



Stress and Loss

A report on the impact of bovine
TB on farming families



"The worst thing was that cows very close to calving had to be shot on farm.
We could see the calves kicking inside as they died."

"I feel there is a constant dark cloud of uncertainty over me, causing stress, anxiety
and fear. I feel weary, mentally and physically which results in pain in my body."

"Financially it is very stressful. Cash flow is a huge problem.
Having to keep animals when I would normally sell them puts more pressure on
me , on my family, animal accommodation and feed costs. I don't know how long
we can keep going."

Acknowledgements

FCN would like to thank:

Alan Spedding who managed the project on behalf of FCN
The farmers who contributed to this project
The FCN volunteers who carried out the interviews

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Farm Crisis Network (FCN)

FCN provides pastoral and practical support to farming families facing difficult times. In the last financial year it helped almost 4000 people in England and Wales through the care and dedication of 300 volunteers from farming and related communities. Most of FCN's work is done on the farm by local volunteers and many beneficiaries are supported for months and even years. FCN has a national helpline which is staffed every day of the year between 7am and 11pm.

FCN has a broad remit. Its service is freely available to anyone within the farming community and we 'walk with' clients to help them deal with a range of major setbacks from severe indebtedness and insolvency, problems with regulation, communication with Defra agencies, illness, depression, bereavement and, all too frequently, suicide.

FCN's concern is for the well-being of the people who feed the nation and maintain the countryside. To that end FCN collaborates with RABI and the ARC-Addington Fund as Farming Help to ensure that any farming family that needs support for their business or domestic situation can get it.

FCN Helpline 0845 367 9990

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“I am frustrated by the situation and very anxious but we keep going as we feel there is no real alternative. My father was a dairy farmer and I hope the family will continue the tradition. I am determined to keep going if at all possible.”

Introduction

While the debate rages on about the causes of Bovine TB, the efficacy of the testing regime and the best means of eradicating the disease, there is apparently little public or official thought for the families who find themselves dealing with the practical realities of living and working with the threat or aftermath of a breakdown.

Anecdotally, everyone knows that TB is not good news for farmers. If you do fall victim there is little to be done other than grit your teeth and get on with it, watching in frustration and disbelief as policymakers haver while your business deteriorates and the disease gets an ever firmer grip on our livestock industry. But is this a true picture of what is going on?

In the course of FCN’s work in the UK TB hotspots, volunteers routinely encounter farming families for whom the reality of TB is far from easy. In the South West and West Wales in particular FCN has increasing numbers of cases for which TB related issues are a major problem. In addition, cases that present as financial difficulty, depression or family break-up often have TB as an underlying cause but one which has become so much a part of life that it is sometimes not even specified. Perhaps worst of all, there are many families struggling under the stress and loss of living with TB who never ask for help but whose business and quality of life are severely eroded by it. The resilience of many farmers in this country is incredible and not always to their advantage.

FCN has commissioned this research to establish the real impact of bovine TB on livestock farmers in TB hotspots. It is not the function of this research to join the hue and cry about causes, eradication and political will or lack of it. The purpose is to hear what is really happening on our farms and to learn from significant numbers of farmers the detail of exactly what TB means to their livelihood and family life. In writing this research there has been no attempt to ‘spin’ the conclusion. Simply we report on the data as it was delivered to us.

In giving farmers the opportunity to talk about how TB affects them and their families it would have been naïve to expect no comment on the hot potatoes of TB politics! Most respondents found occasion to comment (sometimes more robustly than is printable!) on the political issues. The gist of those opinions is published here without commentary.

It is FCN’s hope that the voices of the 68 farmers who are the real authors of this report will be heard with humility by all those who need to hear.

“We are all upset not knowing what to do until we are clear. We are unable to sell any breeding stock which is our main income. My father who took on our pedigree herd from his father is devastated, unable to sleep and causing my mother sleepless nights as well.”

Summary of findings

Farm Crisis Network (FCN) is concerned about the stress on farming families caused by dealing with bovine TB and the impact of the approach taken by the authorities. This report summarises conclusions from interviews with farmers who had suffered breakdowns in the last two years. The interviews were carried out by FCN volunteers in three areas - West Wales, the South West and Worcestershire - all bovine TB hotspots.

The emotional affect on farmers and their families

“Because of the stress I am under, my family bear the brunt and I can see the fear and insecurity I am passing on to them; who knows what long term damage is being caused.”

The results show that dealing with TB causes considerable stress on farmers and their families. 20% of those interviewed admitted that they were either panicked or devastated by the news of their latest outbreak and a further 50% were upset or worried by the news.

Farmers’ reactions ranged between feeling the pressure but coping, through to actual physical illness caused by stress and in some cases feelings of not wanting to carry on.

Some farmers’ families were said to be relatively unaffected by the outbreak but this was usually in situations where the family was not closely engaged in farming activities or where the number of reactors after a test was low. Families were often described as supportive - they tackled the emotional strain together. But sharing the strain meant more pressure, often on the farmer’s partner.

Farmers’ comments underlined how everybody in the family is emotionally involved – they were often upset by the loss of their cattle many of which they would know individually, worried by the financial strain resulting from cattle being culled, by the consequent restrictions and by the extra work which this caused. Sometimes the strain is very graphically shown in the wording of the comments. One farmer reported *“Pressure on the marriage, children picking up tension and friction, upsetting for children when pet cow was put down, psychological stress when young calves are shot.”*

The financial impact on farm business and family life

“Financially devastating”

Impact on the finances of the farm was the most frequently mentioned factor when farmers were asked about how the outbreak had affected the running of their farm business. Reductions in sales of milk or beef caused by the loss of culled animals and the inability to market store cattle were frequently cited. There were many comments about extra costs including having to buy extra feed and bedding for stock which had to be finished instead of being sold as stores, putting up new buildings for them and employing extra labour. In the case of farms with pedigree cattle there were losses by being unable to gain a premium for pedigree sales whilst the herd was under movement restrictions and the cost of losing valued lines which had been bred on the farm by generations of the farming family. These losses were increased because the compensation given did not cover the premium value of pedigree cattle. This was a problem for those on organic systems too.

When asked what was the biggest difficulty caused by the herd breakdown the impact of marketing restrictions was identified by the highest number of farmers interviewed, followed by stress, the government attitude to a badger cull, dealing with the bureaucracy and perceived inaccuracies in testing.

When interviewers were asked for their perceptions of the state of mind of the farmers they interviewed, most were classified as 'resigned', 'frustrated', 'angry' or 'stressed' and the interviewers comments showed that even those who seemed calm usually had more negative feelings below the surface.

The thorny question of badgers

"We are frustrated because we do not feel the test is accurate, and also that the wildlife reservoir of TB is not being addressed."

95% of farmers interviewed thought that what they were required to do by the TB regime would not contribute to the eradication of TB. Asked to comment why this was the case 81% spontaneously said that the disease should be tackled in badgers and other wildlife – cattle are only half of the problem. One farmer put this general view succinctly as *"the test does not contribute to eradication of TB, just to eradication of some cattle!"* These results indicate that government has failed to persuade these farmers that the measures being practised can control bovine TB. Farmers think a badger cull is necessary.

Official communications with farmers

"Authorities appear only to be concerned with the practicalities of testing and imposition of restrictions, with no real effort to discuss the causes and prevention of TB."

Official communication with farmers leaves much to be desired. Farmers were asked about the helpfulness of communication about testing, about causes of TB and about prevention. There was a mixed response about the helpfulness of communication about testing but average scores were worse for communication about causes of the disease and worse again for prevention. There were hints that officials started off enthusiastic about being helpful but lost interest as time went on and their advice was not working or was not taken. The comments are so dominated by the need to tackle TB in badgers and other wildlife that it seems likely that other advice was considered to be ineffectual or impractical and so was ignored. There were also comments that vets were not allowed to advise freely because government doesn't allow them to say what they think.

Criticism of government measures

"Confused about why many cattle have no lesions - need more evidence."

There was also concern about the accuracy of the test – sometimes this focused on the skills of vets reading the results at the second test but mainly it was centred on a perception that the report of no visible TB lesions in slaughtered cattle meant that the animals concerned were free of the disease. It would seem that government has failed to get across to farmers that the rate of false positives for the skin test is extremely low and that only one in a thousand cattle reacting to the test would be free of TB.

Other factors

Only 29% of those interviewed could manage their farms so that TB free cattle could be kept away from infected cattle. So for most farmers having any cattle reacting to the TB test effectively

produces a risk of the disease spreading throughout the herd. It also disrupts management of the farm by effectively ending marketing of cattle except for slaughter.

The impact of tests and restrictions

“I get very upset being taken from other work that should be done. The work on the farm never catches up. Each test costs £600 in labour.”

More than half the restrictions lasted less than a year but there was a small rump of farms where restrictions had gone on for five years or more. 59% of the farms were being tested for TB every two months. Two monthly testing comes to dominate farm life disrupting routines and meaning, as one farmer put it, *“we are always playing catch up”*.

The testing process itself disturbs and upsets cattle, reducing milk production and weight gain in young stock – the cost of this is impossible to evaluate and will vary from farm to farm. But time is probably the main cost. Overall each test took an average of 48 hours of farm labour with 23 more hours extra labour brought in to help.

The results also show that testing is very stressful to the farmers. The second test, where the reactors are diagnosed, stresses farmers even more than the first – 65% of farmers interviewed scored the second test either 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale of increasing stress.

The impact on the herd

“My son gets very upset by TB. It really hits him hard because his commitment to a closed herd is being thwarted.”

Less than a third of the farmers interviewed bought replacement cattle after they had culled reactors. This was often because they wanted to breed their own replacements and did not want to break their system of closed herds. Some took the opportunity to reduce herd size and take some of the pressure off management, others felt that they had been forced to reduce herd size because suitable replacements were not available and were losing income as a result. Still others, unable to follow their normal practice of selling stores, were pushed into finishing them at great expense for extra feed, and in some cases they also had to invest in new buildings to house them.

The compensation system

“The compensation paid was about £400 less than the market value of £1100. The animal taken happened to be a first calver or about 36 months old.”

There was a great deal of unhappiness about the system of compensation, particularly on the farms in England where standard values are used. (In Wales reactors are valued on an individual basis on farms.) The farmers found that the English tables undervalued pedigree and organic stock and the stock of those using ‘higher quality’ animals. There was also discontent that compensation did not cover associated losses like production lost whilst finding suitable replacements.

Thanks

Thanks are due to the 68 farmers who allowed the FCN interviewers to ask the survey questions some of which they would have found deeply personal. Also to the volunteers who did the interviews, fitting them into what was often a very heavy case load. No names because we want to do everything we can to protect the names of the farmers who took part - but they know who they are!

Research methodology

Farm Crisis Network (FCN) is concerned about the stress on farming families in England and Wales caused by dealing with bovine TB and the impact of the approach taken by the authorities. Sixty eight farmers affected by TB were interviewed for the survey between November 2008 and June 2009. Of these 28 were in the South West (Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucestershire), 20 in Worcestershire and 20 in West Wales.

FCN volunteers were used as interviewers and were asked to talk to farmers who had suffered from a TB breakdown in the previous two years. They were also asked to select a range of farm size and type appropriate to their areas. Most of the interviews were done by telephone but a few were face to face on the farm.

The questionnaire used in the survey is given in Appendix 1

The sample

Most (84%) of the farmers interviewed were owner occupiers though some had tenanted land as well. There was a reasonable range of farm sizes with only one farm in the 0-50 acres range. Most farms in all areas were classified as lowland grass except in Worcestershire where there was a slight preponderance of lowland arable mixed farms. There were only small samples of upland farms in the mix. 24% of the farms were pedigree and 8% were organic. Dairy cows were the most frequent enterprise appearing in 60% of the sample; 34% had suckler beef; 26% ran beef calf to finish enterprises; and a further 28% ran beef to store enterprises. Many of the latter were in West Wales where they appeared on 60% of the sample farms.

There was a good spread of herd sizes ranging from below 200 cows to more than 500, although there were only two herds of between 501 and 600 cows—both in West Wales. There was a fair spread of sizes of non-breeding herds though relatively few with more than 200 cattle.

Keeping TB free cattle separate from those affected by the disease would reduce the rate of cross infection. However overall only 29% of farmers interviewed were able to do this. The proportion of farmers in West Wales who could split their holdings (45%) was higher than in the South West (18%) or Worcestershire (30%).

There was a spread of less than 1 to 50 in the number of years since the first TB breakdown in the sample herds with an average of eight years. The average in West Wales was higher at 11 years but largely because of two herds where the first breakdowns had been 40 and 50 years ago. All but two farms in the sample had had restrictions in the last five years and Table 1 shows the percentage of farms in each of the three areas which were free of restrictions at the time the questionnaires were completed.

Table 1: Percentage of farmers free from restrictions currently

South West	West Wales	Worcestershire	Overall
22	25	47	30

Fewer than a third of herds were free of restrictions at the time the questionnaire was completed. Worcestershire was different in that almost half the herds were free of restrictions.

Figure 1 charts how long restrictions lasted. More than half ended inside a year. A significant number of farms have longstanding problems with their restrictions lasting more than 5 years.

Figure 1

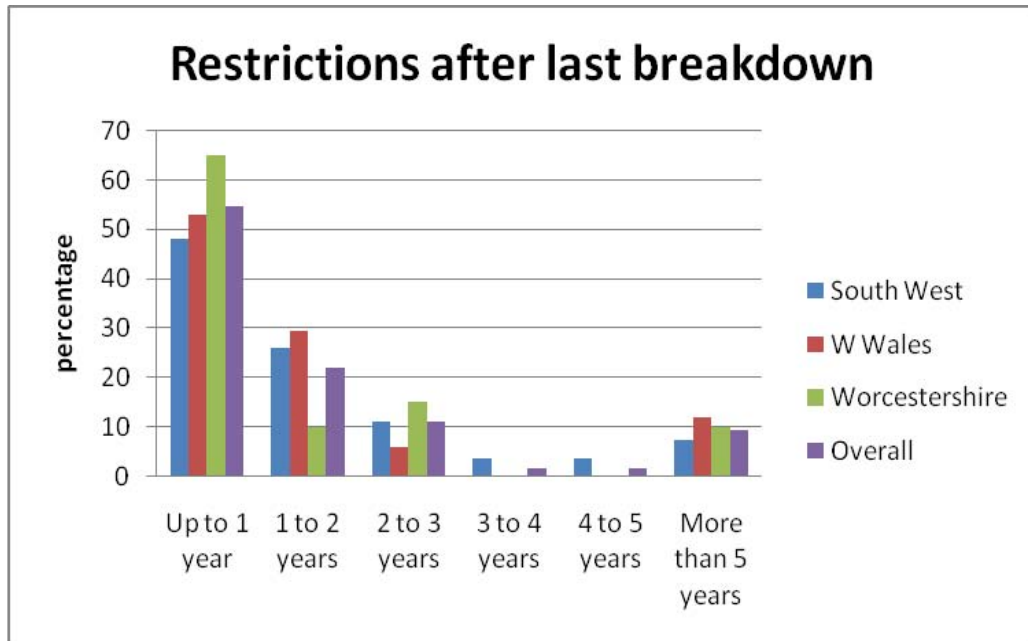


Table 2 shows that over half the farms interviewed were being tested every two months but this ranged from 40% on the Worcestershire farms to 75% in West Wales. Apart from the figures in the table one farmer stated he/she was on four or five tests a year and another that his tests were 7-8 monthly.

Table 2: Frequency of TB tests

	South West	West Wales	Worcs	Overall
Every 2 months	61	75	40	59
Every 6 months	11	5	20	12
Every 12 months	25	10	35	24

Further details of the make up of the sample are given in Appendix 2.

Results

Time taken for testing

“It takes so much time. The vets get paid but it costs us.”

The farmers in the sample were asked to estimate how many man hours each test took themselves and their families and staff. This included the process of rounding up the cattle but excluding time of vets or other officials. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Time taken for each full herd TB test

	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Average estimated man hours	33	87	33	48

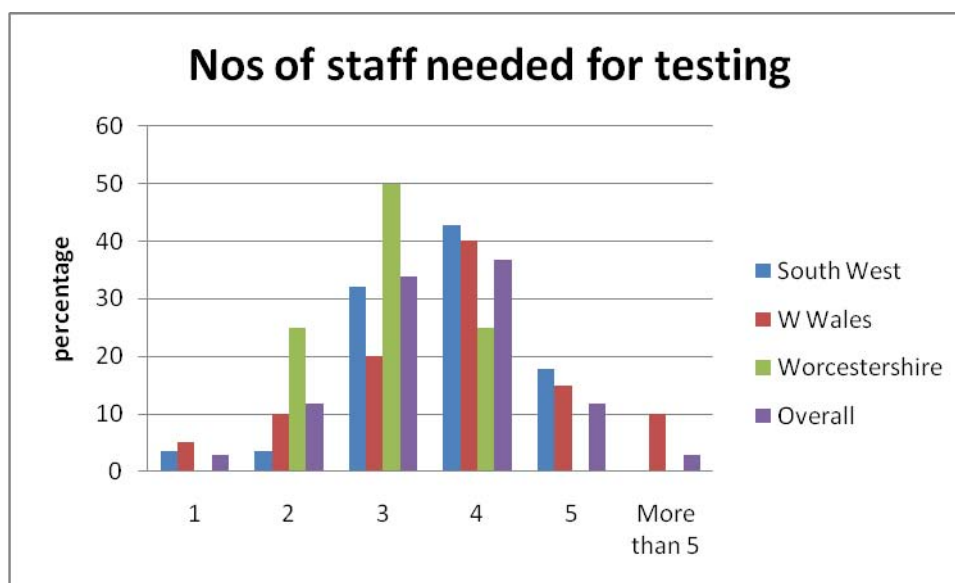
“The main thing is the extra work - both with extra testing but also the fact that stores now have to be finished. This not only creates physical work of feeding and housing, but also the extra work in managing the changes to the system.”

Labour requirements

Overall each test averaged 48 hours of farm labour. Welsh herds took more than twice as long to test – probably because they tended to have more cattle. The tests are obviously very demanding. An average farm on two monthly tests over a year would spend the equivalent of one man working for 30 days!

Figure 2 shows that most farms used three or four staff for testing. Welsh farms tended to use more people.

Figure 2



In addition over half the farms had to bring in extra help from outside as Table 4 shows.

Table 4: Extra staff employed for testing

	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Percentage employing extra staff	64	80	15	54
Of which average number	1.9	1.4	1.7	1.7
Extra employee hours (average)	16	29	36	23

Farmers in Worcestershire were less likely than those in other regions to employ extra staff.

Those who did employ extra staff averaged 1.7 extra people per farm - more in the South West, fewer in West Wales. Extra staff were used for an average of 23 employee hours - more in Worcestershire and fewer in the South West.

From these figures an 'average' farm needs 60 staff hours for each test (allowing for extra staff brought in). So in the case of two monthly testing over a year 700 hours or almost 90 days would be needed.

These figures show how the time demand for testing can thus come to dominate farm life, as some of the comments from affected farmers given later in the report show. Also there is the cost of the time – both in direct terms and indirectly in the reduction of milk and meat yields caused by disturbance of the cattle and, as often seems to be the case, on the impact of the timeliness of other farm operations.

“When we were on annual testing we felt that this was manageable. Now on a 60 day testing interval it is a whole new ball game. A whole week is easily put aside to gather stock and go through the time consuming exercise. Animals are distressed by the procedure, as well as the staff. Other important jobs, for example maize drilling, may be interfered with when our next test is due.”

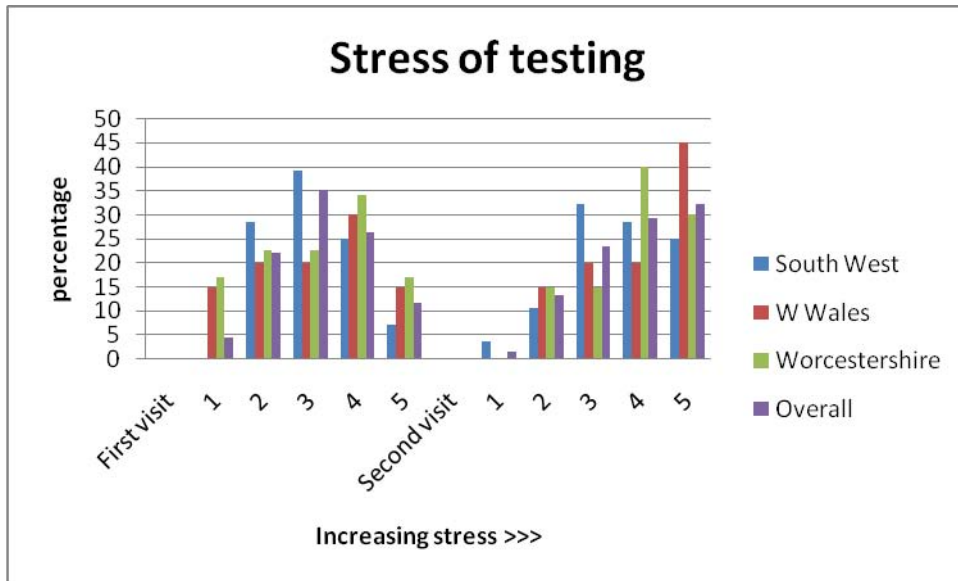
Stress of testing on farmers and their families

The farmers interviewed were asked to score the stress of the first and second parts of their last TB test. It is difficult to measure stress objectively so comparisons of these data need to be made with care.

Farmers' scoring of themselves ranged from 1 for a stress free test to 5 for an extremely stressful test. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Most of the farmers interviewed found the process stressful at both visits but the second visit tended to be more stressful than the first – understandable as that is when any reactors are identified. 38% scored the first visits 4 or 5 on the five point scale but 61% scored the second visits similarly. There is little difference between the three areas but farmers in Worcestershire seemed more stressed than the overall average and those in the South West less stressed than average.

Figure 3



Perceptions of current control measures

“Things are going from bad to worse with no solution in sight. I’m totally convinced of a badger connection but Government won’t accept this. If the public realised the true cost of this situation (testing, slaughter, compensation, etc) they would have a fit!”

Do farmers think that what they are required to do will lead to the eradication of TB? The answer is a resounding ‘no’! Table 5 shows the percentages in each region with 95% of all those interviewed replying in the negative. Only one of the farmers interviewed in the South West and Worcestershire was confident that what they were required to do would contribute to the eradication of TB. Two of the farmers interviewed in West Wales thought they were helping to eradicate TB. Perhaps coincidentally these were interviewed just after the Welsh Government announcement that it was to set up a pilot eradication project which would include culling badgers.

Table 5: Percentage of farmers who thought TB control measures would contribute to the eradication of TB

	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Percentage replying ‘no’	96	89	100	95

“How can we get the badger people to understand?”

Fifty five (81%) of interviewees spontaneously said that the disease should also be tackled in badgers or other wildlife. These results show that government has failed to persuade these farmers that culling badgers would be ineffective in controlling TB. While there are other problems causing stress in farmers which come to light in this survey the consequence of this failure dominates the answers given.

Nineteen respondents were not confident about the accuracy of the TB test. Slaughtered reactors coming back clear of lesions frustrates people. Again government has failed to get over to farmers the fact that post mortem reports of no visible lesions do not mean that the animal concerned was clear of TB and that the false positive rate for the skin test is extremely low (around 1 in 1000).

Better communication of simple facts like this and the reasons why badger culling would not be effective might improve the confidence of farmers about the effectiveness of the testing regime, would reduce stress on them and probably make them more wholeheartedly co-operative in following other bio security measures.

Four respondents had closed herds and still got TB and argue that the cause must therefore be wildlife.

Three respondents in West Wales were cheered by the announcement about a pilot scheme which will include a badger cull in Wales.

“I have huge admiration for the Chief Vet and Minister on their announcement of badger cull in Wales.”

However the strength some of the comments below indicate that most farmers think that nothing short of a badger cull will eradicate TB. Also they feel that their knowledge of the problem on their farms has been discounted in determining policy.

A selection of typical viewpoints follows:

- 1. For every cow tested there should be a badger tested.*
- 2. Have suffered over 40 tests over the years but no obvious improvement in TB prevention or cure has resulted. No strong opinion on whether badgers are the main cause or not but very frustrated with lack of progress on eradication of TB.*
- 3. During the winter when cattle were housed we nearly go clear. Then every autumn (after a period at grass presumably with increased contact with badgers) we have severe breakdowns.*
- 4. Test being used has been in use for over 40 years and it is amazing that it has not been improved over this time. The test does not contribute to eradication of TB; just to eradication of some cattle!*
- 5. When we had the first breakdown, the need for bio security was stressed. But we had had a closed herd for 30 years and no sheep, so it must have come from badgers. DEFRA seemed oblivious to this.*
- 6. Nothing is being done about wildlife, especially badgers. There is plenty of advice on prevention, but impractical and unlikely to make any real difference. TB is prevalent amongst neighbours and quite a few farms have given up cattle altogether because of TB and the lack of any potential solution.*
- 7. Lack of control of the badger population and the test is inaccurate. None of our reactors have had lesions or cultures grown proving TB.*
- 8. A badger cull could contribute towards control but need wider package for eradication. All my badgers died suddenly in Spring last year, presumably from TB, after we tested positive. They probably caught it off my cattle and I believe my cattle contracted it from a neighbour who has had TB outbreaks for years and whose cattle were in a field next to mine.*
- 9. Modern farming is a factor - especially mass use of feed and water troughs. A neighbour went down earlier, the badger setts were on our land and crossed to the neighbour's so had somewhat expected it. Both farms were closed herds. How can we get the badger people to understand?*

10. *Need to tackle disease in wildlife as well to completely eradicate. No lesions found. The foreign vet made so many mistakes she was required to re-measure every one. Lack of professionalism and consistency.*

Slaughter and compensation

The farmers were asked how many breeding and non-breeding cattle were removed for slaughter and compensated since the most recent TB outbreak. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Numbers of cattle slaughtered and compensated

Average number slaughtered	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Breeding cattle	23	53	6	27
Non breeding cattle	3	2	2	2

Many more breeding than non breeding cattle were slaughtered. Because of their larger herds, the Welsh farmers had lost the largest number of cattle. Worcestershire farmers' losses were the lowest of the three areas.

The overall numbers on individual farms was between zero to 600 breeding cattle and zero to 52 non-breeding cattle. A total of 1837 breeding cattle and 172 non breeding cattle were slaughtered across the 68 farms.

Perceptions about whether testing was reducing reactors

The interviewees were asked if the number of cattle reacting to the test is increasing, decreasing or about the same. The results are shown in Table 7.

Overall more farmers thought the number of reactors was decreasing than thought they were increasing or staying about the same. In the South West the three categories were more or less evenly balanced.

Table 7: Perceptions about whether testing was reducing reactors

Percentages	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Increasing	37	6	20	24
Decreasing	30	50	55	43
About the same	33	44	25	33

Replacements and compensation

“Does not compensate for associated cost of the knock-on effects of loss particularly with a closed herd.”

The proportion of farmers who replaced cattle following their latest TB breakdown and whether the compensation they received for culled animals covered replacement costs is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Replacements and compensation

Percentages	SW	WW	Worcs	All
Replacing cattle	32	16	45	31
Payment covered cost of replacements	26	47	30	33

Overall about a third of the farmers interviewed replaced the cattle lost for slaughter. Fewer of the farmers in West Wales did largely because they kept closed herds and so bred their own replacements.

There was a good deal of dissatisfaction about compensation for slaughtered cattle – only 26% of those who replaced cattle in the South West and 30% in Worcestershire thought the compensation covered the costs of replacements. The proportion of farmers happy with valuations was higher in West Wales where actual valuers are still used rather the standard tables used in the rest of the country. However even in West Wales fewer than half of the farmers replacing their cattle were happy with the compensation they received.

Why were farmers not happy with the amount of compensation?

“Whoever fills out the boxes on the compensation tables monthly has no basic knowledge of agriculture or the value of livestock.”

The answers here indicate that the farmers do not like the tables which are used to calculate compensation because they undervalue pedigree and organic cattle and higher quality cattle more generally. Also some found replacements of the same quality difficult to find especially if they were pedigree or organic.

“Abysmal—I got less than 50% of the value of a good dairy cow, whose Gross Revenue Value is around £3K but the payment was only around £700! It used to be better but even then it wasn’t sufficient to cover consequential losses.”

Of 51 responses 22 said that the actual costs they faced for replacements were above the table values. Seventeen farmers said they didn’t feel they got payment which would have covered the cost because their cattle were pedigree and six said it was because their farms were organic. Four said table ranges were too broad and you could miss out by having cattle at the top end of the range. Six said they suffered because they had quality animals which weren’t necessarily pedigree, three said satisfactory replacement cattle were anyway difficult to find and four complained that compensation doesn’t cover associated losses like disruption of business.

Some example comments:

- 1. Covers in strict cash terms but does not compensate for the huge disruption to the business.*
- 2. Only 50% of the value of my pedigree cows.*
- 3. Not paid enough for organic and well fed cattle.*
- 4. Organic and quality cattle cannot be found.*
- 5. Compensation on previous occasion was pitiful – cattle were really fattened for market but tabulations were way below market value.*
- 6. There is no allowance made for the production time lost while trying to find suitable replacements that generally cost more than the compensation paid.*
- 7. They were calving heifers for which there is no specific allowance in tables, and would have fetched more at market than the compensation.*
- 8. Would have had more at mart even though not pedigree.*

Communication with the authorities

“The causes and prevention are not addressed honestly so how can we hope to overcome this problem. The government is afraid to address the situation thus costing them money and causing the farming industry undue stress. The NHS might be better off financially if the TB problem was dealt with properly and honestly because of the untold psychological problems it causes.”

Interviewees were asked to summarise the helpfulness of the authorities on a scale: 1 = no discussion to 5 = very helpful. The results for communication about the testing process are given in Figure 4.

Figure 4

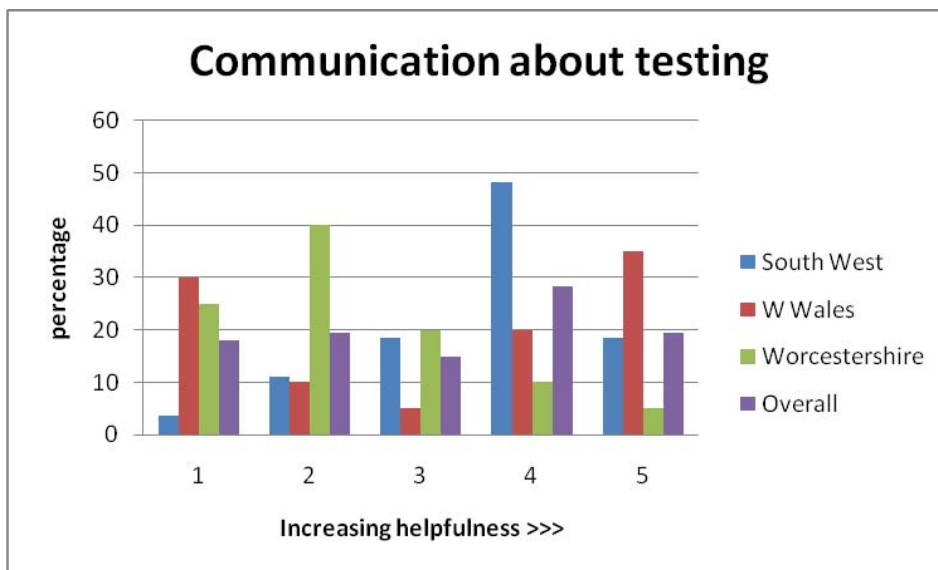
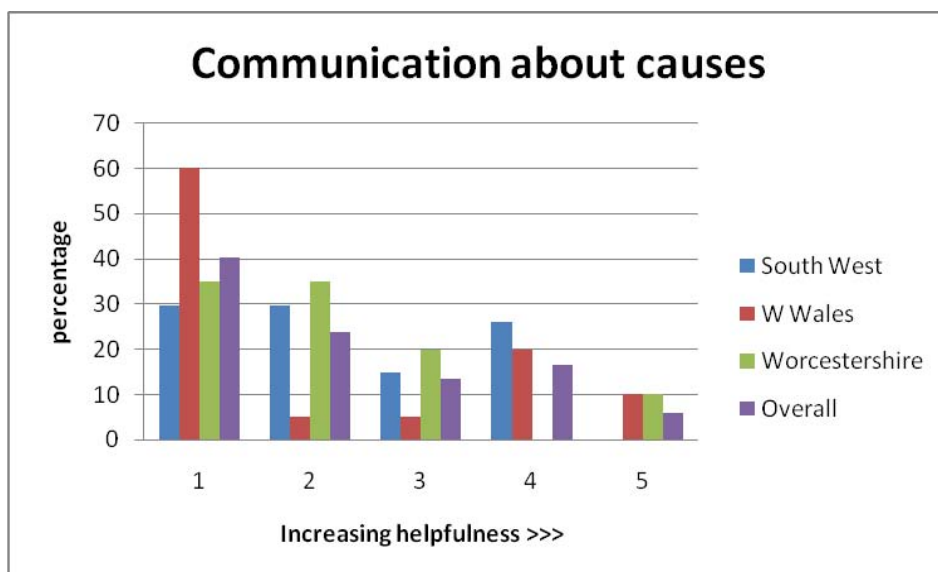


Figure 4 shows a mixed response about the helpfulness of the communication about testing with South West farmers scoring it relatively better than Worcestershire farmers and with the Welsh farmers in between.

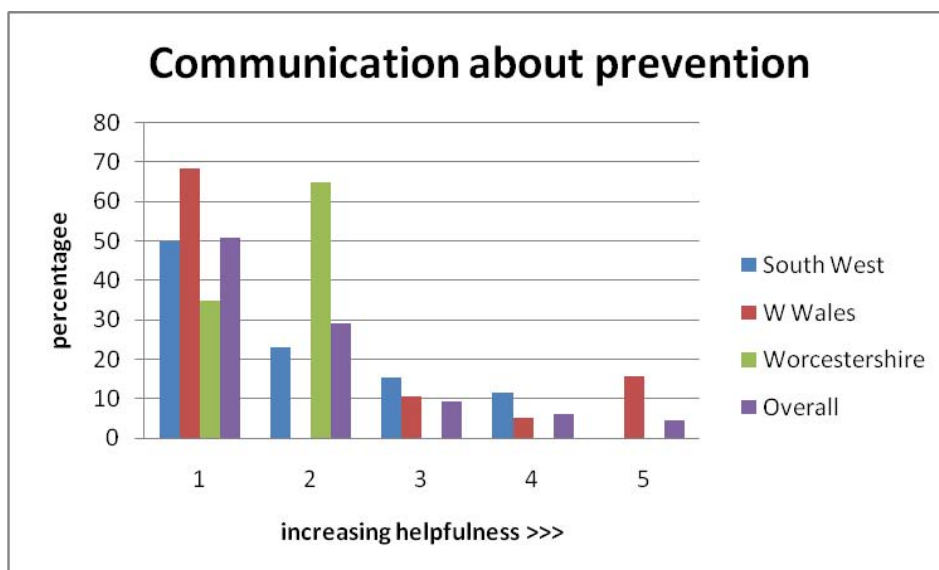
Figure 5 charts what farmers thought of the helpfulness of communication about causes of the disease. This was considered much less helpful than that about the testing process - especially by those in the South West and West Wales.

Figure 5



Communication about the prevention of TB was scored even worse in all three areas as shown in Table 6. 80% of farmers interviewed scored communication about prevention at only 1 or 2 on the scale.

Figure 6



A summary of the comments made by interviewees about communication with the authorities is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Comments about communication with the authorities

Comment	Times mentioned
Number mentioning risk from badgers or wildlife	19
Advice on prevention was not practical	12
Vets hands are tied by government and they are not free to say what they think	9
Skin tests are not reliable	8
Good communication with official and/or own vets	8
Vets discussed initially but nothing lately	4

The number of comments which mentioned badgers and wildlife perhaps indicates that one of the reasons why advice was not considered by farmers as helpful was that it failed to include reference to the culling of badgers. In some cases this seems to invalidate other, often sensible, advice offered by officials and vets in the minds of the farmers.

There is a feeling among some farmers that vets are not allowed to advise freely. Also there are indications in the comments that vets give advice early on in outbreaks but this tends to fade away as the outbreak proceeds. In some cases Defra vets are seen as better than the farmers' own practitioner, in other cases vice versa. Concern about the accuracy of the test again emerges as an issue.

A selection of comments is given below.

1. *Authorities appear only to be concerned with the practicalities of testing and imposition of restrictions with no real effort to discuss the causes and prevention of TB.*
2. *Communication good because own vets are helpful. I also had a man from Defra who studied badgers and he was very helpful.*
3. *Prevention advice not practical (electric fencing around all buildings!)*
4. *Plenty of discussion on prevention in early days but advice impractical and now appear to have given up!*
5. *The Animal Health person was very helpful indeed and even helped work out a way to keep some cattle separate and therefore free from the lock down. Government bureaucracy extremely unhelpful. The valuer very helpful.*
6. *Defra staff understand the situation but just going through political motions. Prevention advice not practical or helpful. The test is not accurate – science has not really advanced over several decades. At least 50 years ago they knew you had to cull badgers and it was successfully controlled.*
7. *Assigned a local vet who has been very helpful on process and causes. Prevention advice not practical – can't fence livestock away all the time and anyway does not keep the badgers out. Warwick University has developed a urine test for badger setts which could be used for a controlled culling of badgers (not all – e.g. this farm has only just got TB after 40 years!). But appears Defra has no desire to pursue this. Indeed, apparently they are saying that they will not take note of the trial badger cull in Wales or the successful badger cull in Ireland.*
8. *Own vet has been very sympathetic and helpful. But Defra was dreadful and most unhelpful – when I went in to their offices to see them to discuss the pitiful compensation they basically refused to discuss it! On causes, Defra have highlighted problem of human sludge (applies to some neighbours but not me) being possibly infectious but seem to ignore deer who do graze alongside my cattle. On prevention, advice to fence off badger latrine runs is utter nonsense – they have to go somewhere and fencing can't stop them entirely. The only way to solve the problem is to cull badgers or vaccinate – vaccination would be cheaper than the current costs of compensation.*
9. *Communication used to be okay but now almost non-existent, particularly for causes and prevention. Used to have a Defra Case Vet, who got to know your situation and provided valuable advice. Currently no Case Vet at all, so have to use own vet and Defra support is poor. Tend to have foreign vets, mainly Spanish, who may be well qualified but their English is generally limited. They do not know the local situation and turnover is frequent so no ongoing relationship can be established.*
10. *The state vets were far more helpful than our own vet. They told me I needed to deal with the badgers and even suggested how I might do it.*
11. *I was not worried about usual annual test, no TB in over 50 years, but 40 reacted. But there was no advice as to why this may have been. They were slow picking up for slaughter and communicating when it was to happen. The worst thing was that cows very close to calving had to be shot on farm; we could see the calves kicking inside as they died. Own vet gave better advice than ministry vets on testing process.*
12. *Little incentive to improve bio security but new regime (Welsh compensation going to be linked to bio security) should help. Little or no advice given by own vet or ministry.*

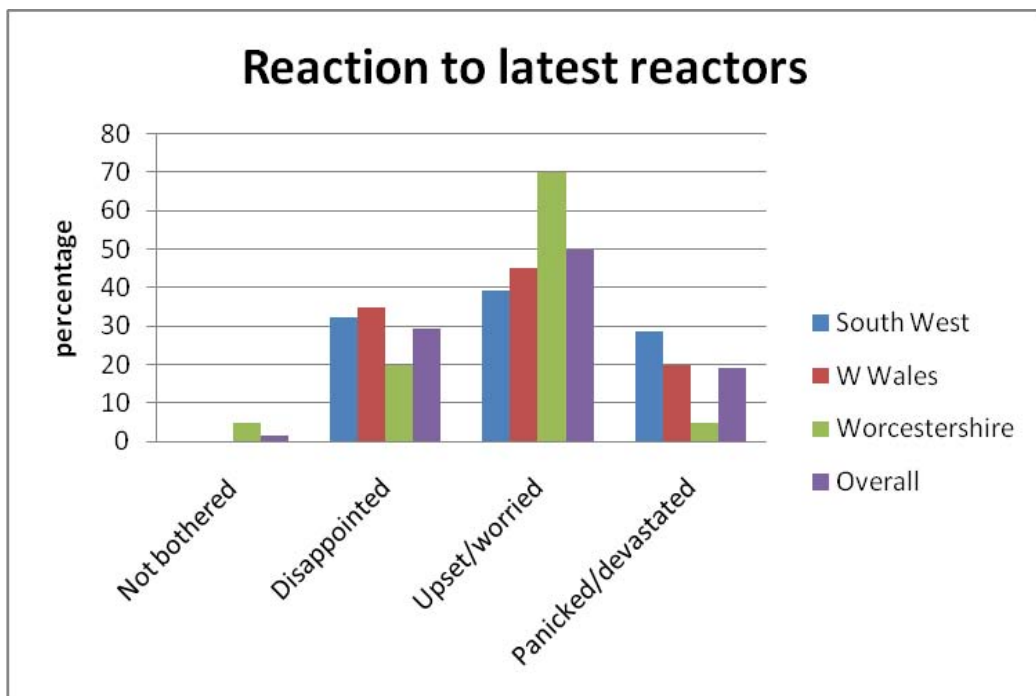
13. *The correspondence from the ministry has improved since the new minister has been in charge. (West Wales)*
14. *Sent someone out to have look at badger setts, advised electric fence around it! That was the sum of the advice.*
15. *Scheduled test was delayed without explanation. I had to chase it up. We feel that it wasn't badgers that caused our problem. If badgers are cleared out will infected badgers move in to the vacuum? Badgers need vaccinating.*

Taking the news of reactors

Overall 20% of farmers interviewed said they were panicked and devastated by their latest breakdown as shown in Figure 7 overleaf. At the other extreme fewer than 2% were not bothered by it and 50% said they were upset or worried.

Those saying they were panicked and/or devastated tended to just have experienced their first breakdown and there are indications that some affected farmers coped better in longer breakdowns.

Figure 7



Impact on the farmer, family and business

Interviewees were asked how TB affected their family, their personal wellbeing and the management of the business.

Impact on the family

“Pressure on the marriage, children picking up tension and friction, upsetting for children when pet cow was put down, psychological stress when young calves are shot.”

“We have lived with it for years and now accept it as a fact of life! I Have a six month old baby and can't use my own milk due to the risk. Our elder child is six and when we had the first breakdown we had to really battle to get her vaccinated. Children on affected farms should be routinely tested, but they are not.”

There were 67 responses relating to impacts on the family. These are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: Main comments on impact on family

Comment	Number
Family upset at loss of animals	16
Very little impact (often where family didn't work in the business or where small breakdowns)	16
Extra work and financial strain	13
Wife affected	12
Just get on with it largely due to mutual support in the family	6

Only 16 farmers said there was very little impact on their families and this usually happened where the family worked away or were otherwise not involved with the business. Also small breakdowns seemed to have little effect on the family – more were about deleterious effects on those in the family who were close to the pressure, usually the wife of the farmer. Some families cope with it together and share the load to allow the farmer to get on with life. Extra work and strain on finances was felt by the family on some farms.

A selection of the more detailed comments is given below.

1. *Main thing is the extra work – both with the extra testing but also with the fact that stores now have to be finished. This not only creates physical work of feeding and housing but also the extra work in managing the changes to the system.*
2. *Wife fully involved in testing and her health suffers as a result. Gets swollen feet from standing on cattle crush for long periods. Significantly increased physical danger from moving stressed animals.*
3. *Having to supply breakfast and lunch for eight people every 60 days as well as doing a full time job.*
4. *Get very upset being taken from other work that should be done. The work on the farm never catches up. Each test costs £600 in labour.*
5. *Got used to it. It is part of the farming process—test, go down, have animals taken away, replace, test, go down, have animals taken away, replace, test, go down, have animals taken away, replace...*
6. *Because of the stress I am under, my family bear the brunt and I can see the fear and insecurity I am passing on to them. Who knows what long term damage is being caused?*
7. *We have only just 'gone down' again with TB after being clear for five years. We were hoping that we had un-infected badgers / wildlife in our immediate vicinity – but obviously not. We run a closed herd and so haven't bought in the disease. Our teenage sons are being brought up with TB as a way of life. It was never an issue for us at their age. My father never saw a badger in the wild until he was 25 years old and now we have them digging in our garden! My eldest son has done his GCSE World Issues course work on 'TB and Badgers'. He takes the subject very seriously. I can see that we will soon feel depressed and fed up if this TB situation isn't contained in the foreseeable future.*

8. *Me and my wife are both very worried and had many sleepless nights. My wife, who does all the paperwork, is over burdened with it — all the licences and arrangements needed for buying in forward stores to finish them off. We are also concerned about the future of the business.*
9. *We are all upset, not knowing what to do until we are clear. We are unable to sell any breeding stock which is our main income. My father who took on our pedigree herd from his father is devastated, unable to sleep and causing my mother sleepless nights as well.*
10. *Financially devastating; we had intended to drastically reduce commercial cattle for financial reasons and to reduce workload, freeing us up to take other employment. Instead workload and expenses increased along with stress. The children don't understand why the cattle have gone.*
11. *No particular problem especially since reduction of herd.*
12. *Concerned about backlash to farmers if badger cull happens but unsure it will!*
13. *Lot of emotions; feel guilty and ashamed; have let neighbours down. Concerned about livelihood.*

Impact on the wellbeing of the farmer

“I don't want to carry on farming. There is no light at the end of the tunnel because nothing is trying to stop it.”

“My husband has been seriously upset by TB. He is a real stockman and loves his animals. He hates seeing cattle taken away to slaughter without any proper attempt to prevent this happening. He has been devastated by the TB and his health has suffered due to the stress.”

There were 65 responses relating to impacts on the wellbeing of the farmer. Interviewees' comments can be roughly classified into one of five categories as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Degrees of stress to the farmer

	Number
Feeling pressure but coping	26
Stressed or depressed	29
Stress leading to physical illness	5
Don't want to carry on	3
Calm	5

Almost all of the interviewees showed some degree of stress with more than half admitting that they were stressed. There were three cases of physical illness and three who are so down they do not want to carry on.

A selection of the detailed responses is given below.

1. *I have been stressed by TB and testing but have coped. I don't think my health has suffered directly but the loss of pedigree cows, in particular, is emotionally difficult.*
2. *We just keep going but we are frustrated by the lack of meaningful action by the authorities. For example, immediate culling of wildlife in an affected area successfully prevented spread of TB in New Zealand and also in USA. But UK has allowed it to spread to such an extent that it now cannot be controlled.*
3. *Utterly despondent*

4. *I have not noticed any problem but it must affect me as I cannot do what I want with my business. I get stressed when I have my test to organise. Getting the cattle in the right place and the amount of staff needed for the test is crucial so it runs smoothly.*
5. *Extra aggravation on top of all the other things resulted in the splitting up of a family partnership - had to change from dairy to beef production.*
6. *I have been unable to sell calves - though some are sold but cannot be moved off the farm. We still have all last year's calves. I'm afraid to replace cows as may bring in more disease and I want to retain a closed herd.*
7. *Furious with all the red tape when we want to sell anything, inconsistencies in regulations and the notice required.*
8. *Concerned about the future especially silage stocks and housing for store cattle during next winter.*
9. *Stressed, especially at first, but now okay - just grit teeth and keep going.*
10. *It has put ten years on me and my wife. We have felt at times that life is not worth living when special animals gone.*
11. *I am resigned to it but my wife is fed up with no stability. She does the accounts. The milk sales go down so we have less money.*
12. *I feel there is a constant dark cloud of uncertainty over me causing stress, anxiety and fear. I feel weary, mentally and physically, which results in manifest pain in my body.*
13. *Depressed and fed up. Just another lot of government interference which is not solving the problem.*
14. *Suffer from depression anyway. We have had to have animals shot on farm. Management issues are more complicated. Much more stress. Will not allow animals to be killed on the farm again. Particularly devastating when they are heavy in calf. Authorities don't realise the human impact - even laughed about reactors.*
15. *Stressed to the hilt.*

Management of the business

“Myriad of minor impacts which together have a major impact, e.g. movement restrictions lead to increased stock levels, less grazing available, more feed and feeding required, accommodation shortage, increased workload and hassle, cash-flow problems ...”

There were 64 responses relating to the impact of TB on management of the farm business. These are summarised in Table 12.

Loss of income was the most common response but impacts are often very complex as some of the comments below show.

1. *Overstocking means we have to send bull calves off to slaughter at a week old - 250 a year - costs £10 each but they are worth £80. So we lose £90 average on each animal - nearly £25k not compensated. Cannot keep them long enough to determine their worth as a breeding bull. Total of around 600 animals lost in last six and a half years. Constant management problems e.g. we have bought land to accommodate increasing herd - 60 heifers registered in the last six weeks. We should have been retiring but cannot bear to dispose of herd to slaughter so we have increased the dairy enterprise - new parlour etc, more labour employed.*

Table 12: Summary of impacts on the management of the farm business

Impact	No of mentions
Loss of income or increase in costs	30
Option to sell stores gone	14
Forward planning difficult	12
More feed to be purchased	11
Cannot sell or show pedigree stock	7
Lost production	5
Calves have to be destroyed	4
Always catching up	3
Had to reduce stock numbers	3
Little impact	6

2. *Difficulty in cheese making (unless fully clear milk has to be pasteurised) and selling off calves and barren cows and breeding stock if not required. Can't always purchase enough organic food to feed cattle having to be held under restrictions.*
3. *All bull calves are shot at 4-5 days old, cannot sell (renewed) cows - loss of £45,000 of income. Cannot export Friesian bull calves—loss of £2,000 of income. (In 1992 when started only one sett on farm now more than 10 setts.)*
4. *Still building up numbers - knocking back this process. No compensation for milk production that is lost. Used to sell bull calves within 40 days but now holding on to them which means less space and more costs and labour time.*
5. *Two buildings costing £50k have been built to hold cattle that cannot be sold. The money has had to be borrowed from the bank. Besides this, we have £50k of stock on the farm that not been sold. This means extra borrowing of £100k making the farm business unprofitable.*
6. *Reduced size of herd to become less intensive and this may have contributed to reduced impact of TB. Having a smaller herd is easier to manage when under pressure and reduces cash flow difficulties. $\frac{3}{4}$ Hereford and $\frac{1}{4}$ Simmental cross is fairly quiet (compared to previously having some Limousin which are very nervy and much more affected by testing).*
7. *Stopped growing maize to reduce risk (badgers frequently in the maize field). Extra straw needed for bedding and hay to feed due to restrictions – hence moved to grass only. Lost closed herd due to having to replace.*
8. *Not too much of an impact as we finish our own cattle - just more time and paperwork getting permission and chasing licences. A lot more hassle and lack of freedom to make own business decisions. Set up is organised to cope as efficiently as possible with TB threat.*
9. *We have spent £250K on a brand new dairy for 300 cows but now cannot get up to that number due to TB restrictions so suffering financially.*

10. *The dairy herd is a result of 40 years worth of breeding improvements. The herd has been pedigree since 1974. It is so upsetting to lose important breeding lines that are impossible to replace. Farm income will be hit by the latest breakdown a week ago. There could be a 10% cull as a result with consequent loss of cash flow income plus the cost of purchasing equivalent value replacements.*
11. *Wanting to keep a closed herd I have retained as many heifers as possible for herd replacements, causing a lot of extra work and extra stock. Now up against NVZ rules because of it.*
12. *We sell cattle every week. It is playing havoc with our process as the notice required is inflexible. They should use fax or email rather than insisting on post. We can't buy cattle we want because of the restrictions.*
13. *Lost many foundation stock; hard to recover. Took three years to get anything of quality back - cannot compensate for the time. Cash flow badly affected yet had to buy better quality stock in. Now lower valuations, even in Wales, affects whole potential of the breeding. Also cannot sell stock from annual/6 month testing regions at the big pedigree sales to those in four-year testing areas.*
14. *Can't replace home bred cattle. Can't replace animals in full milk. Youngest cows get TB. Losing milk production - 600 litres per day down but no compensation for that. Six more cows going off tomorrow and guaranteed there will be no lesions. Can't plan; restricted from buying in replacements. Inflexibility on treating for fluke. Can't put reactors' milk in tank, can't feed to calves, can't put down drain - so if put in slurry tank eventually ends up on land. Wonder if this causes problems.*

The biggest difficulty

There were 64 responses relating to the biggest difficulty in dealing with TB in the herd and they are summarised below in Table 13.

Table 13: Biggest difficulty

Concern	Number
Impact of marketing restrictions	21
Stress	14
Government attitude to badger cull	12
Dealing with bureaucracy	11
Testing is not accurate	5

The impact of marketing restrictions was the most often mentioned biggest difficulty; followed by coping with the stress, badger culling, bureaucracy and the perceived inaccuracy of testing. A selection of detailed comments is given below.

1. *Knowing how to stop TB and when it will be dealt with.*
2. *One of the biggest problems is not being able to test animals over the weekend!*
3. *Testing – a week lost every 2 months. It feels like a complete waste of life!*

4. *Cut in income from loss of milking cows. Also future potential breeding stock. Most cows killed by Defra had calves inside them.*
5. *Never able to have a pedigree sale - can only sell to slaughterhouse. Had to build extra sheds to accommodate cattle held too long.*
6. *The sheds were crowded and the stock couldn't be out. Some of them were getting violent to me.*
7. *Frustration that cannot take obvious measures that need to be taken e.g. culling badgers. The fact that we cannot show animals means our reputation as a breeder is affected and this affects the sale of breeding animals which is the main business of the farm.*
8. *Restrictions change the nature of the business – we are 'dancing to others' tune' rather than managing our own business as we wish to.*
9. *Been unable to get bull in for the last three months to put to heifers so calves will be very late. Can't understand the Defra vet (she is Spanish with very poor English) so real difficulty in communicating and complying! Seems no light at the end of the tunnel.*
10. *Financial impact of having cattle taken. Also for much of the time it diverts me and my employees away from their normal work. It is staggering that, having got rid of TB some years after the Second World War, it is now been allowed to become endemic again! Other countries, e.g. New Zealand, have successfully controlled outbreaks by culling wildlife.*
11. *Finding replacements of a suitable quality. Pressure on buildings needed to house young stock that would normally be sold.*
12. *Frequency of testing causes increased stress in the herd causing some or all of the following symptoms: higher cell counts and/or more mastitis; abortions and/or calving early; drop in fertility (cows not bulling or not holding to service); drop in milk yield at TB testing.*
13. *The biggest difficulty is trying to stay calm about the situation and not getting over anxious and angry about an issue that seems to be totally out of our hands. Practically it is getting the manpower together to actually undertake the testing. Guess we are resigned to the fact that we are in this for the long haul.*
14. *We could manage everything else but it is the difficulty in buying in to replace what has gone away. There are such strict bio security conditions for the farmers but the markets are able to sell tested and untested in the same place on the same day and are able to travel in the same wagon. They should be kept apart.*
15. *Cash flow and stress at loss of animals. Lack of willingness in ministry to discuss results in depth. How many farmers do they want to hang themselves before they sort this out?*
16. *Wondering what the future of the farm and herd is. Probably having calves born to be killed soon after birth - they were injected by the vet. I remember one who had tears running down his face which devastated me and my wife—I will never forget it.*

Farmers' state of mind

Interviewers were asked to comment on the apparent state of mind of the interviewee from his or her manner and attitude to the questions. A summary of the words most used in the 52 comments received is given in Table 14.

A high proportion of interviewees appeared outwardly calm but there were usually more negative feelings below the surface as illustrated by the examples of comments below.

1. *Calm and controlled but has clearly been affected by TB and frustrated at lack of meaningful action by government.*

Table 14: Interviewers' perceptions of state of mind of interviewees

Word	Number times used
Calm	23
Resigned	21
Frustrated	15
Angry/anger	7
Stressed	10

2. *This farmer was calm to speak to and resigned to the fact that he had gone down with TB. However, he did express anger towards the government for their inability to deal with badgers.*
3. *Angry that nothing is being done about it. Desperate that the situation is not being sorted out.*
4. *Calm and resigned. Finds it a bind but is very encouraged to hear about the badger cull in Wales - feels it the only hope to turn things round. Is unsure about the science as to whether his animals actually have the disease though could accept that it has been caught at early stage. He would welcome more clarity and evidence, e.g. of animals kept for observation after positive skin test. (West Wales interviewee)*
5. *A mixture of simmering anger and indifference. Unhappy and clearly feels let down by the government.*
6. *There was a combination of resignation and deep frustration and he looked tired and drawn. This man is a premier breeder and well respected nationally. He is in touch with a number of breeders and seems to take their woes on his shoulders. He is well respected and knows the importance of listening to people. He knows one breeder who has been shut down for five years. Knows another who only copes because it is a huge estate and there is capacity for keeping well animals separate. Listens to farmers who have been fined for killing badgers (one was fined £8,000).*
7. *Calm and resigned to the situation but with strong feelings of frustration and even despair.*
8. *The interviewee was resigned and rational about the disease control. Clearly they regard TB eradication to be impossible while the wildlife reservoir of disease is left. There are no badger setts on the farm but there are many in adjoining properties. There is no apparent link between the recent outbreak and any purchases of cattle as the herd produces virtually all its own replacements. The attitude seems to be that they are going to have to live with TB and the expensive consequences for the foreseeable future. If the current policy continues, it may mean increased levels of culling which would then mean their business will be under threat.*
9. *Farmer and wife in their late thirties with a family of 3 children. The farmer is almost resigned to the fact that TB is here to stay and will have to put up with the consequences. The wife says he has become more tired over the last 12 months and she considers it's to do with the stress of TB and the frustration of not being able to deal with the problem himself and all the bureaucracy created by government. It seems apparent that the State vets are as frustrated as the farmers about all this and it shows.*

10. *Interviewee was calm and relaxed. He is a competent manager and able to see beyond the immediate problem but is frustrated by the inconsistencies in interpretation of rules.*
11. *Had been stressed but now resigned. Is rather a workaholic. They had been going to change to beef rearing on new hill farm, possibly to retire, but now all on hold and cannot see any means of making plans. I feel concerned for their personal welfare if it goes on too long. They just hope they will go clear again before too long.*
12. *Very stressed and suffers from depression. Identifies a key problem as lack of trust between private and ministry vets.*

Additional comments

A number of interviewees made additional comments including:

1. *Extremely worried – already have to work off the farm to make ends meet.*
2. *Costs £400 per test for 130 cattle every 2 months! Yet Defra send a person just to put (yet another) tag in each animal's ear which is a total waste of money. Also they employ a haulier to take away reactors, with a filthy trailer and who jams the animals in – if I tried to use such a disgraceful haulier I would probably be prosecuted for cruelty but Defra get away with it!*
3. *I don't know for sure about the number of reactors because of confusing information from Defra. At the time of the test I was told we had two reactors under Standard Interpretation. But subsequently telephoned by a Defra vet (who is Spanish and I can't really understand her English) and told it had been changed to Severe Interpretation and was now three reactors and five inconclusives!*
4. *The unknown and the futility of the current situation. No progress is being made to eradicate it. When I had the last TB breakdown in 2007 I tried to get the rules on TB from Defra but I couldn't get anything in writing. I wanted guidelines on 'interpretation' but they were unwilling or frightened to divulge these. This seems to be totally unreasonable!*
5. *Have had around 80 cattle removed for slaughter over the past 12 years or so but of all these only one proved positive after slaughter. What a waste of time, effort and cost, particularly as eradication has not been helped one jot by this. In fact the movement of cattle for slaughter (which are probably clean) and subsequent replacement, merely heightens the risk of spreading TB. Luckily we have not suffered from a real TB 'storm' ie widespread infection and huge losses. Probably don't have infected badgers at present but we have dozens of setts and the numbers have grown enormously. If they do get severely infected, then a 'storm' is likely.*

Conclusion and implications

It is abundantly clear, particularly from the many comments made by the farmers that from a human perspective bovine TB is not trivial. It causes immense financial hardship and worry about the future of the business and indeed forces some families to leave or drastically alter their businesses. Such financial stress has a clear impact on family relationships, in some cases causing rifts and partnership splits.

Many farmers show clear signs of psychological distress as well as physical illness and while some assume cool resignation about the situation for themselves it is clear that they worry about the impact on their families. It is touching how many showed concern for their children's distress. Some indicated a desire to come out of farming or even end their lives because under the current control regime they see no light at the end of the tunnel.

It is striking just how much TB costs the farmer, not just in emotional terms, but in sheer exhaustion and overwork as well as time and money. There is a real sense that testing denies them the ability to get on with other essential tasks and the freedom to run their business as they feel it needs to be run. It is also striking how many farmers are working under intense frustration and with a sense of futility regarding government policy.

The perception of the farmers interviewed for this survey is overwhelmingly that culling badgers is an essential part of controlling bovine TB. They feel that a major source of the the huge amount of stress which many of them and their families suffer is because government does not accept what to them is an obvious ingredient of any effective control policy. The results from West Wales show that the decision there to embark on a pilot project which includes badger culling is seen by farmers as a major breakthrough in the fight not just to control TB but eventually to eradicate it and arguably has an alleviating effect on stress levels because 'something is being done'.

Whether or not the government in England decides to grasp the nettle of badger culling, there is a need for more support (also recently recommended by the Final Report of the Government's Bovine TB Advisory Group) to help farmers in both England and West Wales to cope with the problems bovine TB brings them. Support is needed, not only to help farmers to cope with the stress of TB, but also to plan and manage their businesses better in the context of the individual challenges they face.

Communication by officials is clearly an issue too. Failure of communication by government seems to be undermining the effectiveness of the measures being taken to control TB quite regardless of whether there is to be a badger cull or not. Farmers should be seen as partners in the process. Instead they feel they are being dictated to by measures determined by people who know less about the problem than they do. Eradicating TB is as a huge challenge for farmers however it is tackled but currently they are caused considerable expense and huge stress for a project they do not believe in.

While the control measures are as they are the implication is that we will see TB increase and spread further before farmers can expect any relief. Even in Wales it is estimated that it will take a decade to eradicate the disease. In the light of the pain, cost, frustration and stress so eloquently expressed by this sample of farmers it is to be expected that more breakdowns means more cost, more distress, more farmers coming out of livestock and more need for pastoral and financial support. FCN and all those who seek to help farming families in trouble can anticipate both an increased caseload and increased costs as they try to relieve some of the financial, emotional and mental distress of this disease.

Stress and Loss

The impact of bovine TB on farming families

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Survey on the impact of bovine TB on farming families

Questionnaire

Introduction for FCN interviewers

FCN are concerned about the human impact of bovine TB on farming families and the approach taken by the respective authorities in dealing with TB on farms in England and Wales. The aim of this survey is to identify farmer perceptions of how the authorities deal with the breakdown on individual farms and to build a picture of how TB affects businesses, families and individuals.

We have selected you as one of the interviewers who are strategically positioned in England and Wales. Once you get the final questionnaire we would like you if possible to complete forms for 20 farmers in your area who have been affected by a breakdown by the end of March 2009.

Please try to get as representative a sample as possible. This means a range of farm size and type appropriate to your area (e.g. mainly grass lowland, mixed arable and grass lowland, upland and hill). If the interviewee has more than one farm, try to relate the questions to the largest/main holding.

Note that the farmers you interview must have kept cattle for the last five years at least and have had a breakdown in the last two years.

Each questionnaire needs your name and a number which identifies the farmer to you. Please keep a list of your names and numbers so that you know which farm is which and we can check back later if we need to. However do not disclose the list to anyone else and destroy it at the end of the survey.

It is important that you do not draw interviewees into exaggerating the impacts. You probably need a few comments like “are you sure?” when the impact strikes you as being very high (but do not overdo this).

TB Questionnaire

Interviewer name

--

Farm number

--

Section 1. The Farm:

Which Region? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

South West	West Wales	Worcestershire

Are you an Owner Occupier/Tenant or both? (put an 'x' in both boxes if appropriate)

Owner occupier	Tenant

What is your farm size? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

0 to 50 acres	51 to 150 acres	151 to 350 acres	Over 350 acres

What is your farm type? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Lowland – mainly grass	Lowland – arable mixed	Upland (DA)	Hill (SDA)	Pedigree	Organic

Is this a split holding which allows you to keep TB free cattle separate from TB affected cattle?
(please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

What are the main enterprises (inset an 'x' in as many boxes as apply)?

Dairy Cows	
Suckler Beef	
Beef rearing, calf to finish	
Beef rearing, calf to store	
Finishing stores	
Intensive beef (no grazing)	
Sheep – breeding ewes	
Sheep – finishing stores	
Arable – cereals only	
Arable – including maize and/or roots	
Pigs	
Poultry	

How many breeding cattle (including bulling heifers) on your main holding? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

0-50	51-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	600+

How many non-breeding cattle on your main holding? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

0-50	51-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	600+

Section 2. Your experience of TB

How many years has it been from your first TB breakdown?

	Years
--	-------

Have you had any cattle restrictions due to the incidence of TB on your main holding in the last 5 years? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

If yes, are you free from restrictions now? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

At your last TB breakdown, how long did restrictions last? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Up to 1 year	
1 to 2 years	
2 to 3 years	
3 to 4 years	
4 to 5 years	
More than 5 years	

Are restrictions still ongoing? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

Currently, how frequent are your TB tests? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Every 2 months	
Every 12 months	
Or how frequent?	

How much farm time does each full herd TB test take on average, including rounding up cattle?
(includes both test days)

Man hours	
-----------	--

How many people do you use to staff each test (not including veterinary staff)?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
More than 5	

Do you need to employ extra staff and if so how many?

Yes/no	Number of extra staff	Total extra man hours

Section 3. TB implications for you

At your last TB test, how did you find the 1st part of the testing process?
 1 = Stress-free to 5 = Extremely Stressful (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

1	2	3	4	5

At your last TB test, how did you find the 2nd part of the testing process?
 1 = Stress-free to 5 = Extremely Stressful (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

1	2	3	4	5

Do you feel confident that what you are required to do will contribute to the eradication of TB?
 (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

If not why not?

--

Since your most recent TB breakdown, how many breeding cattle were removed for slaughter and compensated?

--

Since your most recent TB breakdown, how many non-breeding cattle were removed for slaughter and compensated?

--

Is the number of your cattle reacting to the test increasing or decreasing or about the same? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Increasing	Decreasing	About the same

Did you replace the cattle taken from your latest TB breakdown? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Yes	No

Did you feel the payment you received for culled animals cover the cost of replacing the cattle taken?

Yes	No

If no say why, e.g. organic or pedigree?

--

How helpful was the communication with the authorities regarding the testing process in general and the causes and the prevention of the disease. 1 = no discussion 5 = very helpful. (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

	1	2	3	4	5
Testing process					
Causes					
Prevention					

Please note any farmer comments on the process.

--

What best describes your reaction to the news that you had TB reactors in your herd (the latest incident)? (please put an 'x' in the appropriate box)

Not Bothered	Disappointed	Upset/Worried	Panicked/Devastated

How has TB affected:

Your family	
Your own personal well being	
The management of your business?	
What is the biggest difficulty or problem you face while trying to deal with TB disease in your herd?	

Suggest that the interviewee gives you a call if he thinks of anything else which might be relevant.

Thank you

End call.

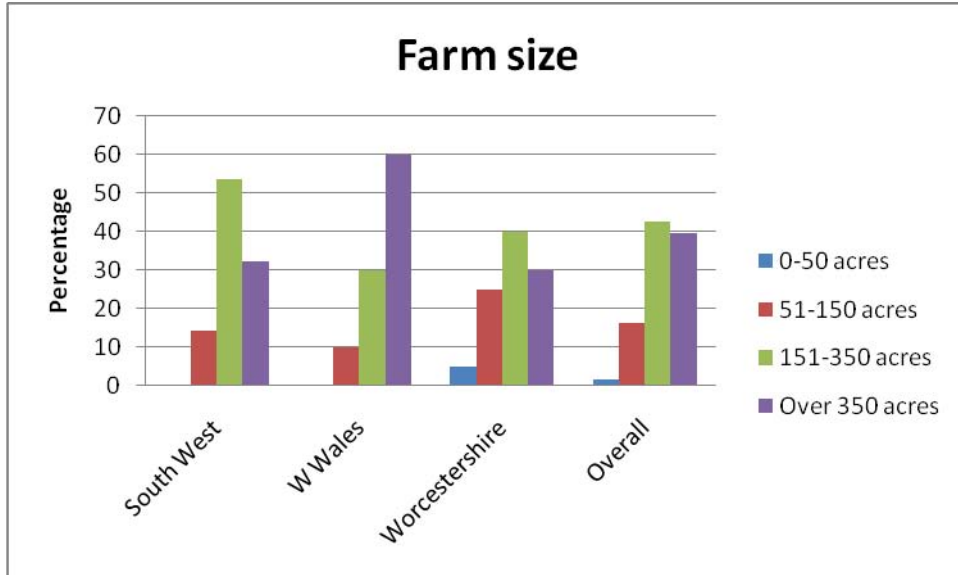
Interviewer's comments

Have you any comments about the state of mind of the interviewee from his or her manner and attitude to the questions? For instance did he or she seem calm, stressed, angry, or resigned?

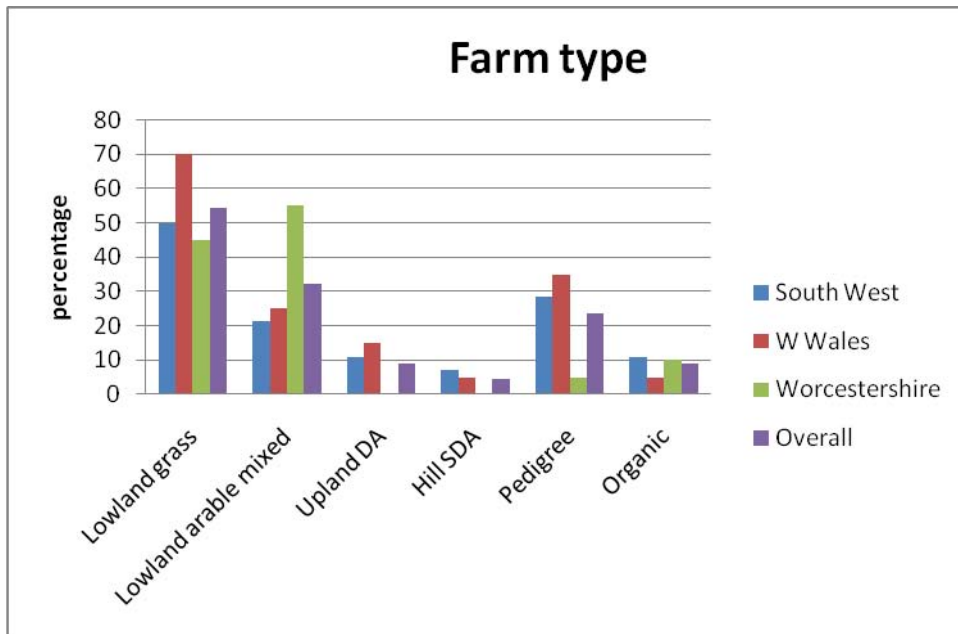
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Appendix 2: Details of the sample

Farm size



Farm types

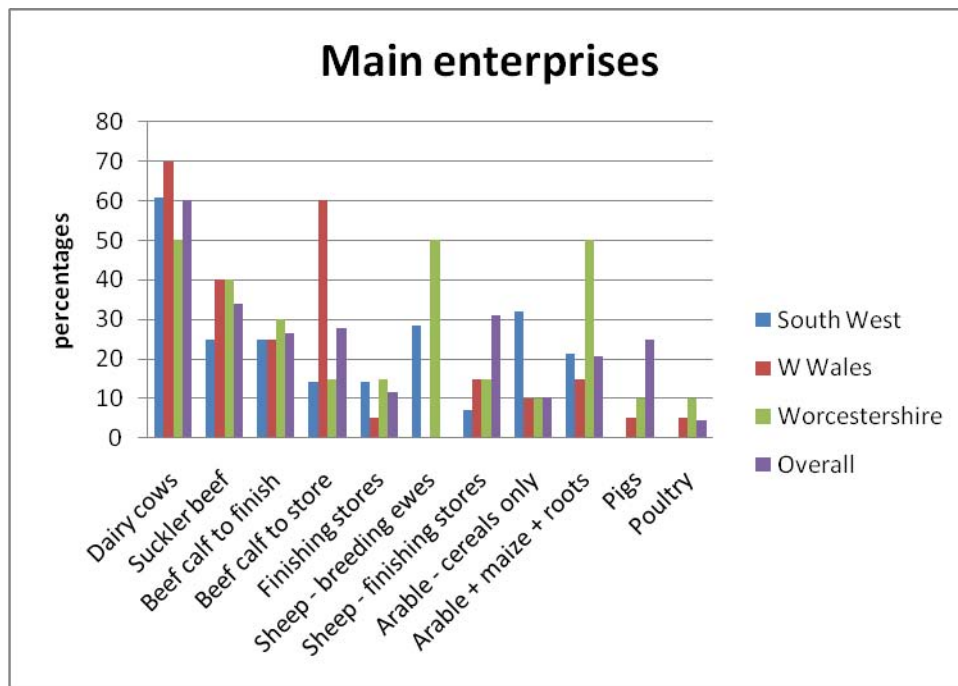


Percentages add up to more than 100 as some farms were in more than one type group

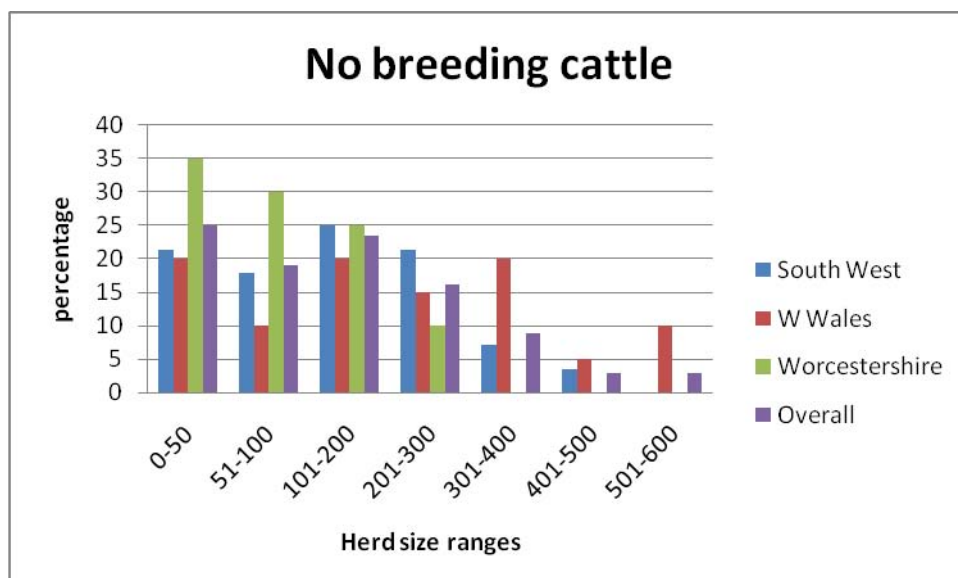
DA = Disadvantaged Areas

SDA = Severely Disadvantaged Areas

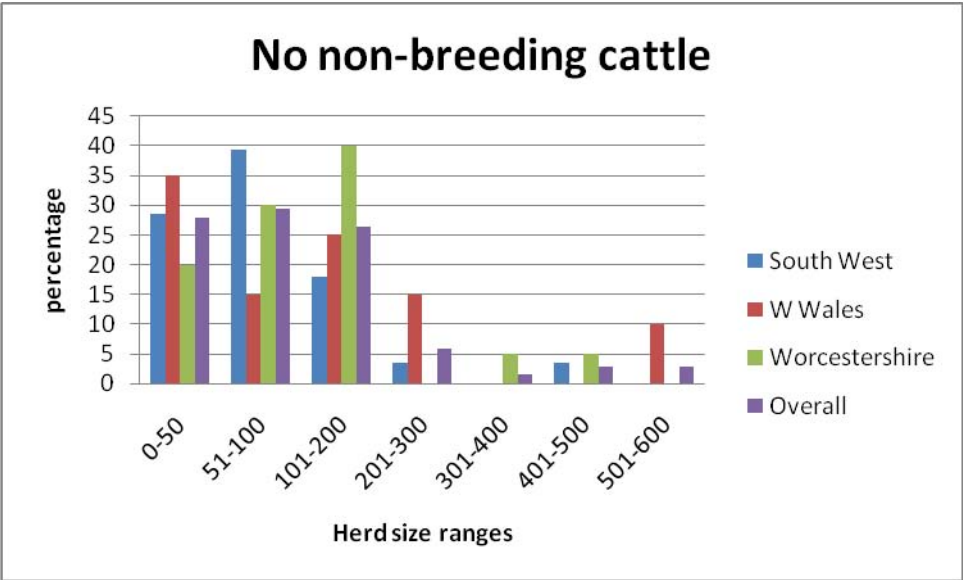
Main enterprises



Numbers of breeding cattle (percentages of sample in different herd size ranges)



Numbers of non-breeding cattle (percentages of sample in different herd size ranges)



Years since first TB breakdown (percentages of responses)

	South West	West Wales	Worcestershire	Overall
Average	7	11	7	8
Range	1-25	4-50	1-14	1-50



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Charity no: 1095919

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