

BAS Code of Conduct

Biosecurity – Tuberculosis

Camelids are susceptible to several types of tuberculosis including avian, microtic and bovine. Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is zoonotic (can be passed to humans) and is a notifiable disease.

The BAS has no statutory powers to control the movement of animals or disease. This 'code of conduct' is mechanism developed to enable members to assist Defra Animal Health in the rapid control and eradication of this disease from the UK National herd.

1. If DEFRA Animal Health confirms bTB on a holding, that farm will be under legally binding movement restriction.
ANY breach of Animal Health Movement Restriction will result in the immediate removal of BAS membership and may affect the registered status of all animals in the ownership of the herd in breach.
2. All deaths MUST be recorded and reported to the BAS Registry. Unless the cause of death is known (eg, an accident), a post mortem MUST be carried out and the results recorded.
3. Owners who suspect disease on their farm MUST voluntarily terminate all animal movement onto or off the holding and report to their local vet and, through them, to Animal Health.
4. Owners who suspect disease on their farm should also notify all clients, animal contacts and show organisers of any shows attended within the preceding 12 months to alert them to the need for increased vigilance.
5. Owners should co-operate with Animal Health and facilitate testing and provide accurate movement records when requested.

'On Farm' precautions

Camelids and humans can be infected by locally infected wildlife (badgers, deer, rats), infected cattle, or other infected camelids.

High risk areas have been identified by Defra. The updated map is available at [http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/publications/TB/PTI_20080815\(English_divisions\).jpg](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/publications/TB/PTI_20080815(English_divisions).jpg) or on request from the BAS office.

Your local Animal Health office can give advice and, if asked, will make a farm visit to help reduce risk.

Defra provides recommended management precautions for cattle farmers, which apply equally well to camelids, on their web site at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/abouttb/protect.htm> and in a booklet [Bovine TB: Do you know how to reduce your risk?](#) (PDF 848 KB). For free copies of the leaflets contact Defra Publications (phone 08459 556000 or e-mail defra@cambertown.com) quoting references PB12590.

In summary, this advice includes:

1. Avoid contact with potentially infected animals (both wild and domestic).
2. Improve fencing to minimise contact with badgers and other wildlife.
3. Raise water and feed troughs and licks off the ground. Ensure barns and feed storage areas are closed to wildlife especially at night

bTB Testing

The legally accepted test for bTB in camelids is the cattle skin test. BCL (British Camelids Ltd), BAS (British Alpaca Society) and BLS (British Llama Society) are working with Defra to develop research with a view to creating a camelid specific test. **This is a long term project unlikely to produce a test for many years.**

Unfortunately, advice from experienced vets and Animal Health suggests that a **negative skin test result** is less than accurate in camelids and provides no guarantee that an animal is free of disease. However a positive reaction does strongly indicate infection.

Once an animal has proved positive it should be isolated immediately and culled as soon as possible .

Its herd mates should be isolated from all other contact and kept under observation for a period of at least six and preferably 12 months. Existence of a positive test result in the herd will result in the farm being put under legally binding movement restriction by Defra Animal Health.

Owners are advised that once bTB is verified in the herd there is a need for constant monitoring for many years to come and it is vital that suspect animals are isolated from the main herd immediately for investigation.

Herd owners may wish to carry out skin tests on their herds, or require skin tests to be carried out before animals can visit their holding or show. This is one of a raft of mechanisms that can be applied for reducing risk. bTB tests can be arranged via your local vet.

Registration

All cria births, all deaths and all ownership transfers should be notified to BAS (BLS for llamas and other camelid species).

Currently BAS offers free listing of non-breeding pet alpacas to BAS members and conditions for any subsequent transfer to facilitate an accurate record of location and traceability of all alpacas are available from the BAS Office.

Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping and traceability are paramount in the fight against any disease .

All camelid owners must:

1. Ensure that all animals are uniquely identifiable by the use of an EID (microchip).
2. Maintain an up-to-date and accurate record of all movements onto and off their holding.
3. Maintain an up-to-date record of all births and deaths on their holding.
4. Register all births, deaths and transfers with BAS as soon as possible (BLS for llamas and other camelids).

5. Provide a 'self declaration' form (see below) for all animals leaving their holding to give to the receiving farm
6. Hold a copy of the 'self declaration' form for all animals visiting or arriving on their holding.
7. Be prepared to provide absolute transparency of their biosecurity protocols to all other herds they have direct contact with.

On Farm Records

Records may be kept in an 'on farm' computer system, or on paper. BAS provides an example Movement and Record Keeping Book, available on the BAS website or from the Society Office free of charge. Records should include:

1. Births – date, animal id, mother id, sire id, record of any problems.
2. Deaths – date, symptoms prior to death, reason for death, name of vet or Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) centre which carried out the post mortem examination. (If TB was cultured, record the date confirmed and the spoligotype.)
3. Animal movement off farm – date, destination, reason, departure time, arrival time, duration of travel.
4. Animal movement onto farm – date, original location, reason, departure time, arrival time duration of travel.
5. All animal movements off farm which return to same holding – date, destination, reason, destination of travel, departure time, arrival time, risk assessment.
6. Animal movement between groups within farm – date, from where, to where, reason, risk assessment. (A history of which groups of animals are living with whom on the farm may also be beneficial.)

All short term movements for shows, displays, matings, shearing or any other reason MUST be included in these records.

Self Declaration Forms

Members moving animals from one holding to another for whatever reason should be prepared to provide a '**self declaration**' form for all animals leaving their holding regardless of length or duration of absence.

Members receiving animals onto their holding for whatever reason should demand a 'self declaration' form for all animals arriving on their holding regardless of length or duration of stay. Example forms are available on the BAS website or from the Society Office. The information provided on this form should include:

- Address of both farms and holding numbers if applicable
- Date and time
- Identification of the animal /s
- Weight of animal
- Body score.
- Medical history (vaccination, worming, etc)

Risk Assessment

It is essential that all members carry out their own risk assessment before undertaking any movement of camelids regardless of duration.

Each member will need to gather the information necessary to make their own assessment of risk and their own tolerance to that risk.

Useful information to assist members with this are:

1. Defra map of areas designated as high risk
2. Risk assessment notes (prepared by Nick Weber), attached as appendix
3. Self declaration form information
4. Accurate movement and health records from the source farm, for example:
 - History of any particular health issues on the source farm in the past year, eg, liver fluke, Johnes disease, BVD, worm issues, mineral deficiencies, etc.
 - Is the source farm in the area designated by Defra as high risk for bTB?
 - Has the farm had a bTB test in the past year?
 - Has the farm ever refused a request by Animal Health to skin test for bTB?
 - Has this animal been in contact with animals from other farms during the past six months?
 - Has this animal moved off the farm and back in the past six months? If so, where and why?
 - Have other animals moved onto the farm (or off and back on) in the past six months? If so, where to and why?

General Management

Animals under any form of physiological stress have a compromised immune system and are more susceptible to all forms of disease.

Ensure that your herd has as high a general health status as possible.

1. **Nutrition** – autumn and winter grass have very little nutrient value. Get your hay tested for nutrient content, use propriety alpaca concentrate feeds and match the nutritional requirements of your herd with the feed on offer.
2. **Trace Elements** – Ensure that suitable minerals are available at all times especially for growing cria and pregnant females. Talk to your vet about blood testing to check the mineral levels in your herd and treat accordingly.
3. **Overcrowding** – Competition for grazing and food produces stress don't put your animals under grazing pressure. Try to maintain stable groups, watch and know your herd. Consider moving animals who are being bullied.
4. **Parasites** – Check for skin and gut parasites, talk to your vet about regular parasite control regimes.
5. **Vaccination** – plan your annual vaccination programme with your vet to ensure maximum protection whilst minimising physiological stress. Vaccination should include clostridial and Bluetongue (BTV8).
6. **Weight Loss** – Monitor the weights of your animals. Any animal showing sudden and rapid weight loss should immediately be isolated and monitored closely.
7. **Quarantine** – All animals moving onto or returning onto the holding should be quarantined for a period of at least 30 days. Quarantine to be all in/all out, that is, the 30 days begins when the last animals entered the quarantine group. Note that this period of quarantine will not disclose all diseases, most notable bTB.