

FAQ – MPI’s call to cull herds on Infected Properties

Q: Why is MPI directing this cull now?

This is a critical measure to control the spread of *Mycoplasma bovis*. We have made the decision to cull now because the testing of milk from every farm in New Zealand is now almost complete. Combined with MPI’s extensive work to trace every possible animal movement from infected farms, we are confident that *Mycoplasma bovis* is limited to animals connected by movements between farms.

This means the disease is not widespread throughout New Zealand and so culling those animals is now appropriate.

Q: How many animals are going to be culled?

Approximately 22,300.

Q: What’s the value of the animals?

The value of around this number of cattle is very significant. The precise value will be determined by independent on-farm valuations, so MPI can calculate the right amount of compensation.

Q: Where are all these animals going?

The huge majority will be slaughtered at processing plants in-line with standard procedures. Before leaving the farm, the animals are assessed to confirm they are fit for transport. A small number of animals that are unfit for transport may need to be slaughtered on-farm and buried.

Q: Are the culls starting today?

No. There is considerable planning to take place around the logistics of it - where and when animals would go for slaughter, how this can best fit in with farm timetables and activities and those of the meat processors. We are, however, confident the process will be completed before Moving Day on 1 June.

Q: What is MPI expecting farmers to do?

We are not expecting the affected farmers to go it alone. We’ll be working very closely with the owners and managers of the infected farms to plan how this cull will take place. Those plans will be individually tailored to each of the operations concerned.

Q: Is this just the first step in wide-spread culling of herds across NZ?

No. We are only directing confirmed Infected Properties (IPs) to cull their herds. Properties that are under restricted place notices (RPs – which impose movement restrictions) or notices of direction will not be directed to cull their herds.

Q: Is this a sign that MPI will eradicate M bovis?

No, this decision has not yet been made. This cull gives us the benefit of significantly reducing disease pressure and puts us in a good position to pursue either eradication or long term management options.

Q: What should farmers do after their herd is culled?

Once the affected farms are de-populated they’ll be cleaned and disinfected, and left empty of cattle for 60 days. After this the farmers can start re-building a disease-free herd from scratch. Farmers will discuss these details with MPI as they plan the cull.

Q: What about properties under Restricted Place notices and NODs that are not infected?

There is no change for these farms, and we ask for their continued understanding as we work through the appropriate response to this disease. We will help these farmers develop tailored management plans to carry them through this short period of uncertainty.

Compensation questions for affected farmers

Q: Do farmers have to pay for the cull?

No, this activity is carried out as part of the response and costs will be met by MPI's budget. Farmers will be paid compensation for verifiable losses caused by MPI's disease control programme.

Q: What will farmers be compensated for?

Farmers who are directed to cull may be compensated for verifiable losses suffered as a result of powers exercised by MPI. The losses must be verifiable, and reasonable steps must have been taken to mitigate the losses.

Q: How do farmers make a claim for compensation?

MPI will work with each of the affected farmers individually. The claim form and more advice is available on the MPI website, and farmers may contact their Compensation co-ordinator. Phone: 04 894 0055 E-mail: compensationcoordinator@mpi.govt.nz.

Q: How do we demonstrate verifiable losses?

Affected farmers can discuss this with MPI, however, verifiable losses can be demonstrated through such things as cash manager or a farmlands account which shows the expenses incurred.

Q: How long will compensation take?

We understand farmers need to be compensated as quickly as possible to support cash flows. That is why we are building up our compensation team to respond to this need. However, we are dealing with public funds and we must run a good process. We will keep each farmer informed as their compensation claim is processed.

Q: What income will farmers have between culling their herds and receiving compensation?

This depends on the individual farmer. However, it is likely we will make partial payments early on, while we sort out the fine detail with individual farmers.