensed individuals. At the time of writing there is no licensed cattle vaccine. BCG-based vaccines do not provide complete protection against infection.

In England, a joint industry action plan has recently been developed to reduce herd susceptibility to bTB, as part of the TB strategy for England published in April 2014, which aims to see bTB eradicated by 2038. In Wales, The Welsh Government also has a long-term goal of eradicating bovine TB and The Scottish Government has a strategy to maintain its Officially TB-Free (OTF status). Risk-Based Trading for bTB was introduced on a voluntary basis in 2013, encouraging cattle sellers to disclose information about pre-movement testing and dates of last bTB breakdown.

More information about bTB can be found at [www.tbhub.co.uk](http://www.tbhub.co.uk).

## Background to this programme

The Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA), which runs the statutory bTB testing and control regime nationally, has investigated the benefits of awarding a risk status for each holding in the UK based mainly on location and last breakdown. However, biosecurity measures, management of added and animals and level of collaboration with the herd vet in controlling the disease also affect the risk of a bTB breakdown, and APHA recognises these aspects also ideally form part of a risk assessment.

This is where CHeCS has a role to play. Good biosecurity practice is central to the other CHeCS disease reduction programmes, as is a planned approach to disease reduction through the herd vet. With risk already being used in other disease programmes, CHeCS is well-placed to provide the framework for a programme that recognises and rewards more on-farm efforts to reduce risk of a breakdown. For this reason, the APHA risk proposals have been put on hold to allow a CHeCS-run voluntary proposal time to work.

This CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme is based on the findings of researcher Amie Adkins in 2015, when she examined the risk of a herd contracting bTB. She found that after a herd breakdown, the longer a herd went without a further breakdown, the lower the risk they had of contracting bTB, up until year 10. After this point, the time since the last breakdown had no impact on likelihood of suffering another.

Also in 2015, APHA sought to identify origins of infection and routes of entry for bTB on to farms. It found that 36% of breakdowns in Edge areas were from purchased cattle, and 45% were from local exposure; it is estimated the figure in High Risk areas is likely to be similar. In Low Risk areas, 70% of breakdowns were from purchased cattle. In summary, indirect contact is important and likely the main route for infection in High Risk and Edge areas; if indirect routes can be identified & addressed, there is more opportunity to prevent infection through targeted biosecurity.

This is the basis of the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme. It is anticipated that while it will not appeal to or be relevant to all cattle owners, a number could find it beneficial:

- Farmers within high risk areas with low-risk holdings who sell livestock and want their status to be acknowledged
- Farmers in lower/lowest risk areas who are selling livestock and want to ‘accredit’ their low risk status
- Farmers buying in livestock who want to minimise the exposure of their herd to bTB infection
- Farmer members of CHeCS schemes who would like to include bTB in the diseases they are controlling proactively
- Farmers who wish to complement Government and industry efforts to control infection

## How CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation works

Working with a CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme (list available from www.checs.co.uk) and their herd vet, beef and dairy herds may improve from 0 up to 10, depending on implementation of general CHeCS requirements, specific preventative measures taken, and progress made in controlling bTB. Homebred animals marketed from these herds can then be sold with that status.

CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation works differently from other CHeCS-accredited schemes which handle diseases such as BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR, because APHA co-ordinates a centralised statutory testing regime. So rather than testing animals themselves, the Health Schemes, with the agreement of the famers, will access test results data direct from APHA.

To move up through the scores within the programme, herds must be operating with a CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme and be deemed to be implementing CHeCS standards. As well as this, the herd needs to avoid bTB breakdowns – not always possible, but helped by applying CHeCS guidelines and observing the supplementary quarantine and testing requirements.

Some farmers may choose to test animals and conduct some form of other independent risk assessment outside of the mandatory requirements of this programme. These herds will remain 'unclassified' and will constitute the highest risk of being a source of bTB-infected stock <u>for the purposes of this programme.</u>

## Definition of the different CHeCS scores

Statutory routine bTB testing is completed at intervals set by the national bTB disease control programme (see links at end of document) and may be subject to changes according to regional or local disease prevalence and incidence. Accreditation scores for herds in the CHeCS scheme are set according to the number of years that the herd has been Officially bTB Free, up to 10 years, as seen in the examples below.

**<u>Score 10</u>**

- The herd is Officially bTB-Free (OTF) and there has not been a bTB breakdown within the herd for at least 10 years.
- Any required statutory herd tests have been completed in accordance with the required testing regime for this herd (in some cases this could be none).
- The herd is operating within a CHeCS-accredited health scheme and is deemed to be adhering to CHeCS standards.

**<u>Score 9</u>**

- The herd is OTF and there has not been a bTB breakdown within the herd for at least nine years.
- All statutory herd tests have been completed in accordance with the required testing regime for this herd.
- The herd is operating within a CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme and is deemed to be adhering to CHeCS standards.

**Score 8**

- The herd is OTF and there has not been a bTB breakdown within the herd for at least eight years.
- All statutory herd tests have been completed in accordance with the required testing regime for this herd.
- The herd is operating within a CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme and is deemed to be adhering to CHeCS standards.

There will be a score corresponding to each number of years since the herd regained OTF status after a breakdown (see additional notes) down to:

**Score 0**

- The herd must be OTF.
- There has been a bTB breakdown within the herd in the past year
- All statutory herd tests have been completed in accordance with the required testing regime for this herd.
- The herd is operating within a CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme and is deemed to be adhering to CHeCS standards.

**Additional notes**

- All scores require a health plan covering the control of bTB in place and quarantine facilities as a general requirement of CHeCS standards.
- A bTB breakdown within the herd is deemed to have occurred when a test positive animal has been disclosed at any private or statutory TB test conducted on the herd, or a culture positive slaughterhouse case has been found in an animal originating from the herd.
- However, disclosure of a test positive animal that is in quarantine, or a culture positive slaughterhouse case has been found in an animal originating from quarantine, <u>does not constitute a bTB breakdown under CHeCS rules.</u>
- All cattle herds are classed as Officially bTB Free (OTF) if their bTB tests are up-to-date and there is no suspicion of bTB infection. To calculate the number of years since the last bTB breakdown (if applicable), the date that TB2 restrictions were lifted at the end of the last bTB breakdown (TB10 issue date) is used.

# Rules for CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme

These instructions are mandatory for participating herds.

**Biosecurity**

Guidance on biosecurity for bTB control can be found at [www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity](www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity). Herd owners, managers and Veterinary Surgeons participating in a cattle health scheme must be familiar with this advice and should seek to achieve the standards set.

**Testing**

All appropriate animals must be presented for testing when requested and the facilities for testing must be such that the test can be accurately and safely completed. All animals must be identifiable by their ear tags or by electronic ID.

Any animal that tests positive for bTB by skin test, bTB gamma interferon test, or has bTB lesions at post mortem or a positive *M. bovis* culture is a positive animal. Any animal that tests positive or inconclusive for bTB must be placed in isolation and retained there until culled or, in the case of an inconclusive reactor, re-tested clear. Milk from these animals must not be fed to calves. If a test-positive animal is identified in a herd through statutory or private testing, the herd will immediately lose its bTB Herd Status Accreditation and only regain 0 once no longer under restriction. The same applies if a test-positive animal is identified in a herd through post-movement testing – unless it is confirmed that CHeCS standards (biosecurity and quarantine measures) have been sufficiently observed to allow the herd to retain its original bTB Herd Status Accreditation once no longer under restriction.

**Added Animals**

These animals always constitute a risk of introducing infection into the herd. Unless an animal to be introduced into the herd has resided since birth in a low-incidence area (the four-yearly testing area in England, or in Scotland), it must be subjected to a pre-movement skin test at the holding of origin within 60 days of the proposed introduction.

Post-movement skin testing of added animals is compulsory for members of the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation Programme unless the animals have resided since birth in a CHeCS score 10 herd where there is no statutory requirement to pre-movement test. The post movement test will be conducted between 60 and 120 days after arrival.

Pre- and post-movement testing is carried out at the cost of the keeper, unless the period happens to coincide with a statutory test.

On entry to the herd it is recommended that all added animals are placed in quarantine and the general CHeCS rules above on isolation and testing apply. Observing these rules means that in the case of a test-positive, the animal will not affect the herd CHeCS bTB Herd Status once the herd is no longer under restriction.

It is not compulsory for the added animals to be kept in quarantine until the post-movement skin test has been conducted. However, if the added animal then fails the bTB test outside of quarantine, the herd will be deemed to have suffered a breakdown and the herd will drop to accreditation CHeCS bTB Herd Status 0 once no longer under restriction.

All post-movement testing must be conducted by the veterinary practice responsible for monitoring the CHeCS standards on the farm. The veterinary surgeon concerned can then certify that the test was conducted in quarantine and that CHeCS standards are being maintained.

In England, if desired, it may be possible with permission from APHA for the added animals to be tested using the gamma interferon test (as a private test, paid for by the keeper) whilst in quarantine. The post-movement skin test would still be required for animals that were subjected to pre-movement testing, but a negative gamma interferon test would give the keeper additional reassurance to facilitate earlier introduction of those animals into the herd without risking his/her CHeCS bTB Herd Status.

Here is a summary guide to pre- and post-movement test requirements:

| Originating from a… | Having a CHeCS bTB Herd Status of… | Moving to an area which … | Pre-movement testing by seller | Post-movement testing by buyer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Six-monthly or annual testing area | None/ not applicable | Tests six-monthly or annually | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly or is OTF | ✓ | ✓ |
| | 0-10 | Tests six-monthly or annually | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly or is OTF | ✓ | ✓ |
| Four-yearly area but not OTF (Officially TB-Free) | None/ not applicable | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | ✓ |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | ✓* | ✓ |
| | 0-9 | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | ✓ |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | ✓* | ✓ |
| | 10 | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | ✓* | ✓* |
| OTF (Scotland) | None/ not applicable | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | ✓ |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | | ✓ |
| | 0-9 | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | ✓ |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | ✓ |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | | ✓ |
| | 10 | Tests six-monthly or annually | † | |
| | | Tests four-yearly | † | |
| | | Is OTF (Scotland) | | |

Key: ✓ = statutory testing requirement; ✓= CHeCS testing requirement;
✓*= statutory pre-movement testing required unless the animal has spent its whole life in a four-yearly test or OTF area; † = CHeCS pre-movement testing unless the animal has resided since birth in a low-incidence area (four-yearly test or Scotland).
✓*= CHeCS post-movement testing required if the animal has had statutory pre-movement testing.

## Selling animals that have been purchased from another herd

CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation scores only apply to homebred animals and cannot be used when selling other animals. Hence CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation can only be used for the first sale; after that, the animal must be sold as 'no status'.

## Shows and Sales

Animals attending shows and sales will run the risk of contracting bTB even when all animals attending the show or sale have been pre-movement tested. Certain agricultural shows have been assessed as lower risk by APHA and therefore are deemed to be exempt from the pre-movement testing requirement – in these cases, CHeCS will follow the statutory requirements for pre-and post-movement testing, as can be found on www.tbhub.co.uk. Animals returning to the herd from shows and sales that have not been deemed to be exempt from pre-movement testing by APHA shall be regarded as being the same as added animals that required pre-movement testing and, as such, will require post-movement testing between 60 to 120 days after the last show. If the animal owner wishes to safeguard his/her herd's CHeCS bTB Herd Status, animals returning to the herd should be kept in isolation until they are tested.

## Accreditation of herd for scores 0 to 10

The date the herd first achieved a particular status of accreditation will be included on the Certificate of Accreditation. Should a herd, having reached a particular status, fail to meet the standard and lose its status, but subsequently regain its original status, the date on the certificate will be when that status was regained.

If an added animal tests positive whilst in quarantine the whole of the holding is subject to restriction in line with statutory requirements. CHeCS bTB Herd Status is suspended until a TB10 notice is issued to lift herd restrictions. If during the consequent tests no test-positive animals are found outside of quarantine, the herd will be restored to its previous CHeCS bTB Herd Status. This will require certification by the veterinary surgeon that the test-positive animals were only found in the quarantine facility and that quarantine was maintained.

If the quarantine facility is on a separate holding (ie, has a separate CPHH) then the main holding will be unaffected by the statutory restrictions and its CHeCS bTB Herd Status will be maintained. APHA may however require that the whole herd undergoes a check test after veterinary risk assessment.

If a suspected slaughterhouse case is found the CHeCS bTB Herd Status shall be suspended until that case is confirmed to be negative by culture.

## Definition of a clear test

In accordance with statutory testing, for a herd test to be clear all animals eligible to be tested must be test-negative. Any animal with an inconclusive result must have further testing carried out with negative results to demonstrate it is not a test positive animal. Until all animals have achieved a negative result the CHeCS bTB Herd Status of the herd must be decreed as unknown.

**Offspring of female test-positive animals**

Any calf under twelve months old that has been reared by a cow recognised as a test-positive must be subjected to a skin test after a suitable interval if this has not already taken place as part of the herd test. To maintain the CHeCS bTB Herd Status, the calf should be kept in isolation until it has tested clear. The clear test must be at least 60 days after weaning.

**Health Plan**

A health plan covering the control of bTB must be in place as part of the requirements for the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation Programme. It must be updated annually and signed off by both the herd's veterinary surgeon and by the herd owner or manager. The health plan must be available to the health scheme provider on request. The health plan must cover the mandatory control elements listed in the guidelines. The herd's veterinary surgeon must detail in writing within the health plan why any particular guideline has not been followed.

**Grazing of cattle**

In a High Risk or Edge area, cattle must not be grazed on pasture previously grazed by non-accredited cattle until a period of two months has elapsed. The same grazing restrictions apply to accredited cattle if slurry or manure collected from non-accredited cattle has been used on the pasture.

**Farm boundaries**

Farm boundaries must prevent cattle from straying off or onto the farm and must prevent nose to nose contact with cattle of a lower health status over fences or walls. Installation of double fencing, or use of an equivalent boundary to provide a gap of 3 metres between scheme cattle and any neighbouring cattle of a lower or unknown health status, is essential where farms are in a High Risk or Edge area. It is a useful standard to adopt for all areas.

**Failure to adhere to mandatory requirements**

Should a herd fail to adhere to any of the control elements then it will immediately lose its CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation. Furthermore, failure to provide a current and signed-off health plan within one week of it being requested by the health scheme provider will result in the immediate suspension of their CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation.

**Re-accreditation**

Herds that have lost their status can only regain their previous status following all mandatory requirements being satisfied and after the next herd test.

# Q&A

<u>**About the programme**</u>

**Is the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme voluntary or compulsory?**
The CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme is voluntary. If you join, while you have to meet the requirements of the scheme, it is your choice whether you declare your risk status at any point, for example when selling cattle. You do, however, need to continue meeting statutory requirements.

**Is it associated with proposed APHA risk level scoring?**
No, that was a different plan which has been placed on hold. This is a different, voluntary, industry-run programme.

**How do I join?**
You apply to one of the participating Health Schemes listed on the CHeCS website (www.checs.co.uk). You will be asked to fill out a form and sign a data agreement that allows the Health Scheme to let APHA know you are now a member, and allows APHA to send your test history and any new data to the Health Scheme to allow it to allocate a bTB Herd Status score. <u>For more information on the process of joining and the way a starting bTB Herd Status is allocated, please see Appendix 1.</u>

<u>**How the CHeCS programme works alongside Government testing**</u>

**How similar are the programme requirements to statutory control measures?**
Statutory control measures are legal measures that must be observed, irrespective of membership of the CHeCS programme. However, the CHeCS programme adds extra measures to reduce risk of exposure to bTB and introduction of infection into the herd. Observing these measures presents a lower risk, which is then reflected in an improved Herd Status score. The main differences between statutory measures and CHeCS requirements is the increased level of pre- or post-movement testing and the added biosecurity.

**Who does the bTB testing in CHeCS-accredited herds?**
APHA continues to run the statutory testing programme and Defra and the Welsh Government will continue to pay for it. Pre- and post-movement bTB testing will be carried out, as now, by the herd vet at the cost of the seller and buyer respectively.

**Will CHeCS scores have any impact on action APHA takes?**
It has been indicated that Government is committed to rewarding good quarantine and biosecurity – it has not yet been confirmed what form this will take.

**Where does CHeCS get its information?**
When a farmer from Scotland, England or Wales joins the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme through one of the participating CHeCS-accredited Health Schemes, with their permission, their details will be notified to the centralised database held by Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and a ‘flag’ will be placed against their record. This means that any change to that record regarding testing, restrictions, breakdowns or clear tests will be notified to the CHeCS-accredited Health Scheme.

**Is this creating another database of bTB information?**
No – the Health Schemes will continue to keep their own records and are simply being notified of test results from the APHA/Defra database as they happen.

**Is there any difference between the CHeCS data and APHA's statutory data?**
No, the data is the same but how it's treated is different. To CHeCS, a breakdown in vet-certified quarantine is unlikely to count as a herd breakdown, so CHeCS would use the TB10 data from when the last breakdown not in quarantine occurred to create a bTB Herd Status score. However, the APHA records would still identify a breakdown.

**Where will CHeCS get my bTB test data from?**
CHeCS will use a data agreement with the farmer to be able to access his/her APHA test results.

## Risk-Based Trading

**Will current Risk Based Trading information be the same as CHeCS information?**
Risk Based Trading information asks for the cattle seller to disclose pre-movement test information and details of the last statutory test and last herd breakdown. CHeCS provides similar information but combines into a single bTB Herd Status score. It recognises the difference between breakdowns <u>on the holding</u> for an added animal held in quarantine, and <u>breakdowns within the actual herd</u>.

## Legal situation

**What are the legal obligations around the programme?**
Bovine TB is subject to statutory measures. This means there are legal obligations around the testing, notification and control of bTB. The CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme does not replace these but uses data supplied by APHA to help allocate Herd Status scores which incentivise good practice and reward participation. While CHeCS-accredited Health Schemes will work with APHA data to ensure the process is accurate, cattle owners have an obligation to use the latest certificates awarded and not misrepresent their bTB Herd Status, as enforced under the Sales of Goods Act and Trading Standards.

## Biosecurity

**What are the requirements to check biosecurity?**
The herd vet must make an annual declaration that the farmer is abiding by the mandatory biosecurity measures required by the programme. For example, where stock risk physical contact with cattle owned by another keeper, it should be ensured there is a gap of at least 3 metres between the animals to prevent contact. Certifying these requirements have been met may require additional time, but if the vet and the farmer have already been working together to combat bTB, these aspects may already be known and just require certification.

**What are the biosecurity measures?**
Various requirements are laid out in the programme rules (see earlier sections) but farmers and vets are also recommended to follow the guidelines at [www.tbhub/biosecurity](www.tbhub/biosecurity).

## Pre- and Post-movement testing

**As part of the programme, will all animals being traded have to be pre-movement tested?**
All animals to be introduced into a CHeCS herd must be subjected to a pre-movement skin test by the seller at the holding of origin within 60 days of the proposed introduction – unless they have resided, since birth, in a low-incidence area (the four-yearly testing area in England, or in Scotland). While this is a CHeCS requirement, it is also a statutory requirement for a farmer in Scotland buying from the four-yearly testing areas of England. There is already a statutory requirement to pre-movement test, within 60 days before sale, any animals moving off a holding within the six-monthly or annual testing areas into a four-yearly testing area.

**Does this mean that as a farmer in the CHeCS programme, I can't buy an animal unless it's been pre-movement tested?**
You can buy an animal that's not been pre-movement testing as long as it has resided, since birth, in a low-incidence area (the four-yearly testing area in England, or in Scotland).

**Will I have to post-movement test all purchased animals?**
Post-movement skin testing of added animals is compulsory for members of the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme unless the animals have resided since birth in a CHeCS score 10 herd where there is no statutory requirement to pre-movement test. Again, quarantine measures and post-movement testing are also recommended for these, but not required.

## Other questions about testing

**Can I gamma-interferon test my animals to help me manage risk?**
In England you can request a gamma-interferon test to be carried out privately as this may help you make management decisions, such as whether a bought-in animal can be released early from isolation/quarantine before it has its skin test. However, it's important to note that all results will be notified to APHA and a positive test will signify an official breakdown. Also, the test cannot be used on its own to maintain or regain OTF status for any herds. Private gamma testing is not available in Scotland or Wales.

**Who can carry out gamma interferon testing?**
The private vet (Delivery Partner) can carry out the private gamma-interferon testing but they must request permission from APHA. Individual Health Schemes may apply to be providers as well. Please check with your Health Scheme.

**What happens in the case of an inconclusive skin test result?**
If you have an Inconclusive Reactor in a skin test, your CHeCS status will be suspended until the animal has been re-tested. If the Inconclusive Reactor is clear at re-test, your CHeCS status will revert to its previous score. If the animal has a second inconclusive reaction it will be regarded as a reactor and a breakdown will be deemed to have occurred. Your CheCS status would then be 0 once you are OTF again.

## Certification

### How does the certification process work?

Once a farmer has joined the programme, the Health Scheme will award a certificate depending on the test information received back from APHA and declaration from your local vet that you are compliant with the mandatory elements of the CHeCS scheme. If the herd is currently under restriction (ie, not OTF at that time), it will not be possible to receive a bTB Herd Status score until the herd becomes OTF again. The starting bTB Herd Status score will depend on the 10-year test data received from APHA.

### How often does the certificate or bTB Herd Status get reviewed?

The certificate will be reviewed and updated every year unless there is a notification between times of a breakdown, which will trigger a suspension of the bTB Herd Status then a review once the herd is OTF again.

### Can the farmer request his/her bTB Herd Status is reviewed, for example if the herd the requirements of a lower bTB Herd Status during the year?

Yes, the farmer can request this and, if his/her claim is valid, receive an updated certificate, which will then be renewed annually from that point. For more detail on the processes for updating certificates, please see Appendix 2.

## Costs

### How much will extra testing cost?

All CHeCS programmes carry extra testing requirements as this is needed to gain certification. The cost of doing this will vary depending on your vet but needs to be balanced against reduced risk of breakdown and potential added-value of a lower risk status

### How can costs of extra testing be minimised?

Costs can be reduced by combining testing with vet herd visits or statutory testing, and average cost per animal reduced by testing more animals at the same time to dilute the cost of the herd visit. It might also be useful to combine this with other CHeCS disease control programmes as similar quarantine and biosecurity measures apply to all, and some vet costs can be defrayed by dealing with more than one disease at a time.

### How much does it cost to join the bTB Herd Status Accreditation Scheme?

Each Health Scheme will charge slightly differently, but as the information is being handled on a herd rather than individual animal basis, you are likely to have a very modest single annual charge.

## Who can join and who will it benefit?

### As a cattle rearer selling stores, can I join the programme?

Yes you can but it should be noted that bought-in animals that you subsequently sell will not be sold with your herd's bTB Herd Status score. Only homebred animals will be sold with your herd's bTB Herd Status score. This is in line with the CHeCS accreditation schemes for other diseases.

**If some of my animals are bought in and some homebred, how does that affect the status of my farm?**
Your farm status is unaffected by this but only homebred animals can be sold with your herd's bTB Herd Status score.

**<u>Buying and selling animals</u>**

**What is the process for selling animals?**
As a member of the scheme, you will receive a certificate declaring your score. This is valid for 12 months unless a breakdown occurs, after which a new certificate will be issued. You can also request your bTB Herd Status is reviewed at any point in the year if you think you may have moved into a different risk bracket. At sale, if you wish to use your CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation, you will take your current certificate to the auction mart or show it to the seller in a direct sale. Only homebred animals will be sold with your herd's bTB Herd Status score. This is in line with the CHeCS accreditation schemes for other diseases.

**What is the process for buying animals?**
If the person selling the animals is a member of the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme (voluntary) and wishes to announce the bTB Herd Status of his/her holding at the point of the sale (also voluntary), the information should be communicated in the same way a BVD or other disease status is communicated, either verbally or on a display board. However, the bTB Herd Status of the herd the animal has come from does not transfer to your herd, and the animal cannot be sold on again under the CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation programme. Only homebred animals will be sold with your herd's bTB Herd Status score. This is in line with the CHeCS accreditation schemes for other diseases.

**Can I apply my herd score to bought-in animals when I come to sell them, especially if I am buying in animals from a lower risk herd?**
No, animals can only have a CHeCS bTB Herd Status score used at their first sale; after that they cannot be awarded a score, irrespective of the farm they are being kept on or if they have been on CHeCS holdings at all times.

**Can individual animals each have a score?**
No. Individual scoring would be too complex. Homebred animals would be awarded your risk score; bought-in animals would fall outside the scheme and would not have a score.

**What happens if animals I buy get mixed with other animals on the same lorry?**
It is advised you seek to ensure that animals destined for other farms aren't on the same lorry.

**Will the bTB Herd Status of an animal be affected by being in an auction mart?**
No because the status belongs to the herd and not the individual animal.

**What about animals being sold in batched lots in the auction ring?**
A CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accredited farm would be advised to batch homebred animals together so that they can be sold with the same risk status, as bought-in animals can't acquire a herd's risk status at sale. There is also an option to not declare the risk status if preferred.

**Could my CHeCS bTB Herd Status score of the farm I'm buying from be shown automatically at the mart?**
It may be possible in the future if a current plan called the Livestock Hub becomes mainstream. It will aim to collate data from a number of different databases on a daily basis so that disease status and bTB Herd Status among other things can be communicated automatically. Otherwise, you should request the status be declared by the auctioneer.

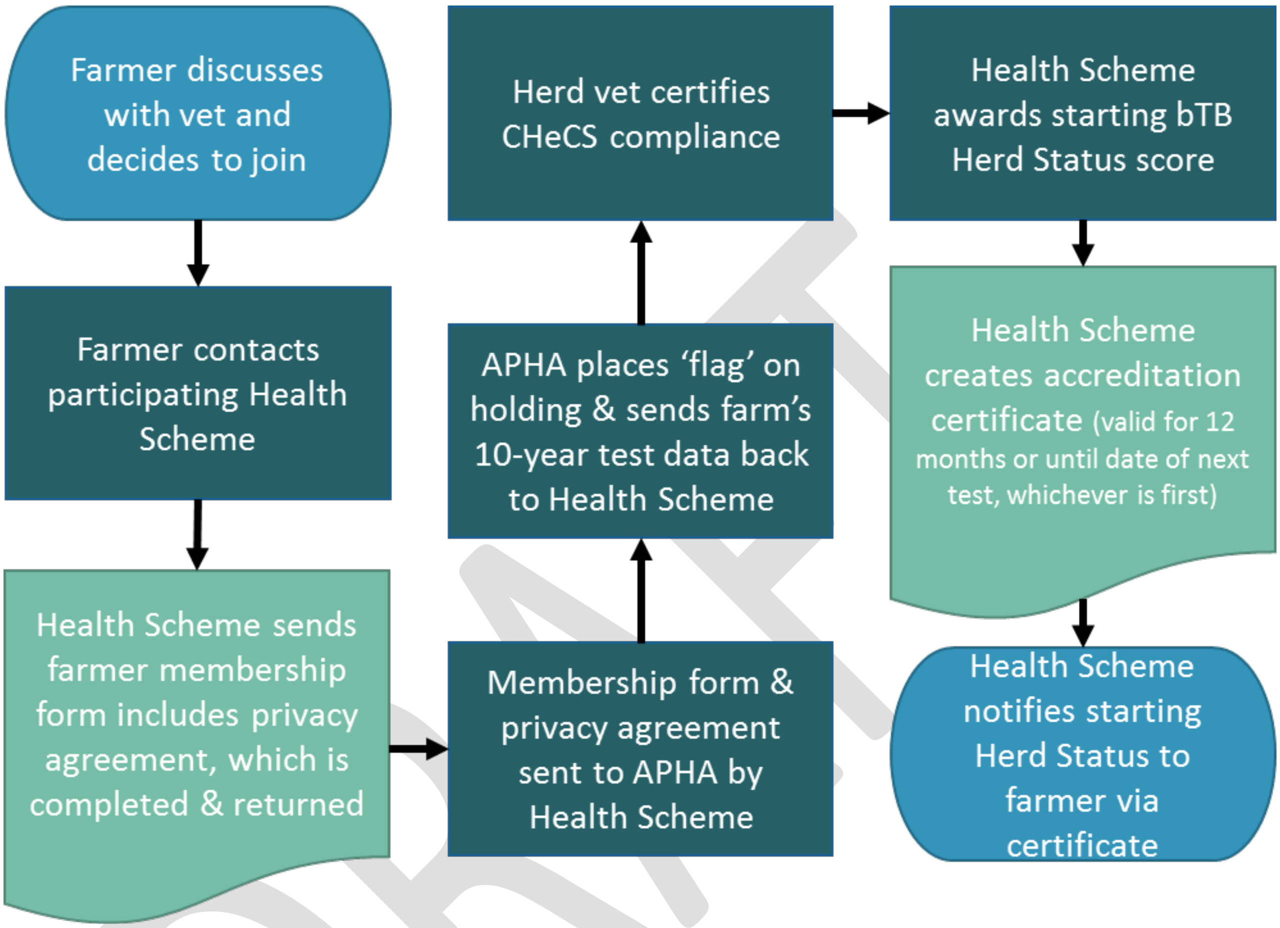
**If my last breakdown has been within the last year, I will have a score of 0. Is it worth declaring that?**
It is your choice – a score 0 animal is still a lower risk than unclassified animals. This does not necessarily mean that unclassified animals are going to have or transmit bTB – in fact they may be very low risk for other reasons. It just means that as there is no third-party verification that they practice good biosecurity and quarantine measures, they cannot be awarded a lower risk status by CHeCS standards. So a 0 score should provide an advantage.

**How do I make sure the score of an animal I buy is correct?**
It's declared by the seller and the seller is required to use the latest certificate he/she has received from his/her Health Scheme, which will declare the correct status. If this is misrepresented, the seller will be in breach of Sales of Goods Act.

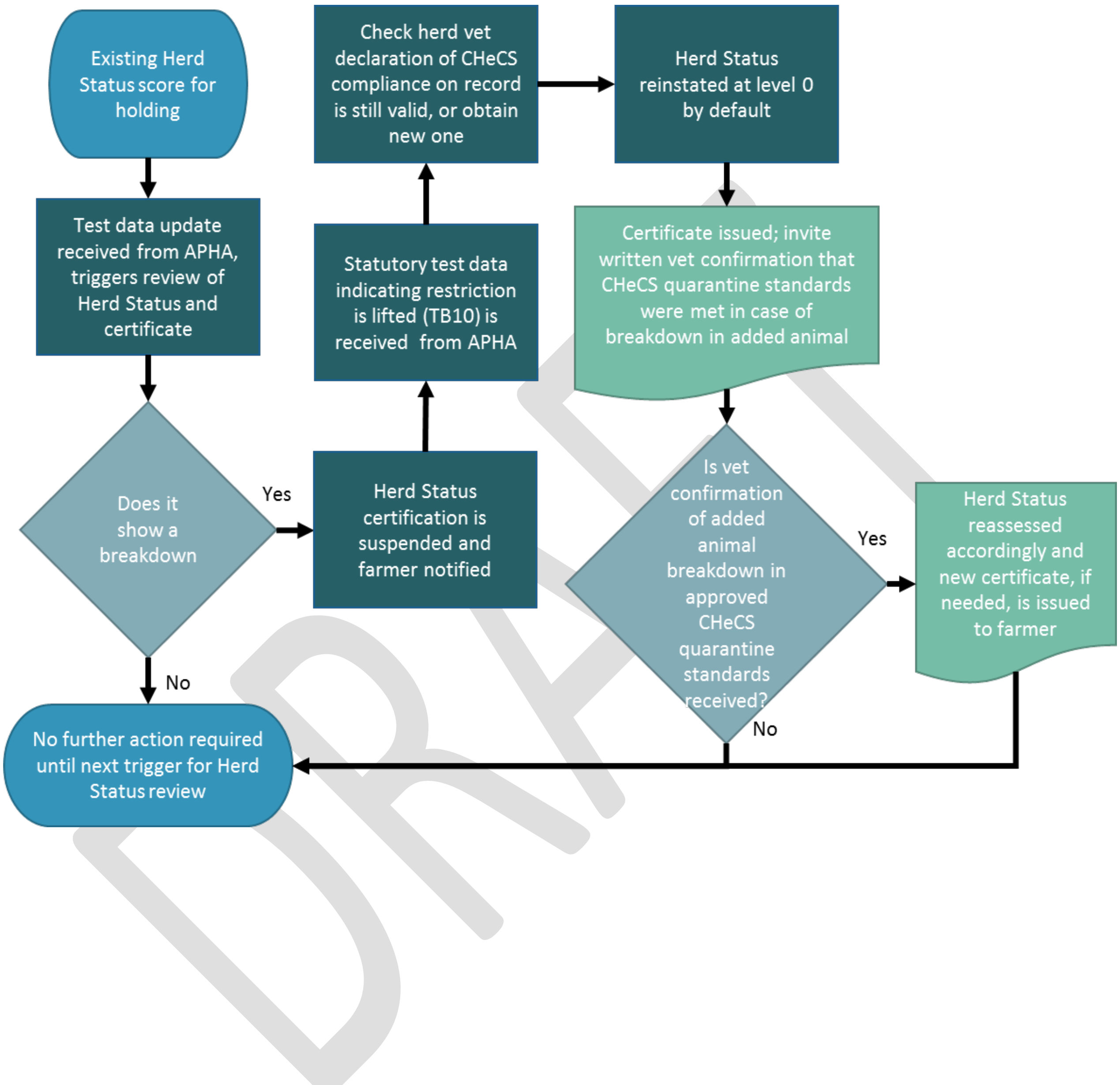
**Will other bTB data still be notified at sale, as well as this?**
Since 2013, the Risk-Based Trading initiative has encouraged sellers to disclose when an animal's last pre-movement test was carried out, the date of the seller's last routine herd test and, in the case of herds which have had a bTB breakdown in the past, the date on which it was last declared Officially TB Free. It is anticipated that there may be a demand to provide both types of information while the CHeCS programme becomes more widely known.

**Will they just give the same information?**
As CHeCS bTb Herd Status Accreditation discounts breakdowns in added animals under CheCS-accredited quarantine, you may see divergences between CHeCS and Risk-Based Trading information, which declares the last 'APHA breakdown'. For example a farm with a very low risk status (bTB Herd Status 10, signifying no breakdown within the herd within 10 years) could be recorded by APHA as having had a recent breakdown if that breakdown was in an added animal. This means it is discounted by the CHeCS programme if it happened under CHeCS-accredited quarantine. The CHeCS bTB Herd Status Accreditation judges risk by breakdowns where the whole herd is compromised, rather than breakdowns where an animal will not have had the opportunity to infect other animals in the herd.

## Appendix 1: process for joining the programme



# Appendix 2: process for reviewing bTB Herd Status after breakdown



## Appendix 3: sample declaration, herd health plan and certificate (overleaf)

# CHeCS Health Scheme bTB Membership Declaration

**This form should be completed and signed.**

**Farm Address:**

**CPH Number:**    **Herd Number:**

**HERD INFORMATION REQUIRED:**

Do you have a Health Plan in place that covers the requirements of the CHECS bTB scheme and is endorsed by your vet?    **Yes** ☐    **No** ☐

**WEBSITE SIGN UP:**

Please tick if you would like your details added to the HiHealth Herdcare membership database which contains information about accredited herds, and contact details for the relevant farms.    **Yes** ☐    **No** ☐

**DECLARATION BY OWNER/MANAGER**

I agree to abide by the Rules and Conditions of the CHeCS bTB scheme. All information is correct as at the time of recording.

Signature:    Date:

Name: (Please print)

**DECLARATION BY VETERINARY SURGEON**

I have discussed the operation of the scheme with my client who, to the best of my knowledge, is complying with the rules and conditions of the CHeCS bTB scheme.

Signature:    Date:

Name: (Please print)

| **Biobest Use Only** | Date received: | Date certificate sent: |
|---|---|---|

Biobest Laboratories Ltd, 6 Charles Darwin House, The Edinburgh Technopole, Milton Bridge, Nr Penicuik, EH26 0PY, UK
Tel: +44 (0)131 440 2628 (Edinburgh) 01856 878293 (Orkney) Fax: +44 (0)131 440 9587
email: hihealthherdcare@biobest.co.uk www.biobest.co.uk

# CHeCS bTB Programme Biosecurity Plan

This programme can be used to fulfil the requirements of the CHeCS scheme, must be completed annually and endorsed by your vet.

Farmer name and holding:

| **Mandatory Elements** |
|---|
| 1. Testing *(all appropriate & statutory testing carried out as required)* |
| |
| 2. Test positive animals & offspring under 12 months |
| |
| 3. Added and returning animals |
| |
| **Guidelines – these must be reviewed annually** |
| 1. Water provision at grass |
| |
| 2. Natural water sources |
| |
| 3. Co-grazing |
| |



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| |
|---|
| 4. Feeding practices |
| |
| 5. Cattle housing and feed stores |
| |
| 6. Locations of badger activity |
| |
| 7. Slurry & muck |
| |
| 8. Transport |
| |
| 9. Additional Notes |
| |

Farmer signature: Date:

I have discussed the control of Johne's disease with the farmer as covered in the sections above.

Vet Signature: Date:

# Owner's Declaration of Health Status

**Issued as a requirement of the CHeCS Licensee**

Premium Cattle Health Scheme

**ELITE HERD**

**SAC Veterinary Services, Greycrook, St Boswells, TD6 0EQ**

Owner: **Mr & Mrs Cattle Owners**

Premises: **Address Lines 1 and 2**

**Address Lines 3/4 and Postcode**

| | |
|---|---|
| Herd No **UKXXXXXX** | Holding No **XX/XXX/XXXX** |

*I hereby declare that the animals listed below are from the above herd which is*

## **Accredited Free** of

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bovine Virus Diarrhoea** | **since 13 February 2003** |
| **Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis** | **since 13 February 2003** |
| **Leptospirosis** | **since 16 February 2007** |

And has achieved

| | |
|---|---|
| **Level 1 Johne's Disease Status** | **since 16 February 2014** |
| **Bovine Tuberculosis Score 10** | **bTB free since *date TB free*** |

*in the*

# Premium Cattle Health Scheme

and have been managed in accordance with Health Scheme Rules Specified in the Technical Document of **Cattle Health Certification Standards (UK)**

Please list animal ear marks

Accreditation valid until: *Relevant Date*

Signed (Owner):

Date:

CATTLE HEALTH CHeCS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS