



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Wales TB Eradication Programme Delivery Plan

March 2023 – March 2028

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# 1. Foreword by the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

The Welsh Government last fully refreshed its approach to TB Eradication in 2017 with the publication of a long-term overarching **Programme document** and an initial **Delivery Plan**, which ran from 2017 until the present, highlighting specific measures to be taken forward. This first Delivery Plan introduced, amongst other things, a new regionalised approach to TB eradication in Wales and a number of measures to tackle bovine TB proactively and intensively in persistent breakdowns.

In 2017 it was my hope Government, vets, farmers and farming organisations would work together to drive forward our Programme and there are many examples of how this collaborative approach has led to successful outcomes. Much progress has been made against the initial Delivery Plan which can be seen in detail on our **website**.

Looking at long term progress since the start of the TB Eradication Programme in 2008, we have seen considerable decreases in key disease indicators, with marked reductions in TB incidence (new herd breakdowns per 100 Officially TB Free tests) across many TB Areas in Wales. We have also taken decisive action alongside keepers to drive down disease in certain areas when it was required.

Partnership working remains at the heart of TB eradication in Wales. This has been borne out by the responses to our 2021 consultation, the outcomes of the **Task and Finish Group on Farmer Engagement**, the **Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee** and the NFU TB Focus Group. We will build on what has been achieved collectively to date, pursuing our common goals

and objectives ensuring the rural community, including those affected directly by bovine TB, remain key players in the success of our Eradication Programme.

Government, the farming industry and veterinary profession must work with partners from academia, the broader rural community and the third sector to form part of the solution to the bovine TB problem if we are to achieve our goal of a TB Free Wales.

High biosecurity standards are necessary to protect all animals from disease, not just TB and disease-free herds and flocks make more profitable and sustainable businesses. The future Sustainable Farming Scheme will reinforce the importance of biosecurity on every farm, recognising introducing diseases could have serious and long-term financial effects on profitability and animal health and welfare. We expect every cattle keeper in Wales to play their part in our joint effort to eradicate TB by applying high standards of biosecurity on their farms and to source cattle responsibly. Government will support this by providing the tools for keepers to protect their herds.

This second Delivery Plan, which covers the five-year period from 2023-2028, has been developed through extensive consultation and by listening to individuals whose lives and livelihoods are directly affected by TB. It is now down to all parties to come together and effectively work as one to make further strides towards our ultimate goal of an Officially TB Free Wales.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Griffiths".

**Lesley Griffiths MS**  
Minister for Rural Affairs and  
North Wales  
and Trefnydd

## 2. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out key enhancements to the Wales TB Eradication Programme to be implemented from April 2023. This second Delivery Plan sits under the Wales TB Eradication Programme, which sets out our long-term vision for the eradication of bovine TB in Wales, guiding principles and core values. This Plan describes key initiatives to be taken forward over the course of the next 5-year period.

The **consultation on a refreshed TB Eradication Programme** between November 2021 and February 2022 sought views on a wide range of proposed actions, including changes to TB testing

protocols, TB Payment arrangements and Informed Purchasing. The summary of responses to the consultation can be found [here](#).

Following consideration of the responses to the consultation and the reports of various Groups and Committees, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd has decided to implement measures in this Delivery Plan in stages. Some measures will be introduced in the short-medium term, whilst others lend themselves to longer-term co-design and delivery, in collaboration with industry and other experts.





### 3. Disease picture: Data as of 31 December 2022

Wales introduced a new regionalised eradication strategy in 2017, based on spatial units which reside within the five TB Areas. An interactive map of Wales by TB Area and spatial unit is available on [DataMapWales](#) and is illustrated by Figure 1.

The aim of this strategy is for Wales to be Officially TB-Free by 2041. To determine the level of progress towards eradication, the Welsh Government with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) collect and publish key metrics. The picture of disease is set out in the [online Wales TB dashboard](#). This is updated on a quarterly basis and contains relevant TB statistics presented by TB Area. The latest update from January 2023 contains data up to 30 September 2022. It is important to view the data in the context of long-term trends, given short

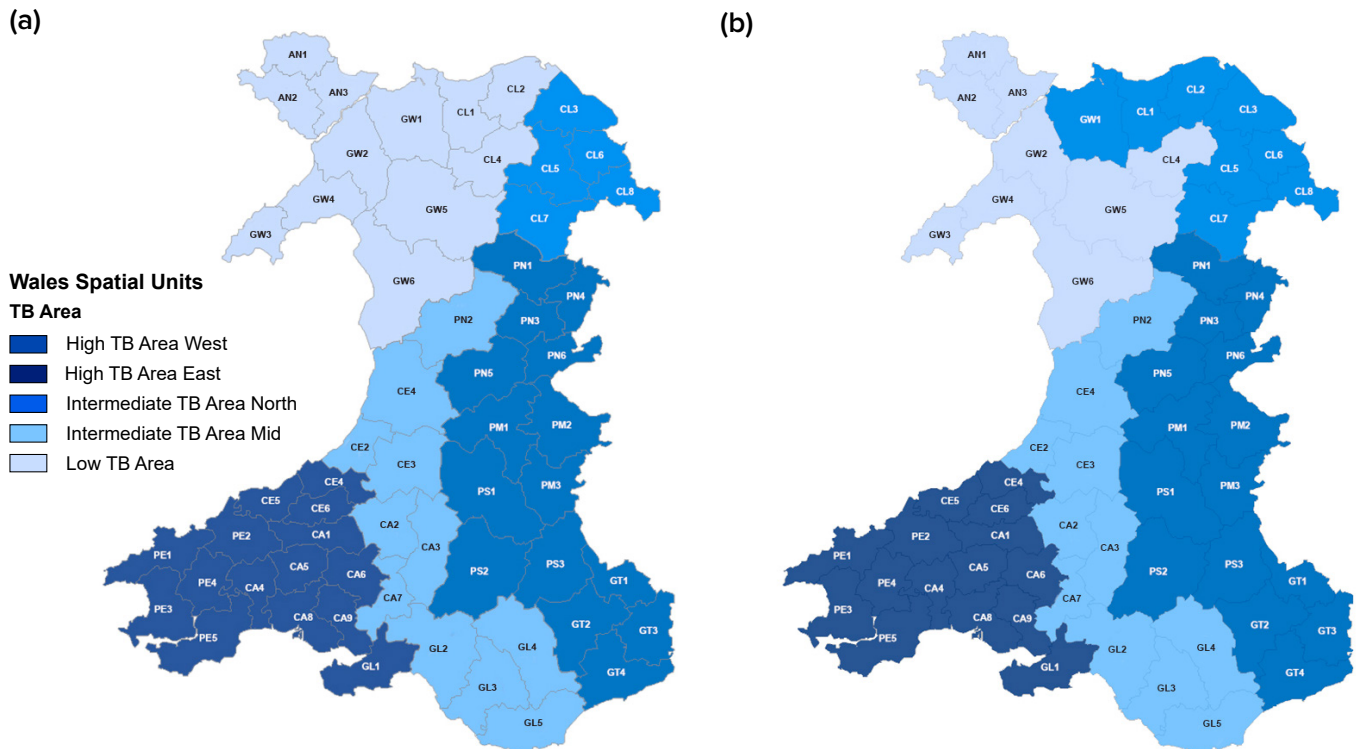
term fluctuations. The longer-term trends in TB incidence and prevalence (herds restricted at the end of quarter per 100 live herds) are shown by figure 2 and figure 3.

Further detail on Bovine TB figures is published in the [APHA Annual surveillance reports](#). The 2021 annual surveillance report will be published in 2023.

Defra publish national statistics on TB in cattle in Wales by TB Area as part of their [latest national statistics on tuberculosis \(TB\) in cattle in Great Britain – quarterly series](#). Due to differences in definitions, some of the numbers between the online Wales TB dashboard and the national statistics published by Defra will not match but will show the same general trends.



Figure 1: TB regionalisation before (a) and after 1 November 2021 (b)



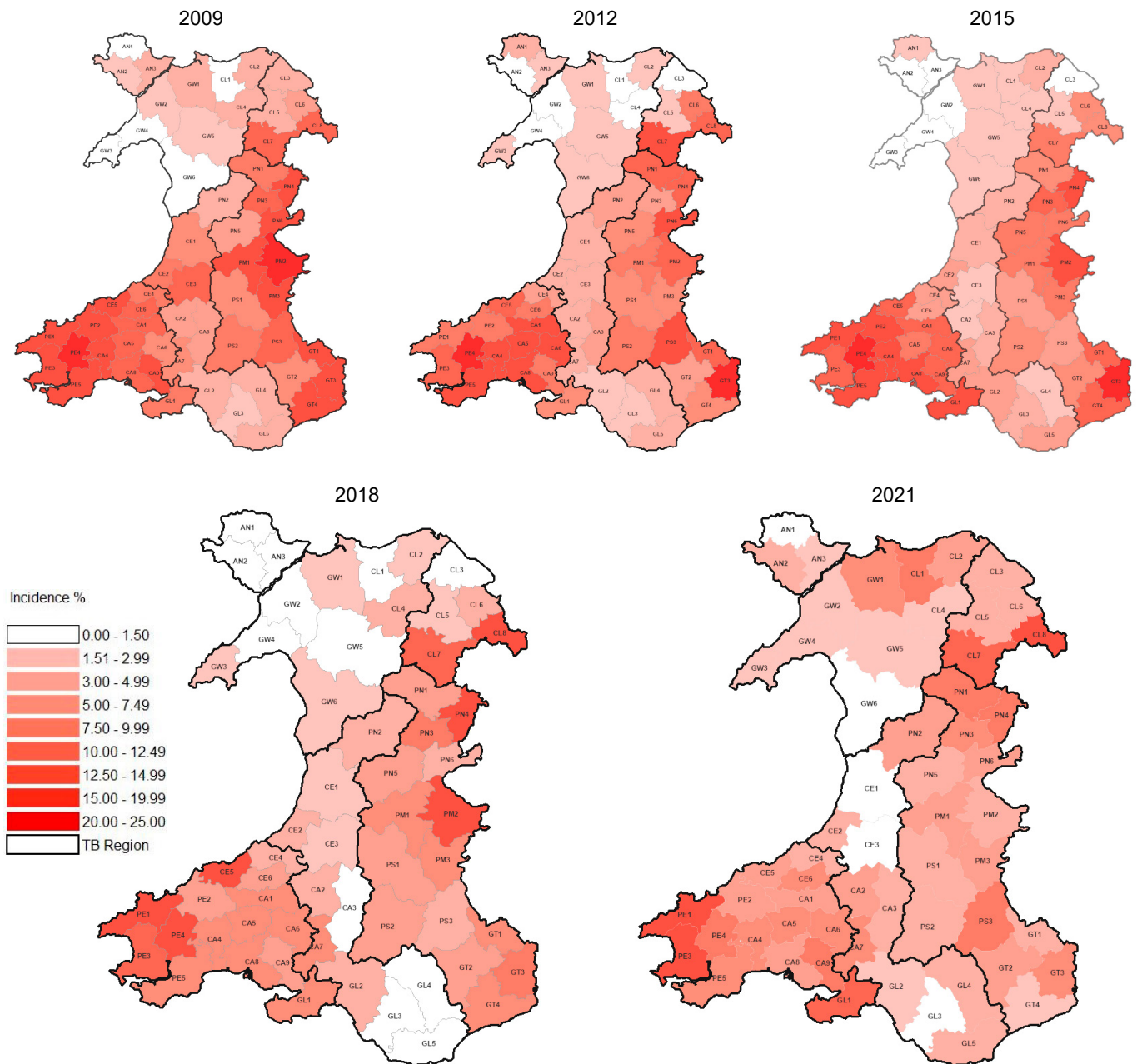
Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.

Low, Intermediate and High TB Areas were established on 1 October 2017 based on disease incidence. Enhanced measures are applied in each TB Area. Measures are tailored to protect the Low TB Area from disease and reduce the level of disease in the Intermediate and High TB Areas.

As a result of epidemiological evidence of local disease spread occurring in certain parts of the Low TB Area (Denbighshire/Conwy Valley), on 1 November 2021 three spatial units (CL1, CL2 and GW1) of the Low TB Area were temporarily moved into the Intermediate TB Area North, as shown in map (b) above.



Figure 2: Map showing annual herd-level TB incidence at Spatial Unit level by year

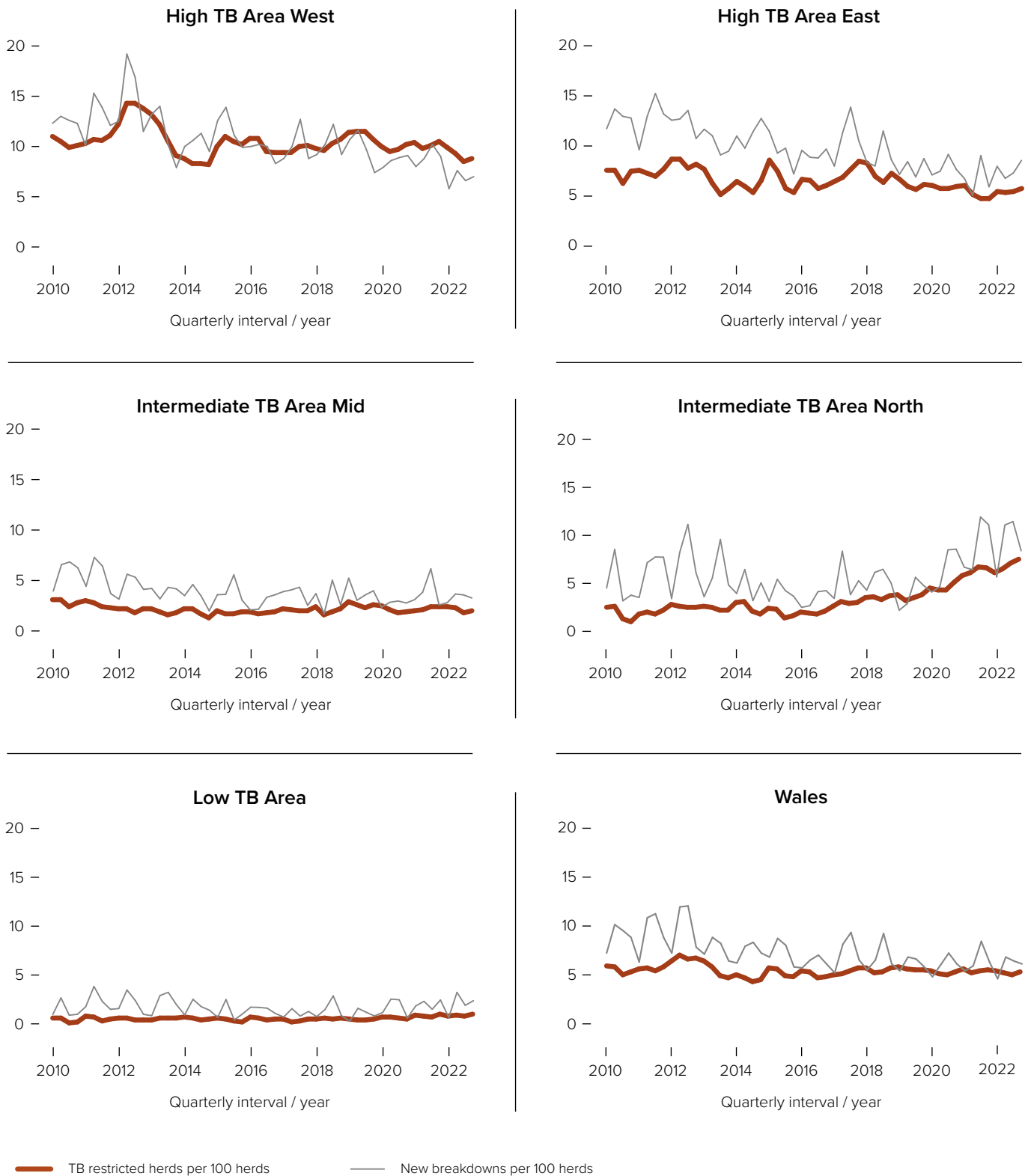


Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.

As shown in Figure 2, certain Spatial Units in the Low TB Area have increased in TB incidence at herd-level in recent years. To introduce increased controls (pre-movement testing) these Spatial Units were moved into the Intermediate TB Area North

from November 2021. The Intermediate TB Area North has consistently had incidence levels above the consideration threshold for an Intermediate TB Area since 2018, except CL3 which up to 2020, had been on track to move to the Low TB Area.

Figure 3: Quarterly herd-level TB incidence and prevalence from 2010 to 2022



Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.



TB incidence is the number of new TB incidents per 100 whole herd Officially TB Free surveillance tests. TB prevalence is the number of herds under restrictions for TB control per 100 live herds in each quarter.

Quarterly TB incidence at herd-level across Wales has steadily decreased from 10.1 in 2010 to 6.1 in Q4 2022. This trend is seen in the High TB Area West, High TB Area East, and Intermediate Mid regions with particularly marked reductions in the high TB Areas. Notably, incidence has reduced from 12.3 to 7.0 in the High TB Area West. However, in the Intermediate TB Area North, incidence has generally been increasing since 2016 despite fluctuations.

Quarterly TB prevalence at herd-level fell from 5.9% in 2010 to 5.3% in Q4 2022. Despite fluctuations, the High TB Area East showed an overall downward trend, with a reduction in prevalence from 7.7% in 2010 to 5.9% in 2022. The largest decrease in the High TB Area West was from 2012 to 2014, after which, prevalence fluctuated.

Prevalence has increased in the Intermediate TB Area North from 2.5% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2022. Historically, prevalence for the Low TB Area has tended to remain below or at 1% of cattle herds each quarter.



## 4. Our TB Policy in Wales

### Our vision, aims and core principles

Our vision is to enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of people and communities in Wales and to achieve a better quality of life for our own and future generations. The TB Programme supports this vision through a continuing commitment to disease eradication through the application of the sustainable development principle that *prevention is better than cure*.

The Mission of the Wales TB Eradication Programme remains: “A TB free Wales for a healthy, profitable and sustainable farming industry”. The four key principles of infectious disease control: *Keep it Out, Find it Fast, Stop it Spreading, Stamp it out* run through every strand of our Programme and remain a focus for continued development of measures to strengthen our approach.



#### Our Mission:

A TB free Wales for a healthy, profitable, and sustainable farming industry



#### Our Objective:

Eradicating bovine TB from Wales by 2041



#### Our Principles:

- **Keep it Out** → **Measures include:** Biosecurity, Informed Purchasing
- **Find it Fast** → **Measures include:** Annual, Contiguous + Pre/Post-Movement Testing
- **Stop it Spreading** → **Measures include:** Movement Restrictions
- **Stamp it out** → **Measures include:** Slaughter, Post-breakdown Testing

This second TB Eradication Delivery Plan, which underpins the Programme document, sets out the individual areas of action we will take over the next 5 year period. It allows for an adaptable approach to delivery of TB policy, which can respond to the changing disease picture on the ground, as we drive toward our target of eradicating bovine TB from Wales by **2041**.

The TB Eradication Programme has strong cross cutting links to the 10-year **Animal Health and Welfare Framework 2014-2024** and the **Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group** both of which support the delivery of our Programme, with detail and commitments provided in their **Implementation Plan**.



## TB surveillance

The cattle test and slaughter programme is integral to TB eradication in Wales.

However, controlling an organism, such as *Mycobacterium bovis*, responsible for bovine TB, can be challenging. The organism can be difficult to detect in both the live and the dead animal and, after infection occurs, it can survive within body defence cells for many years. No TB testing regime currently available can identify all infected animals as positive (100% sensitivity) and all uninfected animals as negative (100% specificity). Some tests, like the tuberculin skin test, have very high specificity, but have lower sensitivity, so are not as strong at identifying infected animals. Others are better at identifying infected animals, i.e., have higher sensitivity, such as the Interferon-gamma and IDEXX tests, but their specificity is slightly lower.

To help combat these challenges, we increasingly use a combination of tests to achieve the best outcomes for any given situation, with the tuberculin skin test remaining the main diagnostic test, supported by the strategic use of Interferon-gamma and IDEXX blood tests. Every herd in Wales is tested once a year; herds in the Intensive Action Area (IAA) in west Wales are tested every 6 months. Cattle moving within and from the High and Intermediate Areas require a clear Pre-Movement Test. Furthermore, cattle moving into the Low TB Area from higher incidence areas need a clear Post-Movement Test between 60-120 days after arrival.

## Regionalisation of Wales

Introduced in 2017, our regionalised approach to TB eradication created Low, Intermediate and High TB Areas. Wales is divided into Spatial Units for epidemiological purposes, with each Spatial Unit originally comprising of whole parishes of approximately 225 herds. The TB Areas encompassed entire Spatial Units and were generally based on grouping clusters of Spatial Units with similar TB incidence together. In the different TB Areas, the progress of the disease can be monitored, and a more local level approach can be taken, when necessary.

## TB Hotspot Clusters and breakdown management

Despite the declining trend in herd-level TB incidence over the longer term in the High TB Areas, there has been a worsening trend, dating back to a spike in disease incidence in 2017 in rural Wrexham (within the Intermediate TB Area North). More recently we have also seen incidence worsening in specific hotspot clusters in North Wales, including Denbighshire, Conwy Valley and Pennal.

A toolkit of hotspot measures has been developed and deployed in these areas. The toolkit is aimed at:

- Identifying disease faster in Officially TB Free herds (OTF) by increasing the frequency of tuberculin skin tests, Interferon-gamma tests and IDEXX antibody tests, and through the re-introduction of pre-movement testing in three Low TB Area Spatial Units moved temporarily into the Intermediate TB Area North;
- Stamping disease out in herds with a TB incident through increased use of a more severe interpretation of the tuberculin skin test, strategic use of the Interferon-gamma test towards the end of an incident and further enhanced measures in certain recurrent TB breakdowns; and
- Offering enhanced biosecurity advice through a keeper's own vet to herds neighbouring a TB breakdown (contiguous herds).

Measures underway in these hotspot clusters are subject to continuous monitoring and review, with changes made in response to the developing disease situation. One such change which will be implemented in 2023, involves introducing severe interpretation of the tuberculin skin test and Interferon-gamma testing of Inconclusive Reactors (IRs) (when no reactors are identified in the herd test) in herds contiguous to a breakdown and during post-breakdown testing, 6 and 18 months after a TB breakdown has ended.

In 2022, we further enhanced our approach by treating all breakdowns as Officially TB Free Withdrawn (OTFW) by default, ensuring all herds suffering a TB incident require two clear tests before restrictions are lifted. We also removed the 'three-year rule' for IRs ensuring all OTF herds, where only IRs are identified in a test, remain under restrictions until the IRs provide negative test results.

Enhanced measures, by means of an Action Plan are put in place in persistent herd breakdowns which have been under TB movement restrictions for more than 18 months. These are more aggressive measures to deal with disease in herds where TB may have become endemic on the farm over a longer period. They are aimed at increasing the sensitivity of animal testing, reducing higher risk within-herd movements, reducing transmission rates between cattle through improvements in boundary biosecurity, cleansing and disinfection and storage and use of manure/slurry and reducing transmission rates between cattle and badgers through preventing badger access to buildings, cattle feed and water and by reducing cattle access to badger latrines and setts.

On a small number of persistent herd breakdowns, badgers have been trapped, tested and culled or vaccinated, over a maximum of a four-year period. The trap and test operations are now being phased out as announced in 2021, and work will be completed on the final farm in 2024.

Keepers of cattle slaughtered under the TB Eradication Programme are paid at market value ascertained by individual valuations of their animals.

## Supporting keepers affected by bovine TB

Our Programme carefully balances the needs of industry against disease control and eradication, and we endeavour to ensure businesses remain viable in the face of a TB breakdown. Outlets to sell cattle from TB restricted premises are available and, following industry feedback, we have sought to make the process of using these outlets more streamlined.

We introduced changes in 2021, to encourage new Approved Finishing Units (AFUs) to be established, specifically to allow the rearing of young cattle, before moving on to another AFU for finishing, thereby increasing the number of outlets available, for less economically viable calves, to keepers under TB restrictions. To facilitate this trade, the approval of TB Dedicated Sales (“Orange markets”) in the High TB Areas of Wales has been allowed and more recently we have agreed to allow animals to move between AFUs, without the requirement for a pre-movement test. The time period a clear tuberculin skin test can

be used, for cattle moving to TB Isolation Units, has been lengthened from 30 to 60 days, to assist in filling these units within the six-week time period allowed.

Fully subsidised Cymorth TB veterinary visits continue to be made available to keepers experiencing a new TB breakdown across Wales. These visits by a keeper’s own private vet offer support and advice with the aim of eliminating TB from the herd as soon as possible. In the North Wales TB hotspot clusters, free veterinary ‘keep it out’ visits are available to keepers whose herds test clear to a contiguous test. These visits are aimed at supporting keepers to protect their herds from disease.

## Cattle vaccination

The 2020 cross-government response to the independent review of England’s 25-year TB eradication strategy set a top priority of ‘a deployable cattle TB vaccine with the objective of introduction within the next five years’. Our cattle vaccine programme comprises four interconnected projects: research and development, evidence, policy and deployment.

## TB in non-bovine species and wildlife

A passive TB surveillance regime is maintained for non-bovine species such as camelids, goats and farmed deer. These species are tested if there is evidence to suggest they may have disease, are contiguous to a TB breakdown, or are co-located on a farm with a TB breakdown.

It is recognised badgers have the potential to play a role in the transmission of bovine TB to and from cattle and between other badgers. Respecting the Programme for Government commitment to forbid the culling of badgers to control bovine TB in cattle, the Welsh Government is pursuing a badger vaccination policy.

Surveillance of wildlife is carried out through a continuing Badger Found Dead survey and through the collection of samples from shot deer from Natural Resources Wales estates and independent deer stalkers.

Further information about our approach can be found on the Welsh Government’s website – [gov.wales/bovine-tb](https://gov.wales/bovine-tb)

# A refreshed approach to TB eradication

## 5. Programme Governance

### TB Eradication Programme Board

The process to appoint members and a Chair to a Publicly Appointed Programme Board commenced during the spring of 2023. The Board will contain a range of representatives across industry, ensuring all sectors and interests are represented and considered.

The Board will oversee the TB Eradication Programme and help to shape it by providing policy advice and guidance to the Welsh Government.

Along with agreeing their Terms of Reference, an initial task for the Board is to consider and recommend stakeholder input into the Programme.

### Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Professor Glyn Hewinson, Sêr Cymru Chair of the TB Centre of Excellence in Aberystwyth has been directly appointed Chair of a Technical Advisory Group by the Minister, with further public appointments to be made later in 2023.

The Group will report to the newly established Programme Board, providing technical expertise on key policy areas.

Priority areas for consideration by the TAG include:

- The TB surveillance testing regime;
- Consideration of our in-calf slaughter policy;
- Cattle vaccination deployment; and
- An assessment of the likely impact slurry spreading may have on bovine TB transmission, risk based management options and eliminating bovine TB from the environment.





## 6. Stakeholder involvement and partnership working

### The Task and Finish Group on TB and Farmer Engagement

A Task and Finish Group was announced by the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd in November 2021. The Group was made up of a range of representatives from across the farming sector and also included veterinary and academic members. The Group was asked to consider how best communication and engagement might be improved between government and the farming sector.

The Group's **final report** was published in May 2022 and contained five recommendations:

1. Testing Data
2. Farmer Engagement
3. Improved Communication
4. Programme Governance
5. Informed Purchasing

Further details are provided in Table 1 overleaf, alongside our proposed actions.



**Table 1: Recommendation, government response and proposed actions from the Task and Finish Group on TB and Farmer Engagement**

	Recommendation	Government response	Proposed actions
1.	<p><b>Testing Data</b></p> <p>Greater availability and accessibility of TB testing data for farmers and private vets. This will contribute to more informed and ultimately more responsible decisions around cattle movements, herd management and farm biosecurity, which may all have a significant impact on controlling TB, especially if higher risk animals can be identified earlier and removed from the population, before moving.</p>	<p>Keepers are fully informed of the results of all TB testing undertaken in their herds. Keepers are at liberty to share that information with their private vet or whomever they choose. The Welsh Government will explore how best to free up the availability of all herd TB testing information and historic data in compliance with UK GDPR legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Welsh Government will work with APHA on improving access to TB testing data.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Farmer Engagement</b></p> <p>Enable farmers, private vets, and Official Veterinarians (OVs) to work more closely in partnership with APHA vets. Welsh Government wants to empower farmers and vets to make prompt and informed decisions and prevent TB breakdowns; one way to do that is through sharing TB testing data. An independent ‘One Stop Shop’ for data, information, guidance and support will contribute to this and will help mitigate and reduce the occurrence of misinformation and misconceptions across the industry.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government accepts the benefit of involving farmers, private vets and APHA vets, as has been borne out in previous work in this area to promote collaborative working (e.g. Cymorth TB, DRF pilot).</p>	<p>Work with farmers, APHA and private vets both prior to and during a TB breakdown, communicating through OV update meetings and using the Cymorth TB/Keep it out programme, recognising barriers and looking at avenues for collective action, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pembrokeshire Project.</li> <li>Establishing stronger contacts with colleges, universities, and representative groups to reinforce training and information sharing.</li> <li>Deliver a range of ‘drop in’ or on farm style training sessions for farmers.</li> <li>Outcomes of this work alongside a review of Cymorth TB will inform future direction. Consideration will include provision of an independent source for data provision.</li> </ul>

	Recommendation	Government response	Proposed actions
3.	<p><b>Improved Communications</b></p> <p>Changes to the format, language and tone of letters and notices that land on farmers’ doorsteps, which will demonstrate Government’s commitment to improving the relationship between farmers and authority.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government accepts the need to communicate clearly, effectively and with empathy with keepers about TB.</p>	<p>We need to recognise some quick wins available on communications, but other aspects, such as APHA letters, embedded in the SAM system, are more challenging and costly to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh Government has already implemented changes to simplify its letters and FAQs, working with the Farm Liaison Service and Farming Unions.</li> <li>• In the longer term, we are keen to promote the idea for members of Task and Finish Group (or wider) and partnership groups across Wales/England to work with APHA to review letters.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Programme Governance</b></p> <p>Reviews of the Terms of Reference of existing TB boards, as well as reviews of existing initiatives and programmes (e.g. Cymorth TB) will help improve engagement and uptake of existing/new initiatives. Build on success and start pilot projects as a specific outcome from existing boards/groups/schemes.</p>	<p>We accept the need to regularly review the Terms of Reference of Boards involved in the TB Eradication Programme. Initiatives, such as Cymorth TB are subject to regular monitoring and review to ensure they are fit for purpose and delivering for both Government and industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the refreshed approach to TB Eradication in Wales a review of programme Governance, informed by the recommendations of the task and finish group as well as other reports is progressing.</li> <li>• Work is already underway to appoint a new Programme Board and Technical Advisory Group via the public appointments process.</li> <li>• Setting up new regional or local Eradication/Engagement Boards will be considered as a principal task of the Programme Board.</li> </ul>



	Recommendation	Government response	Proposed actions
5.	<p><b>Informed purchasing</b></p> <p>Urgent action on Risk Based Trading – or Informed Purchasing – with cross border collaboration on a central, open-source database to include crucial TB testing histories and with mechanisms that enable the disclosure of relevant information at marts/auctions to make informed cattle purchasing a reality.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government accepts the need to act on Informed Purchasing – an initiative that has been promoted on a voluntary basis for many years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A scheme of mandatory Informed Purchasing will be developed through engagement with stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Welsh Government actively promotes the benefits of informed purchasing so keepers can assess the potential risks of bringing cattle into their herds.</li> <li>• We promote the ibTB platform that allows users to look at TB breakdowns, to inform better purchasing decisions. In the short–medium term it is the intention to bring forward new legislation allowing display of TB free herd information on ibTB to provide keepers with even more data for safer purchasing.</li> <li>• We are working across Government to support the introduction of Multi Species Wales (MSW) and the opportunities this can offer.</li> </ul>

## 7. Delivery

### Regionalisation and targets

The regionalised approach to TB eradication and the creation of Low, Intermediate and High TB Areas in Wales has enabled a flexible, adaptable approach to deal with the differing drivers of disease in each of the TB areas. A map showing the regional TB Areas in February 2023 can be found at Annex 1. The Welsh Government also set ambitious **targets** for TB eradication in Wales.

An epidemiological review of regionalisation against targets will take place in 2024 after the end of the first set of initial short-term, regional milestones for TB eradication as set out in 2017.

The review will inform the transfer of spatial units, depending on the herd incidence in the regions. It will also consider whether we have met the targets for the first six years and if not, what actions and measures will be required to move us further in the right direction and put us back on track to meet the next six-year target.

**Table 2: Wales TB eradication timeframe from published policy statement (1), revised to include period prevalence in run-up to OTF status**

	Low TB	Intermediate TB Areas		High TB Areas	
		North	Mid	East	West
2018–2023	OTF	50% fall in incidence	50% fall in incidence	50% fall in incidence	50% fall in incidence
	↓	CL3 to Low TB area; Intermediate Areas to merge		PN1 and CE4 to Intermediate TB Area	
2024–2029	OTF	<0.1% incidence, <0.1% prevalence		40% fall in incidence	40% fall in incidence
	↓	Spatial Units (SUs) to Low TB Area		SU(s) to Intermediate TB Area	
2030–2035	OTF			<0.1% incidence, <0.1% prevalence	<0.1% incidence, <0.1% prevalence
	↓				
2036–2041	OTF				

## TB Hotspot Clusters in Wales

A toolkit of measures has been developed and deployed in defined TB hotspot areas. The APHA Epidemiology Team continuously monitor disease levels and trends with a view to identifying areas of concern and potential new and emerging TB hotspots.

## Intermediate TB Area North

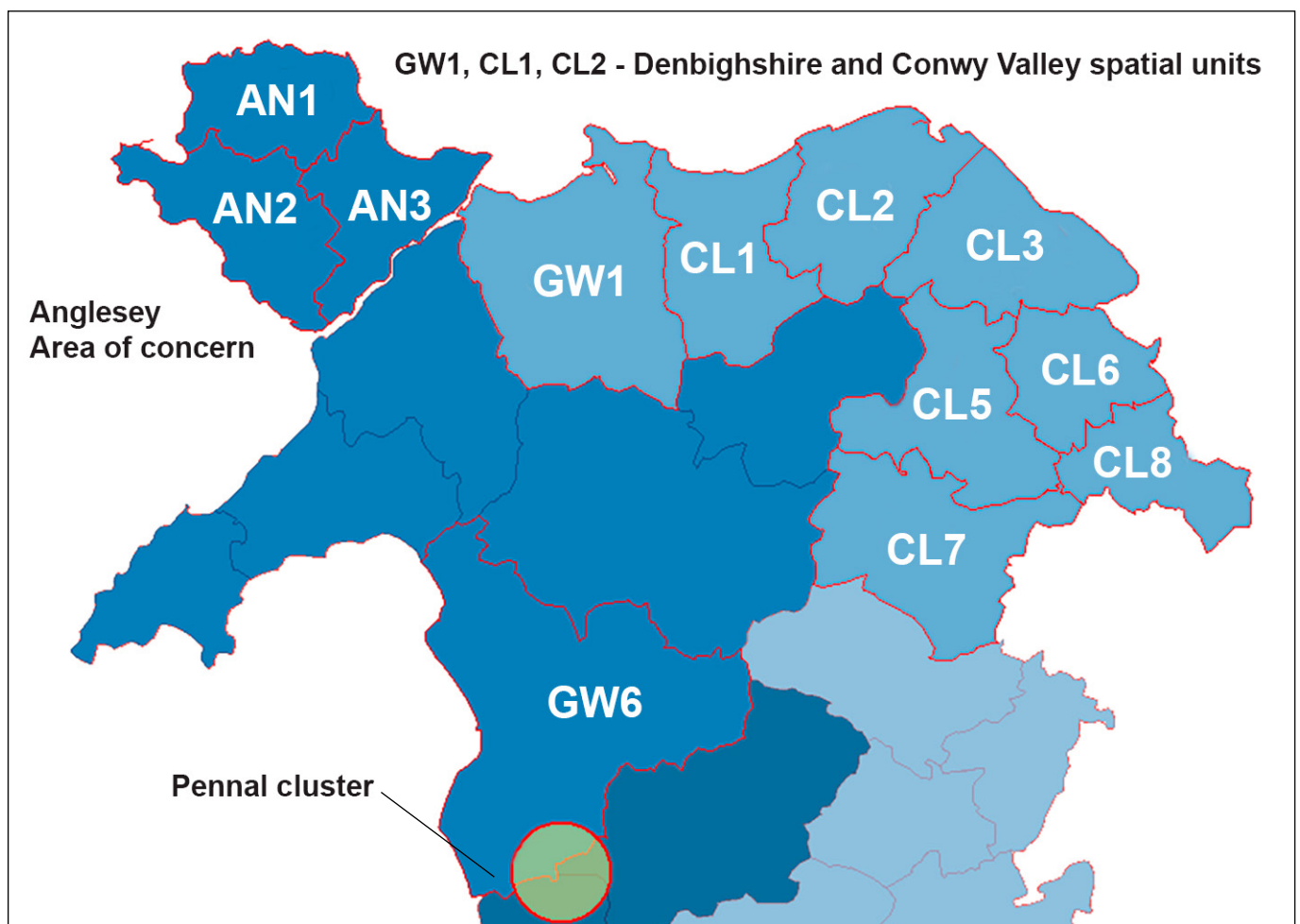
We will continue to closely monitor the disease in this area with consideration to relevant policy changes according to the changing disease situation.

## Low TB Area, including Anglesey

For many years, most of the new breakdowns that occurred in the Low TB Area were due to the buying in of cattle from higher risk areas. We will continue to communicate such risks through our 'stamp it out policy'. However, there is now increasing concern over disease becoming established locally following outside introduction.

One such area of concern is in Anglesey where there has been a sharp increase in disease. Localised actions are being considered and introduced.

Figure 4: Map of North Wales showing the spatial units in which additional measures are being taken



Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.



Spread of disease from cattle to local badger populations is an issue that can occur, when incidence rises in the cattle population. We aim to protect the local badger population in Anglesey by:

- Surveying Holy Island with a view to considering vaccinating badgers thereafter.
- Considering a wildlife and farm survey for the rest of Anglesey.

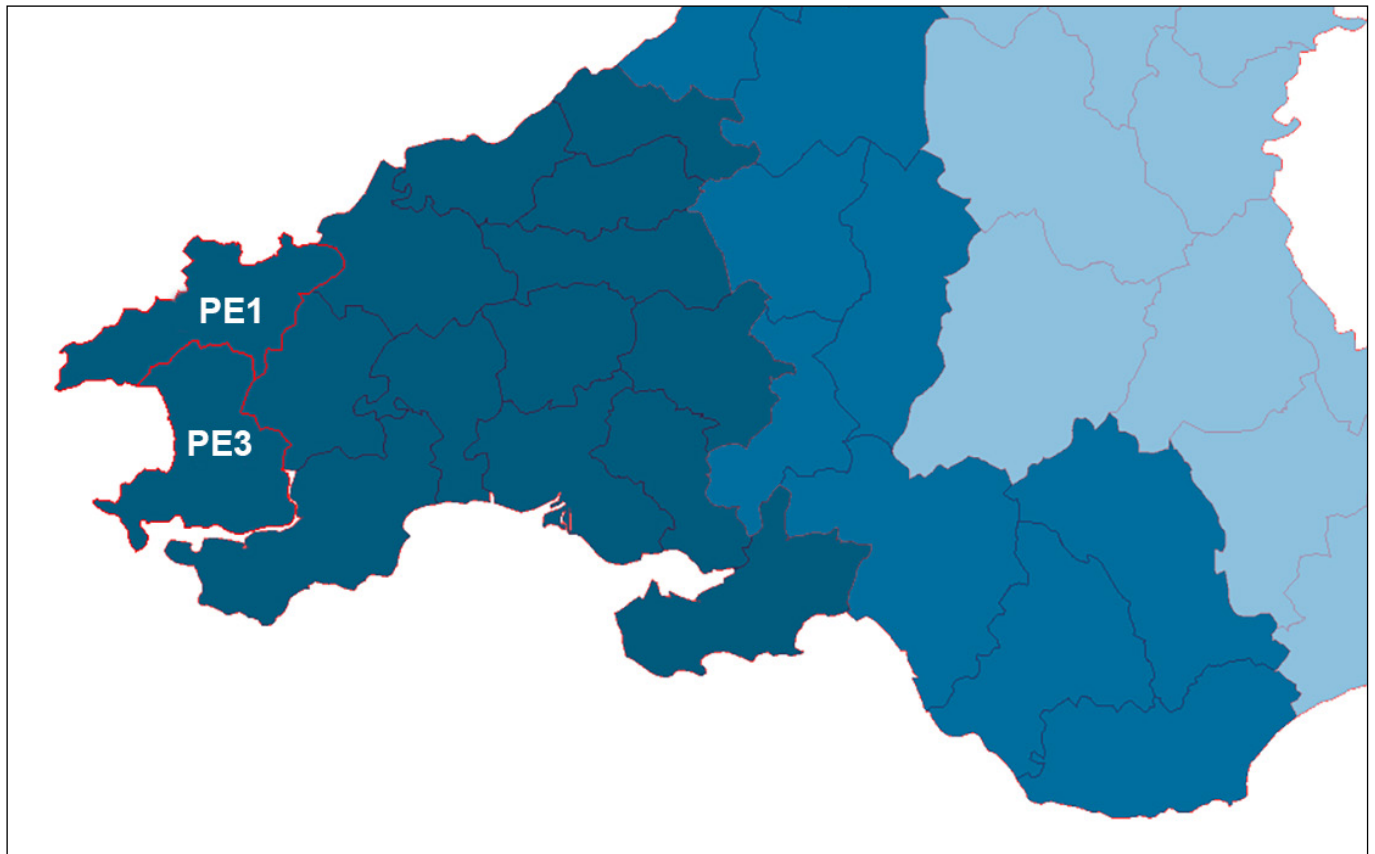
Additional cattle measures, including those already introduced in rural Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy Valley, will be considered for use in Anglesey, or more widely in the Low TB Area.

In an effort to further protect Low TB Areas, including Anglesey, it is planned to bring forward legislation to introduce Pre-Movement Testing for movements within and from the Low TB Area.

## Pembrokeshire

We have been considering how to tackle deep-seated levels of infection in parts of Pembrokeshire, where TB herd-level incidence and prevalence have worsened against the overall improving backdrop. In line with responses to our consultation and the NFU's TB Focus Group report, we are exploring new governance arrangements for TB eradication at a local level.

Figure 5: Map of West Wales showing the spatial units in which additional measures are being taken



Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.

A project in collaboration with industry will be implemented to work on a small number of farms in Pembrokeshire, with the aim of enabling vets and farmers to make informed decisions and show leadership in disease control. It will develop and implement additional approaches to bovine TB control, over and above the statutory measures currently used in the area.

The project will focus on identifying residual disease risk in clear testing cattle and develop a pathway for mitigating risk from cattle-to-cattle transmission. This will be through a risk-based approach involving identification and management of high-risk animals to slaughter and detailed veterinary oversight of biosecurity practices.

We hope to learn from this project and encourage other areas to adopt similar engagement and co-production techniques if they prove successful in Pembrokeshire. The spatial units that correspond to the project are shown in figure 5.

## Approved Finishing Units

The Welsh Government recognises the difficulties keepers face in moving young cattle out of their herds whilst under TB restrictions. We have been working closely with the industry to explore ways in which biosecure movements into TB Approved Finishing Units (AFUs) may be refined and simplified.

As most animals moving from TB restricted herds in Wales are taken to AFUs in England, any changes need the joint agreement by both Welsh Government and Defra. We, with Defra, have continued to meet regularly with industry representatives, to explore ways in which this process may be refined and simplified.

We have been asked to consider increasing the age limit of animals exempt from pre-movement testing and streamlining the licencing process to help keepers to better manage young cattle out of their herds. We, in agreement with Defra, are not inclined to allow this change. Although analysis does not indicate a substantial additional risk by increasing the age limit of animals exempt from pre-movement testing, market trends do not show an industry-wide demand.

However, a change to simplify the licencing process, negating the need to apply for an individual licence for each movement, has been agreed in principle and we view allocating resources to achieve this change as more appropriate. APHA are considering the different options and required changes to processes to enable this to proceed.

## Payment for TB affected cattle

The consultation on a refreshed TB Eradication Programme in 2021-22 included three proposals to change the TB payments regime:

- Table valuations
- Table valuations plus a top up for being a member of an approved animal health accreditation scheme
- An industry-led levy.

In the July 2022 **Written Statement**, we said we would engage with industry to explore the above options, to ascertain whether this could offer cost savings in respect of TB payments, whilst balancing the need to reward good farming practices and the implementation of disease prevention and control practices. This may include linking the TB Payments regime to biosecurity standards (for example those in the Sustainable Farming Scheme).

This will now be taken forward, with further consultation and engagement with industry before a decision is made on a change to the TB payments regime.

## Informed Purchasing

In some areas, the risk posed by cattle movements can be substantial. Informed Purchasing is therefore extremely important to our shared goal of TB eradication. It is vital for keepers to ask the right questions prior to purchasing cattle and act accordingly to reduce the risk of bringing TB into their herd.

Two aspects of Informed Purchasing were included in the 2021-22 consultation:

- Publishing information on TB free herds on **ibTB**; and
- Mandating the provision and display of TB information at the point of sale.

**ibTB** is a useful online interactive mapping tool set up to help cattle farmers and their vets understand the level of bovine TB in their area and manage the risks when purchasing cattle.

Following positive responses to the consultation, we intend to bring forward a change in legislation to allow the display of TB free herd information on ibTB.

Given the complexities involved in mandating the provision and display of information at the point of sale, and to ensure consistency across Wales and England, further engagement with industry and Defra will be necessary. This will include consideration of the potential implications for keepers who do not follow the principles of informed purchasing. Once this engagement has taken place, a detailed plan and timetable will be shared.

## Cattle TB Testing

In response to concerns regarding veterinary capacity in Wales, we commissioned consultants to explore options for the delivery of TB testing.

The **report** was supportive of the use of lay TB testers and the policy was implemented in October 2022, delivered through Veterinary Delivery Partners, Iechyd Da (Gwledig) Ltd and Menter a Busnes. Under the pilot, Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATTs) are able to undertake TB testing in parts of Wales. A full evaluation is being undertaken alongside the pilot to inform whether this approach will be adopted nationally on a permanent basis.

## Cattle vaccination

The Welsh Government participates in the UK-wide discussions held on the various strands of cattle vaccination.

Great Britain (GB) administrations are funding a project aimed at securing UK marketing authorisations for CattleBCG vaccine and DST-F, a new skin test to detect infected among vaccinated animals (or “DIVA”). It is anticipated that this will help save thousands of cattle every year that would have been culled to prevent the spread of disease.

APHA led field trials of CattleBCG and DST-F are progressing. Phase 1 of the field trials assessed the safety and specificity of the DST-F skin test reagent and was completed in May 2022. The completion of phase 1 was an important milestone in ensuring the UK Government remains on track to deliver a deployable cattle vaccine and DIVA skin test for bovine TB.

The second phase of the field trials has now commenced and will assess the safety of the CattleBCG vaccine and the safety and specificity of the DIVA skin test in vaccinated cattle. So far experimental studies have indicated that both the vaccine and DIVA test are safe and accurate under controlled APHA facility environments. The trial is due to be completed in 2023.

Like other veterinary medicines, in addition to laboratory studies, both CattleBCG and DST-F must be shown to be effective and safe under field conditions before the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) can authorise their use.

We continue to work with other devolved administrations to appoint a manufacturer to produce the DIVA test components. The TAG will consider deployment options for Wales with a view to roll out once a licensed product is available.

## Badger vaccination

The Welsh Government continues to run the Badger Vaccination Grant (BVG) scheme to support farmers across Wales in vaccinating badgers on their land, by providing 50% of the costs through the grant scheme providing they meet the grant criteria.

Our current BVG scheme supports 42 farms across a total area of just over 46km<sup>2</sup>. Holy Island will be surveyed in 2023 in preparation for further badger vaccination.

We intend to review our badger vaccination policy in 2023-24.



## 8. Legislative changes

The 2021–22 consultation on a refreshed TB Eradication Programme, identified potential policy and legislative changes. We intend to make the following amendments to the TB (Wales) Order 2010:

- i. Reinstate Pre-Movement Testing for cattle movements in the Low TB Area, whilst maintaining Post-Movement Testing.
- i. Introduce Post-Movement Testing for all cattle movements to holdings in the Intermediate TB Areas from High TB Areas, the High Risk Area of England and from Northern Ireland.
- i. Introduce a legal requirement for farmers not to move cattle between test day 1 (TT1) and test day 2 (TT2) and between blood testing and receiving results.
- i. Introduce a requirement for authority to be sought from the Welsh Government to collect a sample, perform a test, perform a test on any sample and to ensure results from such tests are immediately reported.
- i. Prohibit feeding of unpasteurised milk to livestock on OTFW premises.
- i. Make available on ibTB the number of years a herd has been TB Free.

Proposed changes will follow the Welsh Government’s legislative process, which will include a full Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Further changes to the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010 and the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2011 will be considered in subsequent phases of legal changes over the course of the tenure of this Plan.





## 9. Monitoring and reviewing our TB Eradication Programme

TB trends are monitored through regular analysis and reports. For example:

- Monthly statistics showing numbers of new incidents, open breakdowns, closed breakdowns, animals slaughtered for TB control and tests carried out.
- Quarterly reports with statistical and epidemiological analysis of incidence, prevalence, recurrence and other relevant features of disease progression. Summarised in the **Wales TB dashboard**.
- Detailed annual reports such as the **Wales Annual Surveillance Report**.

This Delivery Plan will be subject to review, and an annual update will be provided by the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd.



## 10. Summary

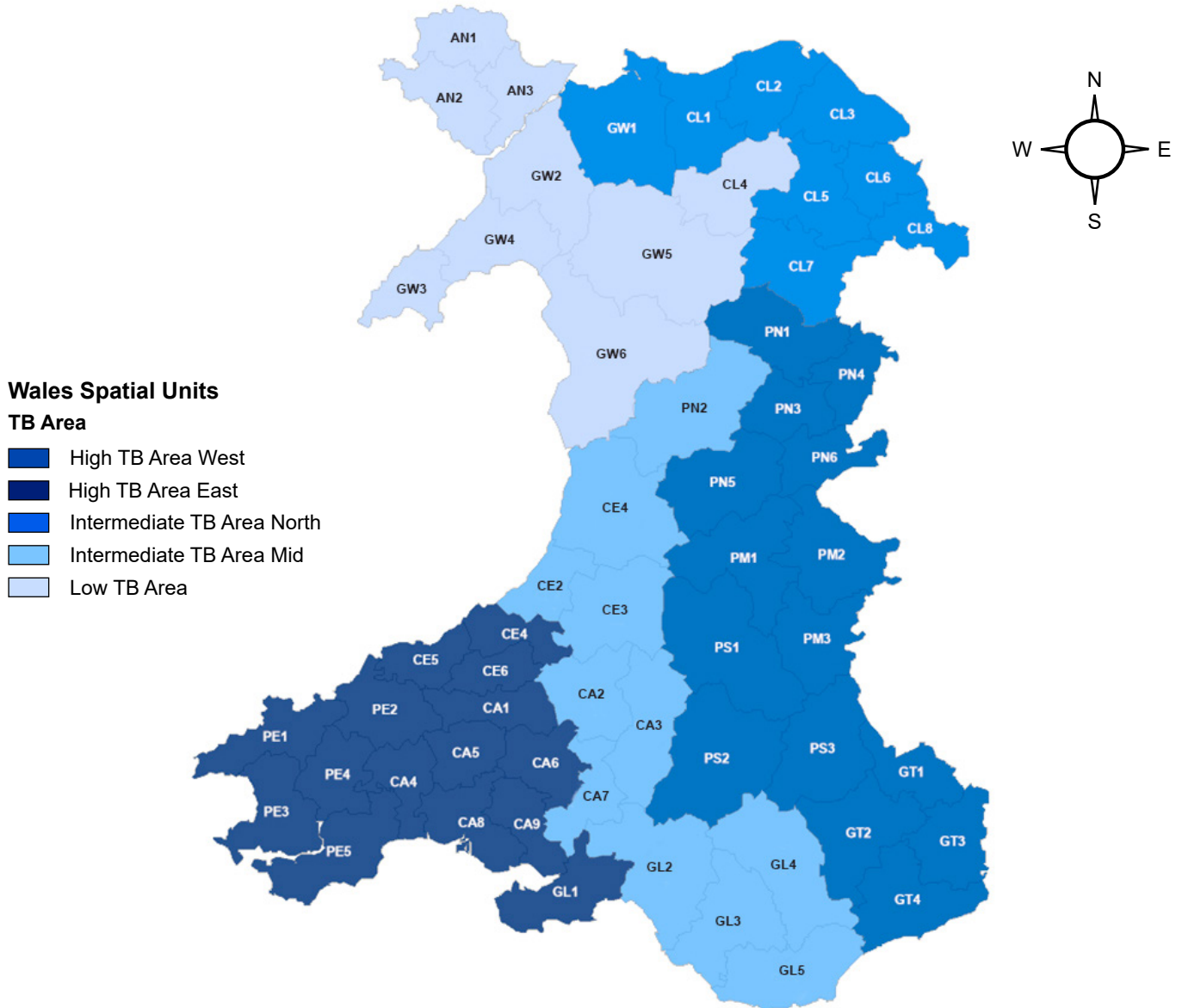
Work area	Short term	Medium term	Longer term
<b>Governance</b>	Publicly Appoint Chair and members to Programme Board and members to TAG.	Agree Terms of Reference. Produce forward look work plan.	Deliver on forward look plan. Steer direction and make decisions.
<b>Task and Finish group recommendations</b>	Changes to the format, language and tone of letters and notices.	Facilitate stakeholder engagement with APHA vets. Utilise private veterinary role to full potential.	Greater availability of TB testing data for stakeholders.
<b>Regionalisation and targets</b>	Keep a watching brief.	Review 2024 regionalisation target.	Transfer spatial units as appropriate.
<b>TB Hotspot Clusters in ITBAN/Low TB Area</b>	Initial contiguous tests and post-breakdown tests (approx. 6 and 18 months after movement restrictions are lifted) will be read at 'severe'.	Monitor and develop new measures according to disease levels.	
<b>Increasing levels of disease in Anglesey</b>	Give consideration to initial phase of measures.	Maintain communication with farmers on measures implemented.	Implement policy based on epidemiological evaluation.
<b>Project to address TB incidence in Pembrokeshire</b>	Invite proposals for delivery of the project.	Tender to be awarded and commence.	Project to run for 2 years with the option of a 3rd year extension.
<b>Approved Finishing Units</b>	Consider options to simplify the licensing process.	Implement licence simplification.	Continue engagement with industry.

Work area	Short term	Medium term	Longer term
<b>TB Payments</b>	Engage with industry on TB Payments options.	Consultation and analysis of deliverability & cost.	Change the TB Payments regime.
<b>Informed Purchasing</b>	Change legislation to publish TB free herd information on ibTB.	Engage with industry and Defra on Informed Purchasing.	Introduce a mandatory Informed Purchasing regime.
<b>TB Testing</b>	Authorise the use of Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATTs) in Wales.	Conduct evaluation of ATT pilot.	Adjust policy if required.
<b>Cattle vaccination</b>	Participate in UK wide cattle vaccination discussions.	Consultation on cattle vaccination.	Deployment once the vaccine and DIVA test are licensed.
<b>Badger vaccination</b>	Continue Grant funded operations.	Consider vaccination on Holy Island and Anglesey.	Review badger vaccination.
<b>Legislative changes</b>	Amend the TB (Wales) Order 2010.	Consider other changes to the 2010 and 2011 TB Orders.	Amend legislation as appropriate.
<b>Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)</b>	Keep a watching brief	Maintain communication with industry	Link development of TB payments and Informed Purchasing to SFS



# Annex 1: Wales Regionalisation map

Wales TB Area boundaries as of March 2023



Source: APHA Bovine TB surveillance data.