

TB IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

This factsheet explains the risks to householders of TB infections from nearby bush, forests and farms.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TB

Bovine TB is an infectious disease that can affect practically all mammals, from farmed cattle and deer to wild life such as pigs, possums and ferrets. The disease is classed as a zoonotic disease, which means it can pass from animals to humans. TB infection in wildlife isn't found just in rural communities, as in many instances TB infection in wildlife can be found very close to town and cities throughout New Zealand.

In New Zealand, Possums are the main host of the disease. They can maintain the disease within their population and can pass the disease on to farmed cattle and deer through close contact and to wild animals which scavenge on their carcasses.

Possums are a focus of the TBfree pest control programme where their populations are reduced using traps or toxins in defined geographical areas where the disease is present.

Farmed cattle and deer are tested on farm and at meat processing plants as part of the TBfree surveillance programme. Cattle and deer movement restrictions are also applied to individual animals, herds and areas to minimise the risk of TB spread through stock movement.



ARE FAMILY OR PETS AT RISK?

Due to the control and surveillance undertaken by the TBfree programme the risk of TB to humans and domestic pets is very low, and cases of infection are rare. However, where any animal – pets or humans – come into contact with infected wildlife or livestock, there remains risk of infection.

TB is spread via aerosol droplets (from breathing or coughing) or contact with exposed tuberculosis lesions, as can occur through handling TB-infected animals while hunting or trapping. Cats and dogs can contract TB if exposed to the disease through close contact, such as scavenging on infected carcasses or fighting with a TB-infected animal.



MINIMISING TB RISK TO YOUR FAMILY

The best way to minimise the risk of TB infection in your family is to consume only pasteurised dairy products and ensuring all meat is well cooked.

In areas where TB in wildlife is known or TB warning signs are displayed:

- Ensure dogs are restrained from scavenging while in or near bush areas
- Keep cats inside at night to avoid contact with possums
- Never feed raw possum meat to pets
- If a pet develops abscesses around the neck, under its limbs or suddenly loses weight, immediately contact your vet.

If you regularly hunt please read the TB information for hunters factsheet at ospri.co.nz.

If you own a small cattle or deer herd (a single animal is classed as a 'herd'), please ensure it is registered with the TB programme and that you record any animal movements within the NAIT system.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Other towns and cities have known TB vectors near their homes and pets within New Zealand. Remember, controlling wildlife infected with TB, along with monitoring of cattle and deer is the key to eradicating this disease from New Zealand. Supporting the TBfree programme is supporting your community.



WHAT TBFREE AIMS FOR

TBfree is a nationwide programme governed by the Biosecurity Act. The programme aims for TB freedom of the disease from livestock by 2026 and possums by 2040, with eradication of the TB bacterium from New Zealand by 2055.

OUR GOALS



2026



2040



2055



FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information and factsheets on the TB programme visit:

www.ospri.co.nz/publications/factsheets