

Temporary Operational Instruction

Action Note: 2024-07-30 - Chapter 2.9 Dairy Hygiene Inspection

Purpose:

This action note is to inform operational staff of a new temporary operational instruction for Official Veterinarians to verify compliance with animal health requirements on hygiene legislation at non-assured dairy holdings in England and Wales.

Background:

According to the Official Control Regulations (OCR) [Assimilated Commission Implemented Regulations \(EU\) 2019/627, article 49](#), an Official Veterinarian (OV) shall verify that Food business operators producing raw milk and/or colostrum must ensure compliance with the requirements laid down by the [Assimilated regulation \(EC\) 853/2004, Annex III, Section IX, Chapter I, Part I](#).

In particular, the official veterinarian shall verify:

- (a) the health status of the animals,
- (b) the absence of the use of prohibited or unauthorised pharmacologically active substances; and
- (c) that the possible presence of residues of authorised pharmacologically active substances, pesticides or contaminants does not exceed the levels laid down in Regulations (EU) No 37/2010, (EC) No 396/2005 or (EC) No 1881/2006.

Procedure:

The OCR requires Official Controls to be carried out regularly and based on risk. The FSA Dairy OCR working group decided to carry out these animal health verification visits on an annual basis (1 visit every 12 months).

Those visits will be implemented with immediate effect by either SDP OVs or FSA OVs. OVs need to complete training before they can undertake these visits. The training material can be accessed as follows:

- SDP OVs: training material has been provided to management for further cascading.
- FSA OV: the training material is kept on a designated Teams channel which can be accessed in [here](#).

Once the training is completed, the OV needs to pass (80% mark) a Quiz to demonstrate their knowledge on the subject. The Quiz has either been provided to the SDP or it is accessible to FSA OVs via the link on the training material. Please access the Quiz, provide your answers and send the completed quiz to Colin.Thompson@food.gov.uk and Danny.Browning@food.gov.uk. Colin/Danny will mark your quiz and let you know via email whether you pass it. Once the OV has demonstrated the required knowledge, the name will be added to a list of authorised OVs to carry out these AH verification visits.

1) Pre-visit steps:

Farm visit allocation: the allocation of farm visits is different between SDP and FSA OVs, as follows:

- *SDP OVs:* the FSA Dairy Ops team will provide a list of farms to visit to the SDP monthly. SDP OVs need to decide the farms to visit and arrange the visit with the FBO. It is for the SDP management to manage the process and ensure allocated farms are visited within the required timescale.
- *FSA OVs:* they will have access to a [Dairy AH visit map](#) of England and Wales which will show (in the form of dots) the location of the farms needing an AH verification visit. When hovering the pointer over the dot, you will be able to see the farm details and information for the allocation of the visit. There is also a "[Farm Scheduler Log](#)" where you can see already arranged farm visits by OVs and the date. Please always check this log before arranging any visit to ensure there is no duplication of bookings.

In order to prepare for the visit, OVs will need to access the [Producer report](#) where the whole history of the farm and previous inspections are recorded.

PPE and disinfectant: before visiting farms, OVs need to obtain the PPE and disinfectant indicated on the training material. There are differences in how the SDP and FSA OVs acquire the PPE and disinfectant:

- SDP OVs need to obtain their own PPE and disinfectant from their employer following their normal procedures.
- FSA OVs can order the PPE and disinfectant through CSU by completing the relevant request/order form and submitting it to CSU.

2) Visit steps:

Please ensure you use the PPE and equipment provided to protect the biosecurity of the farm. Carry out the visit and discuss with the FBO any non-compliances you might identify. Please take evidence (photos, video, records, etc.), where available.

When conducting the farm visits, the following AH aspects must be verified:

- To gain an understanding on how the FBO/Farmer manages the AH of the herd, with special attention to General Infectious Diseases, Brucellosis (BRC) and Tuberculosis (TB).
- Identify if FBO/Farmer knows that BRC and TB are notifiable diseases and the need to notify suspicion to the Competent Authority (i.e. APHA).
- Identify if FBO/Farmer knows that milk and/or colostrum from affected animals with these conditions is not permitted for human consumption.

Note: it is not intended for you to check every individual animal. A general overview of the herd and control measures in place is acceptable.

3) Post Visit steps:

Visit report: once the visit has concluded, any non-compliances need to be discussed with the FBO and evidence gathered, where available. Please complete the [AH visit report](#) and submit it. The timescales for completion are:

- If no non-compliances identified, **within 5 working days**.
- If non-compliances have been identified, the form must be completed on the **same working day**. Please also send an email to dairyops@food.gov.uk with the subject heading "Non-compliance with AH requirements", include the farm CPH number on the body of the email for cross reference purposes and mark it as "important". Attach any evidence you might have gathered. This will allow the FSA Dairy Ops team to identify and act on the non-compliances ASAP.

Enforcement and/or follow up visits: members of the Dairy Ops team will be alerted of any non-compliances identified during the visit and they will take the necessary steps to enforce them and/or visit the farm accordingly (within 5 working days). FSA is only responsible for public health aspects and our enforcement powers relate to this. If the identified non-compliances (e.g. no testing for Brucellosis) refer to Animal Health regulations (e.g. Brucellosis Orders), Dairy Ops will refer the non-compliance to the relevant government agency responsible for its enforcement following normal referral procedures already in place.

Front line staff are required to note the following action:

OVs performing dairy visits on farm, must:

- Complete the course and pass the Quiz.
- Familiarise themselves with the allocated Teams channel (i.e. [FLD- Dairy Animal Health checks](#)) for this work and understand the different documents/Apps on it, check whether they have access to them.
- Obtain the PPE and Disinfectant prior to doing visits.
- Follow pre-visit, visit and post-visit steps indicated above.

This action note will be:

- uploaded to the Temporary Operational Instruction Folder held in the MOC area of SharePoint: [Manual for Official Controls annexes - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- logged on the Temporary Operational Instruction tracker: [TOI Action and Information Note Tracker.xlsx](#)
- published alongside the MOC pages on food.gov.uk: [Manual for official controls | Food Standards Agency](#).

The action note will remain live until either incorporated into the MOC or revoked.

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