



National Surveillance Programme - Information about milk test results

Farmers are currently receiving the results of the testing of their milk samples provided in the National Surveillance Programme. The results are being reported in one of two ways:

- “Not detected”: If *Mycoplasma bovis* was “not detected” in any of the three samples (two supplied by the farmer and one taken by the dairy company). This information will be communicated to the farmer by email via their dairy company. This information will apply to the supply number noted in the email.
- “Detect”: If there is a detection or suspected detection of *Mycoplasma bovis*, MPI will be in touch with the farmer directly. Farmers will be called by MPI and then visited.

What does a “not detected” result mean?

A “not detected” result means that *Mycoplasma bovis* was not found in the milk samples supplied for testing. This provides a high level of confidence that the animals which contributed milk to the vat, or to samples taken directly by farmers, were not shedding (releasing) the *Mycoplasma bovis* bacteria at the time of testing.

As *Mycoplasma bovis* infection can be present without any signs of illness in an animal for some time (only shedding when the animal is under some stress), a “not detected” result does not give confirmation that the entire farm is clear of *Mycoplasma bovis*. Furthermore, there may also be animals on a property (e.g. non-lactating animals) which could be carrying the infection and did not contribute to the milk sample.

Given the milk sample testing does not provide 100% certainty, what will it be used for?

The National Surveillance Programme will provide MPI with the best possible information available at this time about the distribution of *Mycoplasma bovis* within New Zealand. The results of the programme will help to identify any as yet undetected clusters of disease and inform decisions for the next phase of the *Mycoplasma bovis* response operation.

What does the test result mean if I am trading stock?

Farmers are encouraged to consider biosecurity when planning stock movements onto their properties. Seeking information about possible animal health related factors associated with animals coming onto your property is sensible commercial risk management behaviour. Recent *Mycoplasma bovis* milk sample test results are one of the factors that can be considered, but in doing so the limitations of the results – whether animals who contributed to the samples were shedding the disease on the day of the sample taking or not - need to be understood.

Does the result letter provide any guarantee related to animals from the farm?

No. While it is a positive indication, receiving a “not detected” result for the three milk samples is not a guarantee that the entire farm is free from *Mycoplasma bovis*. These results do not amount to a ‘clear status for any individual farm or animal’. We recommend farmers work with their veterinarians to determine the risk profile of their farm, as the bulk milk test result is only one of several factors that should be considered when understanding overall risk.