



PROTECTING YOUR ANIMALS FROM **MYCOPLASMA BOVIS**



The main way bacterial disease *Mycoplasma bovis* spreads is through:

1. Close and prolonged contact between cattle.
2. Calves drinking milk from infected cows.

It will also spread from an infected cow in a milking herd through contaminated milking equipment.

There is a very low risk of it being spread through:

- cattle on neighbouring properties;
- vehicles, machinery, footwear, clothing, sheep movements, etc.

Mycoplasma bovis is not thought to be transmitted in urine or faeces. It is not windborne or spread in rivers and streams. It is a relatively slow-moving disease and the bacteria doesn't survive well outside of the animal.

Things you can do

You can help protect your animals from *Mycoplasma bovis* and other diseases with good biosecurity practices on-farm. Complete the Biosecurity WOF, developed with farmers and vets, to develop your on-farm biosecurity plan. You can find this on www.mpi.govt.nz/bovis or www.dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity.

Animal movements

Infected animals may not show any symptoms but still pass on the disease. In times of stress it can cause illness such as untreatable mastitis, abortions, swollen joints and arthritis, and severe pneumonia in up to 30 percent of infected calves.

Prevent contact with cattle from other herds. Limit cattle movements onto your farm. When sourcing animals, review the full health history of the source herd, especially mastitis and lameness in cows, and pneumonia and lameness in calves.

Use a pre-purchase checklist like the one on www.dairynz.co.nz/pre-purchase.

Calving, calves and milk

Calves can contract *Mycoplasma bovis* through direct contact with infected cattle, or by drinking milk from infected cows.

Calf rearers should source calves from as few different farms as possible. You should also minimise the number of farms from which milk is sourced, and ideally only feed milk from your own farm to your calves. Do not feed milk from cows with mastitis.

Consider using powdered milk to completely remove this risk, or you can pasteurise or acidify milk for calves.

If you're buying or selling calves or milk, you can take some simple steps to reduce the risk of spreading *Mycoplasma bovis* and other diseases. Check on www.mpi.govt.nz/bovis or talk to your industry representative.

Bobby calf and slink collection can continue as normal, with your loading facility and slink collection pick up in a "green zone" to reduce the risk of exposure to pests, weeds and disease. Farms under movement controls cannot move animals off the property without a permit from MPI.

Over the fence contact

So far in New Zealand there have been no cases of *Mycoplasma bovis* traced to over-the-fence contact with animals on neighbouring properties. But to be safe, you should not allow nose-to-nose contact with your neighbour's stock. Create a boundary fence buffer zone; with electric outrigger fencing, or a separate electric fence two metres back from the boundary.

Complete records

Always complete your NAIT records and make sure any movements are correctly recorded. Knowing where your cows have been is crucial to understanding and preventing the spread of disease. Ensure Animal Status Declarations are fully completed and retained.

Grazing

If you are moving animals for grazing, make sure the grazing property has good biosecurity measures in place. This includes internal boundary fences that prevent stock in separate groups from mixing and having nose-to-nose contact. All *Mycoplasma bovis*-infected properties are under Restricted Place Notices under the Biosecurity Act.

Feed

There is no risk of *Mycoplasma bovis* infection from bringing in hay or baleage from uninfected farms. If the feed is coming from a farm under a Notice of Direction or a Restricted Place Notice, confirm that it meets any conditions on the Notice.

Cleaning and disinfection

While the risk of transmitting *Mycoplasma bovis* through equipment is low, practice good biosecurity.

Gear and vehicles

1. Clean off all visible dirt and dung from gear and vehicles that have been in contact with stock.
2. Once items are clean, use a disinfectant and leave it on for about twenty minutes.

Visitors

Make available for visitors coming on and going off-farm:

- A foot bath with disinfectant and a scrubbing brush to clean their boots.
- Clean hot water and soap for washing hands and any equipment that they need to take.

Where to get more information

If you have questions about *Mycoplasma bovis*:

- email info@mpi.govt.nz or call **MPI on 0800 00 83 33**
- If you have sick animals, contact your veterinarian or call the **MPI Pest and Diseases hotline: 0800 80 99 66**

DairyNZ: 0800 43 24 79 69
www.dairynz.co.nz/mbovis

Beef + Lamb NZ: 0800 23 33 52
beeflambnz.com/news-views/topics/M-Bovis

Federated Farmers: 0800 32 76 46
www.fedfarm.org.nz

New Zealand Veterinary Association: www.nzva.org.nz

Your local Rural Support Trust:
0800 78 72 54 (0800 RURAL HELP)
www.rural-support.org.nz

To join our mailing list email
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