

Mycoplasma bovis Programme Moving Day and Calving 2020: scenarios and mitigations

Introduction

Moving Day for dairy farmers occurs annually on June 1 at the start of the new dairy farming year. It is a time of increased stock movements nationwide due to herds being bought and sold as sharemilkers move to new milking platforms with their herds.

There is also significant movement of stock in the months before Moving Day to winter grazing. This practice is more common in the Canterbury and Southland regions. Dairy cattle moved for winter grazing will return to their milking platform in time for calving where they can be milked and their calves cared for. These movements of cattle begin around April and continue for several months after Moving Day.

Moving Day, winter grazing movements and calving can present challenges to the farmers within the *M. bovis* Programme with upcoming movements of stock, sales or contractual agreements to fill, and in-calf cattle away at support blocks for winter grazing.

The *M. bovis* Programme and industry partners have put mitigations in place for farmers within the Programme in the lead up to Moving Day and calving. Below are some common scenarios farmers might find themselves in and actions they can take to ensure the best possible outcome for themselves and their farm.

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In-calf cattle at winter grazing

In-calf cattle are often sent to support blocks for grazing over the winter before returning to the dairy platform in time for calving. If the support block is placed under movement restrictions for *M. bovis* testing, the in-calf cattle will be unable to return to the dairy platform until movement restrictions are lifted. This can occur even when the in-calf cattle are not of interest to the *M. bovis* Programme but are grazing on a property containing cattle of interest. There may also be instances where the dairy platform is placed under restrictions, or found to have *M. bovis* present while in-calf cattle are away at winter grazing.

In-calf cattle are also unable to be transported within 4 weeks of calving without a vet certificate in order to meet Animal Welfare Regulations (2018).

Before sending your cattle to winter grazing, please speak to your grazier about how biosecurity is going to be managed on their farm over the winter. Make sure that your stock is going to be kept separate from stock off other farms and ask that your grazier records stock movements around the farm on a map. This will assist with Programme decision-making if the support block is put under movement restrictions.

Next Steps

Make sure you let the Programme know that you have cattle away grazing and your planned start of calving dates. If you are under movement restrictions, let your ICP Manager or Recovery Advisor know, and if your cattle are being tested under Active Surveillance, speak to Active Surveillance Liaison (ASL). You can reach ASL on 04 831 2197 or at Mbovis2017_ASL@mpi.govt.nz.

The Programme can work with you to make a decision on the next best steps for your farm and get you through the Programme as quickly as possible. This will primarily involve making sure on-farm testing and slaughter sampling of trace animals present is done in a timely manner.

If required, the Programme can work with you to create a feed budget and supply feed for the in-calf cattle so they can stay where they are while testing is completed.

In other instances, movement permits can be used to move the cattle to an isolated area of a property (this can be either the dairy platform or another property). The cattle will require testing for *M. bovis*. If you are going to be moving stock over multiple trips to the same property, a multi-movement permit can be arranged in advance by your ICP manager. This way, a new permit won't be required for every trip. If necessary, the Programme can work with a vet to get your stock a Fitness of Livestock for Transport certificate provided your stock fit the criteria for transport. Your NAIT records will need to be updated with all cattle movements.

In cases where the dairy platform is found to be infected with *M. bovis* while cattle are away at winter grazing, testing of the cattle at grazing will need to happen as soon as possible. If necessary, the Programme can arrange movement permits for your cattle to move to an appropriate location for calving and early lactation.

Where in-calf cattle have tested positive for *M. bovis* in their first round of testing, the Programme can look to have the second round of testing done as quickly as possible at slaughter to avoid cattle getting too close to calving for transportation.

Upcoming movement of stock and contractual agreements

Upcoming movements of stock or other contractual agreements may be interrupted by Programme activities.

Next steps:

If your farm has an upcoming movement of stock either onto or off of your property planned, or if you have any contractual agreements to fulfil such as the sale of a farm let the Programme know as early as possible. If you are under movement restrictions, let your ICP manager or Recovery Advisor know, and if you are being tested under Active Surveillance, speak to Active Surveillance Liaison (ASL). You can reach ASL on 04 831 2197 or at Mbovis2017_ASL@mpi.govt.nz. The Programme can then work with you to ensure you get through testing as quickly as possible.

In instances where your cattle are unable to move due to testing, the Programme can work with you to create a feed budget and bring in extra feed for the time the cattle are required to stay on the farm.

If your cattle are unable to remain on the property they are on, movement permits can be used to move your stock to an appropriate isolated property for the remainder of their testing. The cattle will require testing for *M. bovis*. If you are going to be moving stock over multiple trips to the same property, a multi-movement permit can be arranged in advance by your ICP manager. This way, a new permit won't be required for every trip Your ICP Manager can give you more detail about movement permits but please note that plenty of notice is required to arrange a permit. Your NAIT records will need to be updated with any movements of cattle.

Farms that are close to calving

We know that calving is a busy time for farmers and understand that undergoing testing for *M. bovis* during calving can lead to an increase in stress.

What can you do?

Please be sure to let the Programme know when your planned start of calving dates are. If you are under movement restrictions, let your ICP Manager or Recovery Advisor know, and if you are being tested under Active Surveillance, speak to Active Surveillance Liaison (ASL). You can reach ASL on 04 831 2197 or at Mbovis2017_ASL@mpi.govt.nz.

The Programme will work around you to ensure testing is completed with as minimal disruption as possible.

If all your cattle of interest are on the dairy platform and are due to calve, we can wait until most of the herd has finished calving before testing is initiated. Please note that if you are under movement restrictions, you will be required to stay under movement restrictions until testing is completed.

If however you would like to get testing completed as quickly as possible, we can also work with you to accommodate this.

Your ICP Manager can help you to arrange a permit to slaughter for your bobby calves. Please note that plenty of notice is required to arrange this. If you ordinarily sel 4 four-day-old calves, these can either become bobby calves or reared to sell once testing has been completed.

Bulk Tank Milk detect properties in late lactation

If you return a Bulk Tank Milk detect result late in lactation, be sure to let your ICP Manager know if your farm has cattle away at grazing, upcoming movements of stock, is near to calving or has contractual agreements to fulfil. It is essential that the ICP Manager be made aware of the location of all cows that contributed to the sample that returned a detect result. This may include cows that have moved off to winter grazing since the sample was collected.

Farmer support & Compensation

You can find supporting information on:

- Operational Costs
- Compensation
- Farmer Support

You can read our Info Packs for farmers online here: <https://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/protection-and-response/mycoplasma-bovis/advice-on-mycoplasma-bovis/information-packs-for-farmers-affected-by-mycoplasma-bovis/>